

# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy    January 1986

## The Minister's Devotional Life



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### Abortion

In response to the letters in the July issue regarding abortion, Adventist doctrine and practice should be based on a plain "Thus saith the Lord." And nowhere does Inspiration declare that personhood begins at conception. The idea invaded Christian thought as a corollary of belief in the immortality of the soul, the concept that human life has a spiritual identity apart from conscious awareness. Many ancient moral codes condemned abortion, but the Bible doesn't. Could it be that the popular Christian fury against this practice denotes moral hypersensitivity, an attempt to compensate for moral poverty in dealing with questions like racism, social injustice, and the threat of nuclear war?—Kevin D. Paulson, Loma Linda, California.

### Temptations

"Temptations of a Virtuous Pastor" (July, 1985) was superb. The author really hit the nail on the head. Gutless leadership is so often praised as pastoral humility. "Speaking the truth in love" is used as an excuse to avoid clearly speaking the truth of God's anger against sin and His enormous grace won by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Keep up this type of article!—Paul T. McCain, Defiance, Ohio.

Just a note to express my appreciation for "Temptations of a Virtuous Pastor." We try to be nice but lose out being noble. We try to be patient but lose out on being princes. If all we want or need from Christianity is the "virtues" listed in the article, we can do as well with a good psychologist.

Of course, this is not to say that we do not need these virtues, but when we are satisfied with them to the exclusion of

the imperatives, we have lost not only ourselves but maybe those to whom we minister.—Stanley Murphy, Pecos, Texas.

### AIDS

A million thanks for your excellent editorial on the courage to make a true Christian pastoral response to people with AIDS ("AIDS, Leprosy, and Love," September, 1985). Repeatedly I hear stories of people with AIDS being denied pastoral ministry because of the fears of those who are called to manifest God's love among those most in need of it. I hope that your editorial will raise the awareness of clergy that people with AIDS are God's children too. We all fail from time to time to live up to the standard of Jesus' example, but it still shines ahead of us as an idea of love and service to which we aspire.—Mark E. DeWolfe, Mississauga, Ontario.

Your recent editorial on AIDS and leprosy was both an excellent comparison and, I think, a touching demonstration of love as Jesus intends it. Those of us who deal with pain and death have never seen such fear, panic, and hate as we do with AIDS. When medical science does not have all the answers, there is only love and understanding. Churches seem too often to lack these. Thank you for contributing.—John Wieland, MD, Los Angeles, California.

### Wellness

"High-level Wellness" (September, 1985) was outstanding. While Pat Jones used illustrations from the female gender, the theory is a theory for mankind. Each pastor would do well to contemplate it and relate the members of his/her parish to the illness/wellness continuum.

Thanks for a stimulating article relating to health.—Elizabeth Sterndale,

Health and Temperance Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

### Fund-raising

I have found your magazine of great benefit in my own personal life as well as in the life of my congregation. In fact, I have already sent for Mel Rees's information on the Anonymous Commitment Plan (Shop Talk, July, 1985), which I believe will help us revise our stewardship program and make it more in tune with the Scriptures! Your personnel certainly have a significant ministry to pastors, and I am grateful for what the Lord Jesus is doing through all of you.—Mac Shaw, Fowler, California.

I find the cover of the July 1985 issue absolutely abhorrent. It is nothing short of deplorable that you have portrayed the most common act of Christian stewardship as an ugly, forcible relationship between uncooperative parishioners and belligerent church leadership.—Jeffrey N. Stinehelfer, Oak Park, Illinois.

### Thanks

I have been blessed in my ministry to the church by your gift of MINISTRY, for I have found it very enlightening. I do not look for ideas, theology, or opinions that differ from mine in order to react against them; rather I look for articles that challenge and empower me to be a better pastor. Of course, we sometimes differ in doctrines, but that is not so important. I believe the most important thing is that we can be one in Christ, in purpose, and in His mission. Thank you for the gift I have been receiving for years now. May God give you more power to edify more workers for His glory.—Teofilo P. Caa-lim, San Nicolas, Pangasinan, Philippines.

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If you're receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928, MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but 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. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to 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; requests should be on church letterhead.

# First Glance

A new year brings a new design to MINISTRY. Not that we need any drastic changes. One person who responded to my July editorial dealing with the future of MINISTRY asked, "How can you improve on perfection?" While I appreciate such a gracious compliment, there is always room for improvement. Our new layout, for example, gives us 25 percent more space for article content. We are also beginning to print photographs of article authors. This is a revival of a practice we had some years ago. We believe this will bring added realism and personality to the journal.

Probably the most notable change is that our table of contents will appear on the cover each month. Our staff felt that most readers could leaf through the thirty-two pages quickly to find articles of particular interest, and that eliminating the detailed table of contents frees space to be used more profitably.

We will no longer use the title *Shepherdess*. This does not mean that we will no longer publish articles directed specifically to the minister's wife. We have one slated for each issue. We are simply eliminating the *Shepherdess* title in hope that husbands will read the material too. Through personal questioning we have found that many clergymen skip this section, thinking that it is only for women.

Although we are making a few changes, it is our earnest desire that the content will continue to be helpful to our readers. We always appreciate receiving suggestions for improvement.

And now meet our MINISTRY editors. We are a small but hard-working group who along with our three secretaries, Mary Louise McDowell, Ella Rydzewski, and Lynetta Murdoch, solicit your prayers that God will give us the wisdom, judgment, and strength to do the work that we are committed to. If you haven't done so already, please read my editorial in the July, 1985, issue to learn more about our aims and objectives.

*J. R. Spangler*

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# Knowing Him better

**Why do we need a devotional life? What kind of devotions best meet that need? What does Jesus' example teach us about devotions? How do faith and devotions relate? And on what does the maturing Christian's prayer life focus?**

**P**eople expect ministers to enjoy a rich devotional life. We sense these expectations in the upturned faces of our parishioners, the (sometimes competitive) comments of our professional peers, and the urgings of our superiors. Eager to live up to these appropriate expectations, some of us plunge energetically into the pursuit of a "devotional life" as an end in itself. To what, then, do we look to determine whether or not we have met this ill-defined goal? Should we feel satisfied when a warm glow permeates our otherwise harried lives? Have we achieved success when we can "drop" the report to an awed church member that we spent two hours in devotions that morning? What is the goal, the object, of a minister's devotional life?

In His prayer to His Father, Jesus spoke a watershed insight when He said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3, N.K.J.V.). When reduced to its essence, sin is personal alienation from God, the Life-giver. It is a broken man-God relationship, the separation of beings intended for unbroken union. And every other problem—selfish attitudes, loss of self-worth, hostility, ignorance, sinful behavior, and ultimately death—results from this shattered relationship. Eternal life, then, is found when that life-giving union is reestablished.

Unless we are convinced that the character of God is the central issue in the great controversy and the focal point of personal salvation, our devotional

lives will degenerate into obligated ritual, professional face-saving, or denominational ammunition-gathering. In any case, our devotions will soon cease to be productive. And then they will cease.

At its very core "devotional life" is not a technique, a discipline, or a religious duty. It is the fascination of a person for a Person. It is the God-drawn questing of one's soul for that divine Friend by whom we were created for fellowship. As such, it has all the elements of an absorbing, rewarding, mutual friendship.

In the beginning God did not walk away from man because man had misbehaved. Man walked away from God—and as a result, misbehaved. And since then man has turned against God because his understanding of God has been tampered with by the enemy. Jesus cried out, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee" (verse 25). And this is the greatest tragedy in the universe: that man should regard One so ready to share nurturing fellowship with him as hostile, unapproachable—or irrelevant.

No wonder, then, that nothing was more central to Jesus' ministry than making His Father known! "I have shown your glory on earth," Jesus reported to His Father; "I have finished the work you gave me to do" (verse 4, T.E.V.). Far more than any other topic, Jesus talked about His Father. John alone records 229 explicit statements Jesus made about His Father.

Jesus is the pathway to the Father, not a refuge from the Father. By opening people's understanding to the beautiful truths about the Father's character, Jesus draws them to Him, in trust and love and



*Dick Winn, author of several books including *God Won the War*, *Why Isn't It Over?* was president of Weimar Institute in California when he wrote this article.*

admiration. In contrast to the alienation and fear that track those whom Satan's distortions have blighted, those who accept Jesus' revelation are drawn into bonded union with the Life-giver. They put their trust and loyalties in One whom they have come to know—and thus they pass from death into life (see chap. 5:24).

And this, for minister or layman, is precisely where the devotional life focuses. It becomes the ongoing, excited, soul-feeding deepening of an informed friendship with Him who is the rightful center of our lives. Through it we build rich reservoirs of insight into His character, so that our confidence in Him will be unshakable. Through our devotional life we discover anew that His wisdom is fine and sensible and applicable to earthly details of life, so that we become teachable, always teachable, in His presence. Through it we find evidence, from His dealings with His Biblical-era friends, that God's love is unconditionally nurturing, even when it is confronting. Through it we have the almost sensory delight of discovering a little nuance in Jesus' interaction with some hurting person that confirms that He knew exactly what He was doing in every encounter. It gives us the exhilarating freedom to ask Him the most probing questions, knowing that He relishes such dialogue. In brief, our devotional life is an absorbing, stretching, and healing fascination with a real Person!

Those who have passed from death into life—from alienation into reconciliation—find joy on the other side. Jesus spent whole nights in prayer, not because He had a fetish about praying but because He enjoyed His Father. And for those who suspect that the Old Testament—except for the Psalms—isn't intended for devotional reading, it's worth remembering that the Father whom Jesus cherished in private and revealed in public was made known to Him entirely through the Old Testament. He didn't arrive on this planet with a full-blown memory of His previous existence. Through the same documents and the same Spirit that are available to us, Jesus found His Father.

Obviously Jesus knew what to look for. And all of us who occasionally, or frequently, find our devotional seasons to be dry and dusty need to know what to look for. The answers we find when we open the covers of Scripture depend on

the questions we ask. If we ask, "Where are some promises that will make me feel good?" we may in fact find some. But in time we should grow beyond dropping the correct promises in the slot, pulling the "trust lever," and waiting to catch our expected benefits on the dispensing tray. In time we shall want something more personal, less blessing-centered, and more God-centered.

### **The most rewarding questions**

I have found the most rewarding question is, quite simply, "Who is He?" What are the qualities of His character? What can I know about His personality? Sometimes this question becomes very specific: What is His attitude toward sinners caught in the act? How does He intend to bring everyone in the world to make his or her final decision for or against Him? Actually, any of God's goals, methods of accomplishing those goals, and especially His attitudes and feelings toward sinners comprise prime targets for study, for they all give us more and more reasons to trust Him.

Though this approach to devotional study will produce many insights of a doctrinal nature, I find it places each such insight in a very personal framework. I have come to see the doctrine of forgiveness, for example, not as a theological statement about a judicial act. Rather, I have discovered that our Father is by His very nature a forgiver. I know that I am forgiven, not because I have memorized the proper key texts or measured up to the correct formula. I am confident of my forgiveness because I am confident in the Forgiver!

Once again, the "good news" is not that I am forgiven, but that God is a forgiver. The good news is not that the judgment is coming, but that our Father is the judge. The good news is not that I can go to heaven, but that my God will be there when I arrive. The good news is not that I can overcome, but that our Father wants nothing less for me than wholeness. In a word, the good news is God-news—news about Him. It is the "gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God" (2 Cor. 4:4, R.S.V.).

It is fitting that many writers speak synonymously of the devotional life and the "life of faith." For "faith" takes on its richest meanings when it is used to describe the relationship between a thinking, trusting person and his God. Our parishioners hear repeatedly (often

from our pulpits) that they should "have more faith." Many of them, in a response destined to frustration, search for some greater intensity of feeling, some deeper gullibility of response to the unknown, or some occasion to abandon a quest for meaning and "simply trust."

In most discussions of "righteousness by faith," or its children "justification by faith" and "sanctification by faith," the big Latin words get all the attention and faith gets benignly neglected. But no man can be "righteous" with God (that is, in his rightful state of union with the

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Life-giver) apart from faith. And faith cannot exist meaningfully by itself. It must be connected with its object—as in "faith in God." So we can only have more faith in one way: by becoming better acquainted with God. This confirms that we must make getting to know Him better the fundamental purpose of our devotional life.

### **Making the time**

Any minister who is sensitive to the needs of his flock knows that he will go to bed every night with his work not yet done. The demands seem almost infinite while the workweek is cruelly finite. Many good intentions for time with the Father die as the telephone boils over. And the (perhaps self-consoling) question at workers' meeting is "How do you find the time . . . ?"

Quite likely the answer does not lie in heroic scheduling or in having one's spouse or secretary run interference. A minister must have a "soul session" with himself and admit that the greatest hoax, the most insulting contradiction of terms, is a superficial man of God. Though verbal alacrity, good management skills, and a pleasant visitation style may carry a minister for a while, his own integrity is at stake if he knows that he is regularly speaking beyond his depths. And nothing can deepen a man more effectively than regular contact with the mind of the Infinite.

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When we use our devotional study to collect cute sayings, clever illustrations, or weepy stories, we are not adding substance to our ministry. And study aimed at stocking our doctrinal arsenals may make us skilled debaters, but that is not the skill for which the world hungers. God created our unique order of beings that we might stand shoulder to shoulder with Him, entering into His mind, sharing a *mutually* satisfactory interchange. He Himself invites us to "come up higher," to think as He

thinks—about people and their needs, about the cosmic issues in the great controversy, and about the excruciating demands of unconditional love. What a compelling incentive to rise above the petty preoccupations of our days! The minister who struggles to find time for devotions likely has not yet grasped this perspective. But the one who has heard the high and bright invitation of an intelligent Lord for this soul fellowship does not try to *find* time to respond. He *makes* time!

The mind-set that we daily reaffirm in our devotional moments of solitude can carry through and flavor our entire day. I have enjoyed carrying a pocket-sized Bible and a small stack of 3 x 5 cards with me. In spare moments—while riding the plane, standing in line, or listening to a dull lecture—I enter into quick, excited explorations for new gems: texts that reveal insights into God's character. Or these insights may flash into focus while counseling, during a class discussion, or while in brisk conversation with a friend. In any case, I pull out a 3 x 5 card, jot down the Bible passage at the top, then in the space remaining write down the insights into God's character which flow from that text. (I have a colleague who is doing the same thing, and from time to time we get together and "play cards.") What richness! The growing stack of cards—my theology "card file"—provides not only fresh, God-centered sermon material but, more important, potent prayer material. Every discovery about God's character may be eagerly "prayed into" our own lives.

Paul states it as an unquestioned fact: When we behold Christ, we *shall* be changed into His likeness (see chap. 3:18). Though he reports that this is a step-by-step process (from "glory to glory"), he affirms that the Holy Spirit supports this work. The key, however, is that the object of this beholding is the Lord Himself. Not ancient Hebrew history; not intriguing stories; but the Lord and the qualities of His character.

This means that we increasingly learn to read the Bible as a revelation of *who God is*. Every story, every parable, becomes an occasion to see God more clearly. Even the Old Testament events that are not apparently helpful devotionally portray how God works in secular, or less-than-ideal, settings. Thus the entire scope of Scripture opens to us as prime territory for devotional

study, for all of it reveals our Father—the God who is active among His people.

### **The prayer focus**

As our devotional life deepens and our spirituality matures, our praying quite likely will change as well. We will ask less frequently for things, for favorable circumstances, or for creature comforts. Instead, we will hunger for a relationship and for the likeness of the One we admire. We will focus less on our needs and celebrate more the One who is aware of those needs. As our attention becomes swallowed up in the overwhelming majesty of God's goodness, our prayers will less often be preoccupied with our own perplexities. We shall cease trying to coax Him to act on our behalf and rather seek to align ourselves with what He is already doing to meet those needs. We shall see that blessings are inherent in following the path of His wise will and announce our readiness to walk in His ways.

Jesus said, "If I be lifted up . . . [I] will draw all men to me" (John 12:32). The Bible unceasingly lifts up Jesus Christ. And if we behold *Him* in its pages, we shall be unceasingly drawn to Him. That is the enduring motivation of the devotional life, the greatest assurance that our quest will be rewarded.

Seeing Jesus' unconditional love for us will heal our insecurity and loneliness. Grasping the grandeur of the themes that occupied His mind will gently rebuke our pettiness and lift us higher. When we sense how powerfully He touches us when He trusts us, we shall gladly relinquish our untrusting, manipulative ways of dealing with others. When we awake to the bright discovery that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (see 2 Cor. 3:17), we shall be ashamed of our attempts to control others. When we know that He Himself is the truth, we shall loathe faulty concepts of Him as far greater heresy than mere doctrinal heterodoxy. When we see people damaged, confused, and discouraged because they do not know Him aright, we shall feel the greatest indignation—indignation that shall drive us anew into the pursuit of that chief treasure, the knowledge of His character. We shall crave to be "His people," His transparent medium, because we know that *He is the answer to all the world's questionings*.

For there is no calling for the people of God more grand than that they should be *devoted to Him!*

# Secrets of great preachers

**What keeps great preachers preaching? The lives of some of history's greatest reveal the common thread of a strong devotional life. The secret of their strength lay in their constant devotion to prayer and Bible study.**

**A**t 15 years of age George Whitefield (1714-1770), a tavern keeper's son, began to work behind a public bar. When the bar closed he would go upstairs to his room and read his Bible by the light of a stolen candle. So began the devotional life of a man who later kindled religious revivals throughout Britain and North America and who prompted the founding of some fifty colleges and universities in the United States.

Whitefield's later association with the Wesleys' Holy Club deepened his spiritual life.

Of his devotions he said, "I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books, and praying over, if possible, every line and word. . . .

"Oh, what sweet communion had I daily . . . with God in prayer. . . . How assuredly have I felt that Christ dwelt in me, and I in Him! and how did I daily walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and was edified and refreshed in the multitude of peace! Not that I was always upon the mount; sometimes a cloud would overshadow me; but the Sun of righteousness quickly arose and dispelled it, and I knew it was Jesus Christ that revealed Himself to my soul.

"I always observed, as my inward strength increased, so my outward sphere of action increased proportionably. . . . For many months have I been almost always upon my knees, to study and pray. . . . The Holy Spirit, from time to time, has led me into a knowledge of divine things, and I have been directed, by watching and reading the Scripture in



Harold Calkins writes from Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertshire, England, where he serves as president of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He is the author of the book *Master Preachers: Their Study and Devotional Habits*.

this manner, even in the minutest of circumstances, as plainly as the Jews were, when consulting the Urim and Thummim at the high priest's breast."<sup>1</sup>

When London's churches were closed to him, Whitefield took as his congregation the miners of Bristol. Soon he was preaching outdoors to twenty thousand people, who stood with "tears cutting white furrows through the coal dust on their faces." Frequently his sermons extended to four and even six hours, his audience at times standing in the rain to hear his message.

Prayer and Bible study combined to give power to the eighteen thousand sermons he preached on two continents.<sup>2</sup>

Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910) began his ministry in a quiet, obscure little place where he could spend time with his Bible. By rising at dawn and studying for nine or ten hours per day, he was able to devote an average of sixty hours to each sermon.

He spent much of his study time patiently meditating on a passage of Scripture while communing with its Author. He called this "incubation of the text." His prayer life ignited the fuel gathered in his hours of study. He has been quoted as saying, "I have always found . . . that my own . . . efficiency in preaching [has] been in direct proportion to the frequency and depth of my daily communion with God."<sup>3</sup>

At a time when many of his contemporaries were accepting the new higher critical and skeptical ideas about the Bible, he continued to believe firmly in its divine inspiration and that it was its own best expositor. He warned, "These opinions do not grow, are not shaped by

patient labor, but are imported into the new owner's mind, ready-made in Germany or elsewhere, but not in his own workshop. We have need to remember . . . the woes pronounced on two classes of prophets; 'those who stole the word, every man from his neighbor, and those who prophesied out of their own hearts, having seen nothing and heard no voice from on high.' We have to be sure that we stand on our own feet and see with our own eyes; and on the other hand we have to see that the Word, which is in that sense our own, is in a deeper sense not our own but God's. We have to deal at first hand with Him and to suppress self that He may speak." <sup>4</sup>

We sometimes are skeptical of those who "rise early and work late." Maclaren frankly confessed that an hour of sleep every afternoon was an important part of his daily routine. He also devoted a couple of hours each day to calling on the sick and special visitation. But throughout his forty-five-year ministry at Union Chapel in Manchester, England, he turned aside from social engagements and repeated invitations for other speaking appointments. Nothing could deter him from preparing his Bible expositions for the two thousand who pressed in to hear the gospel.

As "the preachers' preacher" of England, Maclaren is known for his *Expositions of the Holy Scriptures*. "My work," he said, "has been . . . to preach Jesus Christ as the King of England and the Lord of all our communities, and the Saviour and Friend of the individual soul." <sup>5</sup>

John Nevins Andrews (1829-1883), pioneer Seventh-day Adventist scholar, author, and the first American Adventist minister sent overseas, very early developed deep religious convictions. For health reasons he was forced to leave school at 11 years of age. As he worked on his father's farm, he always carried a book in his pocket and took advantage of even a few minutes for reading. He found the Saviour when he was 13 years old and gave his energies to the Advent Awakening that swept the world in the 1830s and 1840s.

Andrews made it a practice to rise at four o'clock in the morning and to spend two or three hours before breakfast studying the Bible and praying. His love for the Bible led him to center his intellectual pursuits on it. On his own, one by one, he mastered Greek, Latin, and Hebrew so that he could study God's

Word in the original languages.

By the time he was 17 he was considered such a scholar that his uncle, a member of Congress, offered to see him through law at Harvard, Dartmouth, or Yale. "I'll arrange your acceptance, pay every bill, and buy your clothing," his uncle promised. "You could have a brilliant career. If you are a preacher of the Sabbath, no one will ever hear of you." The uncle hoped that Andrews would be his successor in Congress. John, however, had committed his life to the higher calling of proclaiming God's truth.<sup>6</sup> He entered the Adventist ministry at the age of 21.

His scholarship brought him into editorial work, as well as preaching, both in Europe and America. At one point he published 170,000 words in a three-year period! When he found time to write is difficult to know, since he traveled by day and preached at night. It is small wonder that he wore himself out prematurely.

His devotional life made him a man mighty in prayer—and others came to recognize this. When James White, then president of the General Conference, became seriously ill, he asked Andrews to come and pray for him. Andrews came and, with other ministers, prayed for and anointed White. Their prayers were answered; White recovered.

Near the end of his life, rumors circulated that he had memorized the entire Bible. A friend ventured, "I hear you can repeat the whole Bible from memory."

He smiled. "So far as the New Testament is concerned, if it were obliterated, I could reproduce it word for word; but I could not say as much for the Old Testament."

His stature as a scholar, writer, and minister may be largely attributed to his hard study, earnest prayer, and deep commitment to Christ.

Alexander Whyte (1836-1921), of Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh, outstanding Scottish preacher of his generation, used his interleaved Bible as his filing system, commentary, and reference book. Lacking the prodigious memory of men such as Charles Spurgeon or Henry Ward Beecher, he needed these notes at hand in the Book he used most.

In "A Minister's Compensations," a paper he wrote while in his 70s, he asserts that the privilege of giving oneself to the Word is the greatest reward of a minister's work. "What is occasional

with another is or may be continual with me," he said. "Morning, noon and night my Bible must be in my hands." <sup>7</sup> Daily he devoted four to six hours to his study.

He did not limit his study to his Bible, however. His two- to three-month summer vacations were closely packed with reading, meditation, and writing; and during them he prepared detailed plans for every regular service through the year ahead. He brought custom-built bookshelves on these working holidays and used them to organize his biographies for *Bible Characters* and other books, classes, and sermons.

Speaking of his favorite books, he said: "If I am to . . . prepare myself finally before I die, I know the great masterpieces of salvation that I shall have set on the shelf nearest my bed. Shall I tell you some of them? My New Testament; my

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**We have need to remember the woes pronounced on those who stole the word, every man from his neighbor, and those who prophesied out of their own hearts.**

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'Paradise'; my 'Bunyan'; . . . my 'Saint's Rest'; . . . my 'Rutherford'; . . . Olney and Wesley." <sup>8</sup> "Read the very best books, and only the very best, and ever better and better the older you grow. . . . Nothing less noble. Nothing less worthy of yourself. Nothing at all but just those true classics of the eternal world over and over again, till your whole soul is in a flame with them." <sup>9</sup>

G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), famous pastor of Westminster Chapel, London, was the son of a Baptist preacher. He took teacher training and came under the gloomy shadow of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. "There came a moment when I was sure of nothing," <sup>10</sup> he said. He floundered and debated in the "secularist halls" for three years.

At the age of 20, in desperation, he locked up all other books, bought a Bible, and made it his chief study. From that study he developed a preaching-

teaching style and content that attracted thousands each week. His reputation as an outstanding expositor of the Bible led to his being called back for a second pastorate at Westminster Chapel.

Entering his study at five or six in the morning, he focused his keen mind on the Bible and would not allow himself to be disturbed during the morning hours. He spoke of reading the book of Exodus through at a sitting forty times before putting pen to paper to write his expository notes for *The Analyzed Bible*. From his study came seventy volumes of exposition, the greatest being *The Crisis of Christ*.

Unlike Maclaren, G. Campbell Morgan traveled much both in England and America. While traveling he constantly read his Bible in the train.

Being a teacher at heart, and with his soul aglow from the study of the Word, he launched his famous Friday evening Bible classes, which drew fourteen hundred or more members of Parliament, doctors, nurses, soldiers, sailors, and servants. Many caught a bus or a straphanger's underground ride to the chapel at the end of a hard day's work, not to be entertained but to find solid spiritual nourishment from God's Word.

H.M.S. Richards (1894-1985), founder of the international Voice of Prophecy radio broadcast, was a Biblical preacher. His father was a preacher in America, his grandfather a Methodist lay preacher in Cornwall, and one of his ancestors was an itinerant lay preacher with John Wesley.

"The greatest Bible school I ever attended was my father's explanations of the Bible at family worship," he recalls, adding, "Mother taught me to memorize Scripture before I learned to read." In spite of an eye injury in his early teens (serious enough to prevent his ever driving), Richards read avidly, giving the most attention to the Bible. Often he could be seen reading as he walked the mile from his home to his office.

Ellen G. White and John Wesley were his favorite authors, and history and biography his favorite subjects. Wide reading enriched his sermons with literary allusions, historical events, and recent discoveries, which served to hold the interest of a variety of hearers.

He described his daily program thus: "When I open my eyes in the morning . . . I pray—right there in bed before I get up—about the day and about my work. Then I take my Testament and read. . . .

After breakfast I go out to work in my garage library of about five thousand volumes. . . . My creative time is in the morning. I must do my hardest work then. In the afternoon I can read, I can write letters, I can talk to people. But to create—to write poetry, to write radio talks—the time is in the morning."<sup>11</sup>

"I try to make the Word the last thing I think about at night. . . . I . . . read some out of it just before I go to sleep."<sup>12</sup>

Each New Year his first priority was to lay aside everything else and read the Bible through completely—sometimes in a few days, more often in a few weeks. After that he read it more selectively through the rest of the year. He considered each new translation an opportunity to find fresh nuances of meaning in God's Word.

His prayer life buttressed his commitment to the Spirit-filled life. I will always remember the tap of his long walking stick on the pavement as he passed our house, climbing the hill to his place of prayer. He said, "I pray before I work at all. I have a special time of prayer when I open my Bible. . . . I pray about each one of the talks I write. . . . I need . . . to be always in the attitude of prayer . . . to practice the presence of God."<sup>13</sup>

A plaque in his boyhood home read, "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen Guest at every meal, the silent Listener to every conversation." The Divine Presence became real to him as he imagined where Christ stood and how He could be guiding him.

He sought constantly to realize his grandfather's dying charge, "You're going to be a preacher. I leave with you something from 1 Corinthians 2: Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. If you are a minister, you've got to be a spiritual man. You can never understand the Bible unless you are spiritual."

One verse of what he called his "unfinished poem" represents the emphasis of his ministry:

Have faith in God—  
Seek truth—do not delay;  
Have faith in God—  
The Scriptures search today;  
Have faith in God—  
His Holy Word obey.  
Have faith, dear friend, in God.<sup>14</sup>

### Jesus' example

What do the Sacred Writings say about Jesus' devotional lifestyle that could serve as a model for us? Of His prayer life we read that He arose early to

pray (Mark 1:35), even, at times, spending entire nights in prayer (Luke 6:12); that He felt its importance strongly enough to retreat from His direct ministry to people and find a quiet place to pray (Luke 5:16); that the Scriptures relate the Spirit's power in His life directly to His prayer life (Luke 3:21, 22); and that in the minds of His disciples His prayer life supported His claim of spiritual leadership (Luke 9:18-20). It was during His prayer struggle in Gethsemane that He won the victory that prepared Him for the cross (Matt. 26:36-46). If every minister used his place of prayer as frequently as Jesus did, we would see greater power in the pulpit.

What of His study habits? He was not formally trained. The pragmatism of His preaching and the profound simplicity of the truths He taught led the Sanhedrin professors to ask, "How can he know so much when he's never been to our schools?" (John 7:15, T.L.B.).

We are not to conclude that formal study will lead a preacher astray, but the Saviour's example indicates that He had another valuable source of theological preparation for preaching. How do we tap that source of knowledge? How can we as preachers today clothe truth in fresh, penetrating, understandable verbal garb? What is the meditative process, the devotional methodology, that was so effective for Jesus?

Since direct answers are not available, let us venture these assumptions: Jesus could read—and did, probably from scrolls similar to those discovered at Qumran. Since it is unlikely that He carried scrolls with Him during His itinerant ministry, His frequent quotations from the Old Testament indicated that He memorized considerable portions of Scripture. Much of this learning probably was done during the "hidden years" in Nazareth, prior to His baptism. His prayer life was meditation, communion with His Father, and application of the promises more than reciting a want list of things.

If these assumptions have validity, current preaching could be enriched with praying the promises in contemplative, quiet times and places; presenting fundamental Bible teachings in today's language to meet present needs; increasing study, memorizing, and quoting of the Scriptures; and helping members to do the same.

Much current preaching is the "boot-  
(Continued on page 12)

# Christian meditation

**Meditation can mean something far greater than staring wistfully at drifting clouds. When guided by Scripture and practiced regularly, it can open whole new vistas to your understanding of God and His Word.**

**I** started "looking" at meditation about fifteen years ago when I found my own spiritual life deficient. I soon discovered, though, that you can't understand meditation by just looking at it. You have to experiment personally with it. My interest in meditation stemmed partly from some serious reading and reflecting I had been doing on faith healing, partly from discussions of transcendental meditation, and largely from the revival work of Morton Kelsey and William Johnston.\*

I turned to meditation with mild curiosity. Through it I've learned a lot about God's ways with people and how the Holy Spirit communicates through Scripture, sometimes almost as if by verbal dialogue. Meditation is nothing to fool around with. It is definitely not for religious tourists out looking for a new kick or a little spiritual cocktail to take the edge off the dull routine of life.

I'm going to discuss in detail what I've learned, and I hope after reading my account you will consider the cost and then join me in what I promise will be one of the most rewarding journeys you have ever undertaken.

First, let me set down in quick outline fashion what I have discovered about meditation.

## **What meditation is**

1. Meditation is hard work. It's fun, but it demands discipline, and it never becomes easy with the passing of time.

2. Meditation can be practiced in a variety of ways. My way may not be your way, but with time, practice, and God's

guidance you will discover what works best for you.

3. Scripture is the basis of Christian meditation. In fact, I define meditation as the art of personalizing Scripture. It involves using the senses and the imagination in ways so creative and rewarding that words fail to describe the experience.

4. Journaling, or keeping a brief written account of experience and insights, is most helpful. I have learned that for me progress comes only when I make faithful journal entries. Charting progress is a challenge, but I've found a way to do it.

5. Meditation is a lifestyle. It is contemplative, yet active. It is subjective, yet it deals with discipline, scheduling, writing, and, most of all, helping. I didn't come to realize just how pervasive meditation is until just three or four years ago. When I first began to meditate I looked upon it as a way of approaching God. A good Christian technique, if you please. But genuine meditation is a way of being and doing that transcends the usual undertaking of prayer and subjective thought. Meditation is a contemplative lifestyle. Each of us created in God's image is given the ability to think, feel, and act; and all of these abilities are involved in true Christian meditation.

Like it or not, meditation is related to the clock. To reap its rewards you have to take time regularly. For me the early-morning hours are the best. After I have exercised and before I have eaten, my body and mind are most ready to cooperate in dialoguing with heaven. And that's exactly what meditation is—a dialogue with heaven based on a reflective examination of Scripture. I



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spend the first five to eight minutes of my fifteen- to twenty-minute meditation time reading Scripture. I enjoy reading a book of the Bible through verse by verse and word by word. The most productive passages for me in the past two or three years have been in the book of 1 Peter. It took me a couple of weeks just to finish Peter's greeting in verses one and two. I thought (meditated) a lot about the "scattering" and moving of my family, both my departed parents, and now my own family. I recalled my happy past, my sad past, and my crossroads past. I recalled God's purpose for me and for my loved friends, and as I did so I shed tears of delight and remembrance, and tears of grief. My journal carries some stains from those intimate times of reflection on 1 Peter.

It might take me several weeks to get through a single Bible verse. If a word or phrase speaks to me, I'll stop and concentrate on the meaning of the passage in my life at the moment. I might visualize people that I'm working with or situations that I'm concerned about and simply sit quietly and wait for an impulse or idea to flood my mind. This sort of quiet waiting did not come naturally to me. I'm a preacher. Proclamation is the cardinal practice in my profession. The dynamic preacher, the powerful evangelist, the well-organized, dramatic word was my early model. But a preacher from the past set me to thinking about listening to people and to God. "Do not rush into speech, let there be no hasty utterance in God's presence. God is in heaven, you are on earth; so let your words be few" (Eccl. 5:2, N.E.B.).

Some days the dialogue is more monologue, with my doing the talking or the asking. Other days the Holy Spirit actively impresses me with meanings, understandings, and relationships that have never come to mind before. When that happens, it is a matter of eliciting personal gratitude to God for His willingness to talk. I firmly believe that our thought life is built up by that upon which the mind feeds and that it rests with each of us to determine its food.

An important component in meditation is imagination. The human gift of imagination is greatly misunderstood. When I talk about imagination, many of my friends assume that I'm referring to events or situations that are not real. But imagination is useful for far more than journeys into never-never land. Our God-given ability to see pictures in our

mind is the vehicle on which all successful Christian meditation moves.

### **Positive outlook**

Research in stress and burnout control, biofeedback, and wholistic medicine has clearly demonstrated the intimate relationship between mind and body. Norman Cousins recalled, first in a rather brief article and then in his book *The Anatomy of an Illness*, how his focused attention on happy and humorous incidents affected his health in positive ways when he was dreadfully ill. It is clear that imagination sometimes produces and often greatly aggravates disease. In fact, many lifelong invalids might be well if they only thought so. Psychological literature is full of reports of the effects of a happy, upbeat frame of mind. If the wrong use of the imagination can bring on and reinforce disease processes that yield untimely death, why don't we just reverse the process and use the imagination to picture health-producing, successful states of mind? By letting the imagination take hold of things unseen, Christian meditation does exactly that.

The imagination must have heavenly themes for contemplation. As we open windows of impulse and feeling toward heaven every aspect of our lives will be purified and vitalized by the Spirit of God. Try it. Let the creative juices flow. Use your God-given ability to picture a face, a form, or a word. In imagination go back to the Biblical scenes. Think the thoughts and feel the feelings of the disciples, of Moses, of Daniel, of Rahab, and as you come to understand their lives and messages you may discern there a vividness and beauty that you never noticed before.

### **How to meditate**

Christian meditation can be done in a variety of ways, but most techniques include a period of quiet reflection on Scripture, accompanied by muscle-relaxing and breathing exercises. Subtle but real changes take place with continued experience. I am much less dependent on verbal and audio material now than I was at first. When I began meditating, I often had difficulty focusing my attention long enough to keep from drifting off to sleep or keeping my mind from wandering into random channels of thought. But with practice I found myself able to discipline my mind, and the paradox of concentrating to

relax became a reality for me. I have learned that I can habituate my mind to concentrate upon spiritual things. Mental exercise brings strength just as certainly as physical exercise does.

After meditation I sometimes find real value in rewriting in a very personal way the passage I've meditated on. And God often speaks to me through the rewritten material. True, I have written it, but in most cases I did not make the connection with people and needs until I reflected on the Biblical material. To illustrate, let me share a couple of

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**If the wrong use of the imagination can bring on and reinforce disease processes that yield untimely death, why don't we just reverse the process and use the imagination to picture health-producing, successful states of mind?**

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sentences of reflection on 1 Peter 4:12 from my journal: "Bill, why are you so surprised at the hostility that (name) exhibits to you. You have tried to be fair; you tried to communicate your concern last Thursday night, but (name) would have none of it. Remember, though, you probably saw the problem between you and (name) too late. Don't feel righteous in yourself, and remember you are not alone." At the time, I was having a trying experience with one of my professional colleagues who was making some unkind and, I felt, unjust comparisons. Later on, as I struggled with the succeeding verses and the problem, God actually showed me a path of behavior to follow that led to reconciliation with my brother. Today we are good friends.

Some Christians approach medita-

tion in a very structured way, emphasizing memorization and repetition. In some ways this approach resembles Eastern meditation. A meditator friend of mine has developed a week-long program that outlines each day's activities. I have found it very helpful in getting beginners started. This method, outlined in the box accompanying this article, can be used with real blessing with many passages of Scripture.

### Share what you learn

The rich material turned up in Christian meditation becomes even more exciting when shared in a small Bible study group. In my opinion every pastor needs to be accountable to a small group

of Bible study colleagues. I have received more support, affirmation, and challenge to grow during those periods of my ministry when I was in regular dialogue with a small group of fellow Christians than in any other setting. For me, personal meditation and small-group sharing are cut from the same bolt of spiritual cloth—they enrich each other as nothing else can.

Meditation offers many personal benefits. I have a warm, personal relationship with many of the characters of the Bible. They become my friends as we talk together. My imagination is alive. I can focus in on a mental picture and see color and form; I can hear sounds that I never before dreamed existed. I have

learned to relax. After five minutes or so I can sense myself quieting down and feeling better. Meditation has taught me to take better care of my body, to get enough exercise and rest, and most important of all, to trust in God's daily guidance.

But abstract meditation is not enough. Christian meditation must also affect lifestyle; it must be active and helping. The results of Christian meditation should be seen in Christians who are strong enough in their bodies and minds to offer effective help to others. A quiet confidence in God nurtured in meditation makes it possible to feel optimistic about the "new world" that being united to Christ ushers in (see 2 Cor. 5:17-20). After all, we come as Christ's ambassadors with the best news of all!

\* William Johnston, *Silent Music: The Science of Meditation* New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

Morton Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1976.

## A week's meditation

Colossians 3:2, 3: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Day 1: *Memorize* the passage so thoroughly that you can say it easily with no hesitation. Repeat it often during the day.

Day 2: *Get the meaning*. With eyes closed, repeat the text slowly and silently to yourself for several minutes or until your mind stops racing through the pressing affairs of the day. Think about the meaning for you. Write what you believe the passage means for you.

Day 3: *Apply*. With eyes closed, repeat the text slowly until your mind is calm and clear. Think about how you can apply the text to your own situation. Be specific as to time, place, event, person, and situation.

- List the things that are most upsetting to your peace now. Can you turn them over to God?
- In what areas of your life are you not "dead"?
- Recall some time in the past where you turned a situation wholly over to God.

Day 4: *Practice*. In the morning, sit comfortably with eyes closed and slowly repeat for ten minutes: "My life is hid with Christ in God." Allow the meaning to sink deeply into your consciousness. Do not strain to concentrate. Do not try to prevent your

mind from straying to other thoughts, but go gently back to the text. With eyes closed, visualize yourself going through the activities of the day. Silently offer these activities to God. As you visualize any difficult situations, repeat: "My life is hid with Christ in God."

Throughout the day, frequently repeat to yourself: "My life is hid with Christ in God." With frequent use, a Biblical passage becomes more and more powerful in focusing the mind on the spiritual. If you should become upset in any way, do not deny or try to change your feelings, but simply tell God about them and offer them to Him.

Before going to bed, run back over the events of the day in your mind. Offer prayers of thanksgiving to God for victories gained and blessings received. Where you have failed, thank Him for the learning opportunity. You needn't become depressed or discouraged about any of the events of the day or your reaction to them, *because your life is hid with Christ in God*.

Write down some of the experiences of the day.

Days 5-7: Repeat Day 4 activities.

Additional passages useful with this method include Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:6-8; 14:19; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:4; 4:8; Colossians 3:12, 13; 1 John 4:7.

## Secrets of great preachers

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straps" variety that can better be done by a psychologist than a minister of the gospel. Such sermons rarely live beyond their time. Great Biblical preaching, however, lives on—based, as it usually is, on devotional habits similar to those practiced by great preachers of the past.

<sup>1</sup> George Whitefield, *A Short Account* (1740), in Harold L. Calkins, *Master Preachers: Their Study and Devotional Habits* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1960), pp. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Calkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> In A. H. Currier, *Nine Great Preachers*, quoted in Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> In F. R. Webber, *A History of Preaching in America*, quoted in Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Virgil Robinson, *John Nevins Andrews: Flame for the Lord* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1975), pp. 18, 19.

<sup>7</sup> In Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> In Webber, *op. cit.*, quoted in Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> Whyte, *The Apostle Paul*, in W. M. Smith, *Chats From a Minister's Library*, quoted in Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> In Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>11</sup> H. M. S. Richards, "Habits That Help Me," in Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

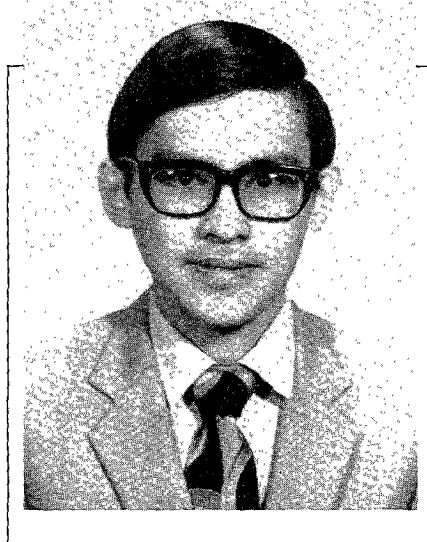
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth W. Wilson, ed., *Walking Through Your Bible With H. M. S. Richards* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1983), p. 12.

# The key to a dynamic ministry

**Luke, more than any other Gospel writer, sees prayer as an essential factor in the ministry of Jesus. Only Luke mentions Jesus' praying before selecting the twelve disciples, and only Luke describes in vivid detail His sweating drops of blood in Gethsemane.**



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**L**uke, the physician turned evangelist, may not have had the privilege of walking with Jesus as two of the other Gospel writers did, but somehow his Gospel captures an essential element of Jesus' ministry more clearly than the other evangelists. And he carries his emphasis on this essential element for success over into the book of Acts to show what an important part it played in the victories of the early church.

Jesus' baptism marked the commencement of His ministry, and all of the Gospel writers record the event (Matt. 3:16, 17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:32, 33). Except for the fourth Gospel, which presents the baptism of Jesus as a testimony of John the Baptist, each Gospel presents the baptism account in a narrative form. We see some similarities among the four accounts: the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove; the opening of heaven; the voice from heaven testifying to Jesus' divine sonship. However, among the four, only Luke mentions that Jesus was praying at the time of His baptism.

Another account preserved by the first three evangelists is Jesus' call of the twelve disciples (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12, 13). Of the three accounts, only Luke presents the preparation Jesus made prior to the selection of associates. Jesus "went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God" (chap. 6:12).<sup>\*</sup> Luke mentions prior prayer again when he recounts how Jesus taught the Lord's

Prayer to His disciples (Luke 11:1-4; cf. Matt. 6:9-13). Before Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "He was praying in a certain place" (Luke 11:1). The same pattern recurs in the story of the transfiguration of Jesus before Peter, James, and John. Jesus was praying when He was transfigured (chap. 9:28, 29; cf. Matt. 17:1, 2; Mark 9:2, 3). Clearly, Luke sees prayer as an essential factor in the ministry of Jesus.

Throughout the third Gospel, Jesus is portrayed as a man of prayer. "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear" (Heb. 5:7). Prayer was not simply an optional matter in Jesus' life. It was an integral factor in His ministry.

At the height of His struggle in the ministry Jesus was praying at Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46). Again Luke stands out among the three accounts in portraying clearly the fervency of Jesus' activity of prayer. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (verse 44).

Luke presents Jesus not only as a master but also as a teacher of prayer. "But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (chap. 6:27, 28). The parable of the persistent widow and the judge is His instruction on persevering in prayer (chap. 18:2-8; note verse 1). Jesus explicitly voiced the need for vigilance when He said, "But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to

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# The church is an organization too

**Is bureaucracy ever anything other than an obstacle? What can the church learn from the business world about assimilating and nurturing members? Insights from organizational theory may help you strengthen your church's ministry.**



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**S**ecular organizations and the church often clash over the values of life. Business people assume the church concentrates on heavenly matters while church leaders believe business institutions care little for people. These erroneous assumptions divide God's world in half, and unfortunately the division hurts both sides. The business world needs to hear the gospel. And the church on the other hand, could use some help from management experts. A study of organizations offers church leaders a better understanding of how their congregations function.

In his book *Complex Organizations: A Critical Study* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1979) Charles Perrow reviews a number of aspects of organizational theory. He begins by defending bureaucracies and concludes with excitement as he describes the work environment's effect on organizations. His perspectives on organizational theory stimulate new insights on parish ministry.

## **Bureaucracy**

Most people hate bureaucracy. The very word conjures images of inefficiency and incompetence. Yet, bureaucracy (an organization governed by routine) can eliminate mismanagement and increase the performance of each individual in the organization. Bureaucracies work best in situations requiring repetition of the same functions and behavior. Prefabricated standards, decisions, and rules characterize bureaucratic organization.

In most organizations bureaucracy

exists out of necessity. Knowing an established policy for common situations allows individuals on every level of the organization to make decisions and meet organizational goals. Because of their inflexible nature, however, bureaucratic organizations find it difficult (if not impossible) to respond to unique situations. Bureaucracy's rigidity may so frustrate those with different needs that its drawbacks may outweigh its contributions.

Congregations are bureaucracies, and they need to be. A great deal of a congregation's activity is routine. Without established schedules and procedures, congregations would crumble under the weight of daily decision making. It is impractical to decide each week the hour the worship service will begin or when the bulletin will be printed. Bureaucracy (characterized by established routine) is a blessing often overlooked.

Unfortunately, bureaucracy holds the potential of restricting a church's ministry to people. Rigid adherence to procedural rules often blocks response to legitimate human needs. Churches need to make allowances for exceptions to the rule. They must permit congregational leaders to transcend established policy when it is appropriate. Discussing potential situations before they occur helps cut through the "bureaucratic red tape." And conversations following unique incidents help foster understanding between church leaders and governing boards.

Bureaucratic organizations often have another weakness: They tend to hire people who accept and support the established routine. And when promot-

ing and rewarding, leaders of bureaucratic organizations too often allow irrelevant criteria (longevity with the organization, being related to the boss, institutional loyalty, et cetera) to outweigh ability or qualification. As a result, bureaucratic organizations lose vitality, creativity, and competitiveness. Without new insights, organizations cannot respond effectively to current trends or needs. A closed system of thought tends to become self-serving. Bureaucratic organizations must discover ways to remain vital, alive, and open to the world they attempt to serve.

Congregations may become closed to the outside world. Roy Oswald, staff member of the Alban Institute, reports that congregations with long-term pastorates tend to elect to key leadership positions only those who support the pastor. This precludes new insights even before the congregation votes.

Recognizing this same problem, Lyle Schaller suggests that the whole congregation nominate people for specific jobs. Members may write their own name, or the name of their candidate, on posters containing a job description. Schaller reports this procedure will make reaching decisions more difficult but will increase congregational support for the decisions made. An open nominating procedure encourages the congregation to select those with particular skills and abilities. As congregations open themselves to new people with different ideas, they become better able to meet the needs of members.

### **Assimilation**

Assimilating new members into an organization is a challenge. Individuals entering a new group come as strangers. Until they learn the ins and outs of their new environment, they remain extremely uncomfortable. "The first thing the new employee should learn is who is really in charge, who has the goods on whom, what are the major debts and dependencies—all things that are not reflected by the neat boxes in the table of organization. Once he has this knowledge, he can navigate with more skill and ease."<sup>1</sup>

Giving the point even greater emphasis, Harry Levinson writes: "The need for closeness is most crucial when people begin a new relationship with an organization. It is at this point that people become 'attached,' when they are most confused about the new job and the

strange organization. They are more heavily dependent than at any other time in their organizational careers, and unless someone takes them in hand, they cannot begin their work."<sup>2</sup> The assimilation process, or lack of it, greatly influences the length of time a person will remain in an organization. Individuals interpret later experiences through the lenses of the assimilation process.

Congregations continually receive new members. John Savage, of the LEAD Institute, maintains that adults joining a church have just experienced a crisis in their lives. Regardless of the nature of the crisis, these individuals are seeking both the gospel message and a caring community. Upon joining, they are heavily dependent upon those already belonging to the church. Congregations need to take seriously this dependency and develop structures to help new members feel they belong. Church leaders may successfully use one or more of several strategies for assimilation.

First, most congregations require individuals to join a "pastor's class" before they become members. The pastor's class reviews Biblical teachings and the particular denomination's interpretations of key Scripture passages. To aid new members' assimilation, pastors may add a history of the congregation to the study schedule. They can explain the "in" jokes and the norms by which their congregations function. This sharing of inside information is well worth the time and effort.

Second, sponsor programs encourage new members to attend not only the worship services, but also other church events. In the business world, when an individual joins a new company the organization assigns that person a "sponsor." It is the sponsor's responsibility to acquaint the new employee with fellow employees, the organization, and the building layout. A company like General Motors would never hire a person and tell him to make himself at home and attend the events that interest him, and then leave him to his own devices. Likewise, the church needs to help those joining to become acquainted with other members, encourage participation in social events, and provide opportunities for individuals to feel they are contributing to the organization.

Third, congregations may care for individual members through a shepherding program. The shepherd serving

the new member's geographic area may be assigned to be his sponsor. The shepherd introduces the new member to the church and its members. This offers the benefit of a six-month or longer special relationship between the shepherd and the new member.

Fourth, congregations may wish to assign a staff person to keep in touch with the new members. The staff member's responsibilities would include contacting the new members, discerning their needs and desires, acting as a referral service to those in the congregation who can meet the needs of the new members, and finally, following up on those arrangements.

Small groups also aid in assimilating new members. They support and protect individuals. Teenagers belong to peer

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**Most people hate bureaucracy. The very word conjures images of inefficiency and incompetence. Yet, bureaucracy can eliminate mismanagement and increase the performance of each individual in the organization.**

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groups, while adults belong to professional societies or clubs. These settings encourage people to air complaints, brag over their successes, and search for new ideas. Congregations with a strong group network have reputations of caring for their members. Groups provide warmth and shelter to their members and can make a large, cold church seem a warm, friendly place. As individuals unite with a congregation, they should be encouraged to join a group that addresses their needs and interests.

### **Nurturing**

The training of executives led to the development of the human relations

model in organizational theory. Today this model dominates managerial training programs. Its heart centers on the assumptions made about, and the consequent treatment of, fellow workers. It notes, for example, that a study of Western Electric employees revealed that workers shown attention by management produced more than those who were ignored.

Nurturing congregational members keeps a church alive and growing. A recent study of large, growing churches in Ohio discovered little similarity in their congregational programs or recruiting approaches. The only element these congregations had in common was their great emphasis on nurturing those who already belonged. Pastors called regularly in hospitals, were available day or night for emergencies, worked hard at knowing their people, and exhibited a sense of caring. Lay people also displayed a caring attitude by noticing when members missed church, bringing food to homes in time of crisis, and talking with each other before and after worship services.

Nurturing congregations make members feel valued, and they attract those seeking a church home. Churches need to ask, What do we do to nurture those who worship with us?

### **Ownership**

Everyone wants to be heard. People become frustrated when they have something to contribute or suggestions to share and no one will listen. Not being heard leads people either to withdraw from the organization or to fight for a hearing. To avoid these counterproductive responses, organizations need to provide a structure that allows every member to feel that someone has heard them. In business, listening posts, suggestion boxes, presidents and vice presidents walking the factory floor, quality circles, and so forth, provide the structures for listening. These structures help workers feel that they have influence in their places of work—that they are important.

It is crucial for the leadership of a congregation to solicit suggestions from the general membership. They may listen through home meetings led by various members of the governing board, through setting aside a month when they call upon every member of the congregation individually, or by inviting members to review and discuss the congrega-

tion's plans. Reporting back to the person making the suggestion also indicates that he was heard. A listening program often fails because of lack of follow-up.

And good communications are essential to the well-being of any organization. Nothing isolates people more than the feeling of not knowing what is happening. A good communication system is multidimensional. For maximum effect, information should be shared in five different forms and settings. Churches, bulletins, announcements, newsletters, discussion at small group meetings, and the "grapevine" form the complex system needed to spread a message. Careful communication creates closeness and cooperation among the members of an organization.

The human relations model of management questions common assumptions. Douglas McGregor suggests that many managers assume workers are by nature lazy and unwilling to contribute to the organization. McGregor argues that workers want to use their skills in the companies for which they work. Management's task is to create an atmosphere in which every person can contribute. If managers would correct their assumptions about those who work for them, productivity would rise and workers would find their jobs more rewarding.

Bishops, church officials, seminary professors, and parish pastors make assumptions about lay people. Often they think laypeople are inferior Christians if they are Christians at all. The fact that laypeople wrestle with such issues as profit and cost points, that they compete against companies that make a similar product, and are concerned for the bottom line does not make them second-class believers in God. Nor does their lack of a formal theological education mean that these front-line troops of God's kingdom cannot minister.

Laypeople want to participate in the church's work. They want to take part in the decision-making process. They want to share the gifts God gave them. Renewal begins in local congregations when leaders examine their basic assumptions about the role and competency of laity and clergy in the light of partnership in the gospel.

### **Organizations as entities**

Many management theories view organizations as lacking personal traits of

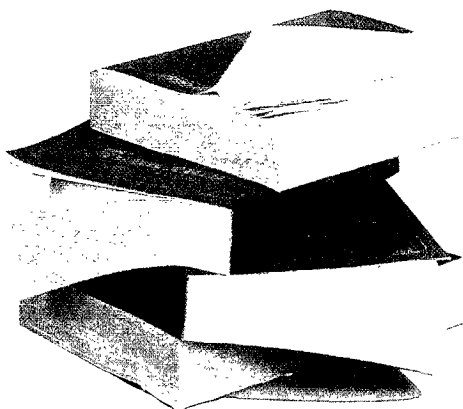
their own. They assume that since people control the organizations, the study of organizations should center on individuals or groups of people. But those who believe organizations are entities unto themselves disagree. They believe that organizations influence the behavior and decisions of those who work in them rather than the people influencing the organizations. They suggest, for example, that those who work for IBM are greatly influenced by IBM dress codes, IBM ethics, and IBM's outlook on the economy. The IBM organization dominates its employees. It has a personality of its own.

Local congregations influence people too. They hold a great deal of control

## **Laypeople want to participate in the church's work. They want to take part in the decision-making process.**

over the standards that are acceptable among their members. And every congregation has a personality of its own. Some congregations excel in worship, while others offer fellowship among members. Some congregations exert political force in their communities, while others ignore area problems and changes. Every congregation specializes in a type of ministry, and it attracts those who are excited by that ministry.

It is the congregation's goals that determine its personality. For example, the church growth movement defines its goal as making as many disciples as possible for Jesus Christ. Congregations that adopt church growth as a major goal will function and feel differently than those which denounce the church growth movement and view witnessing as a minor part of church programming. Adopting the goal of growth means that every decision will be evaluated in terms of its relation to growth. The budget will give preference to advertising and outreach ventures. If the goals of the congregation change, then its personality also changes. Examining a congregation's goals helps one understand behavior.



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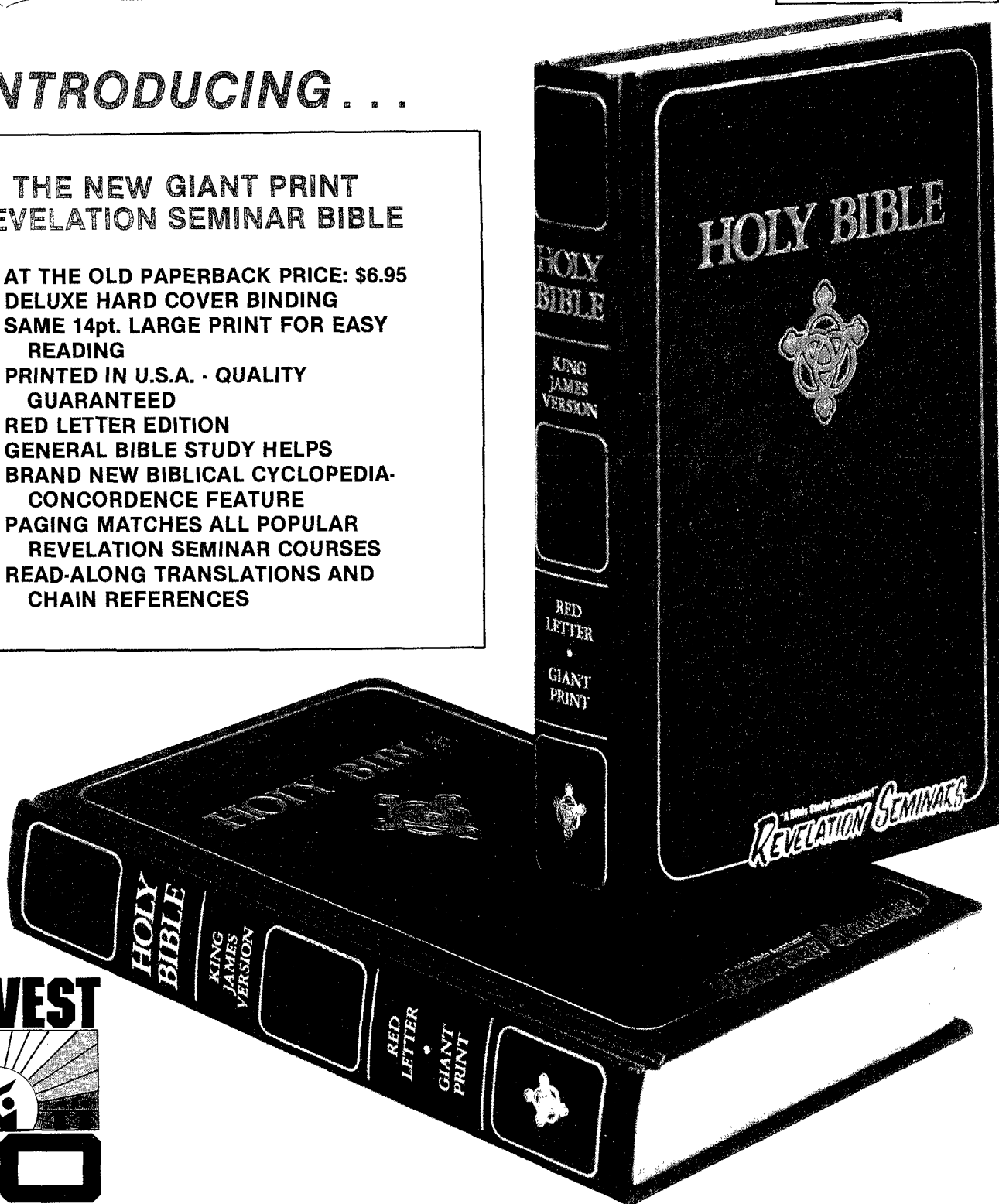
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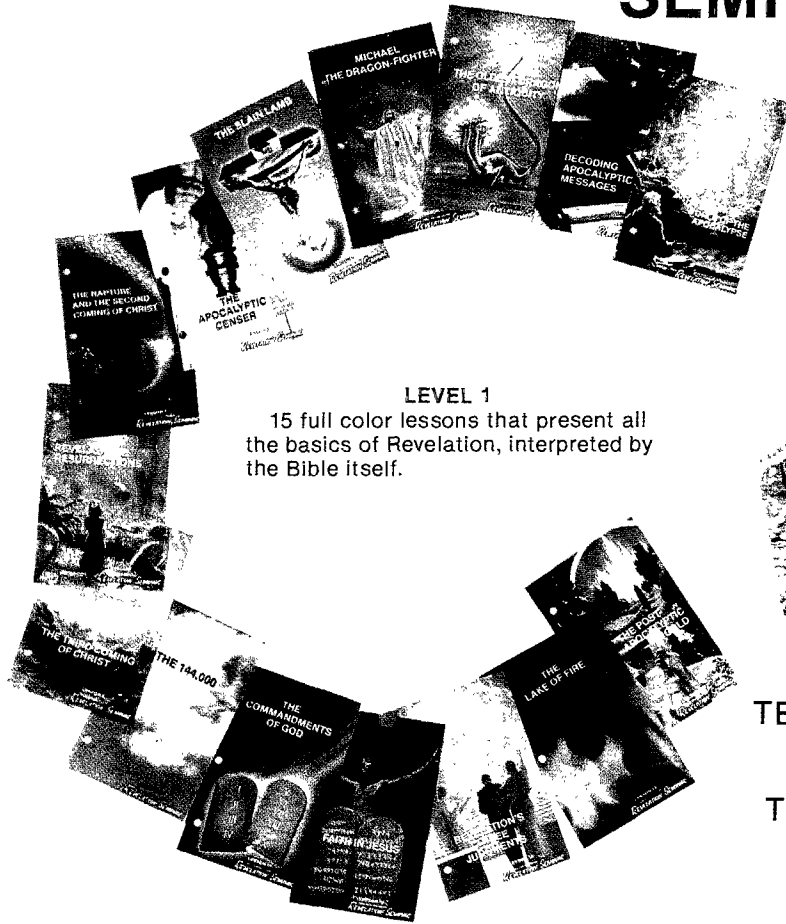
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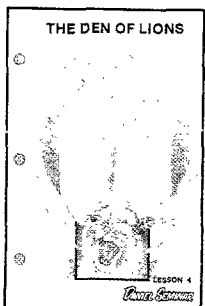
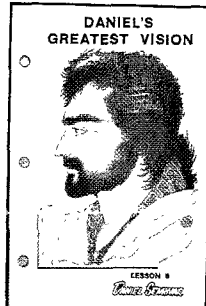
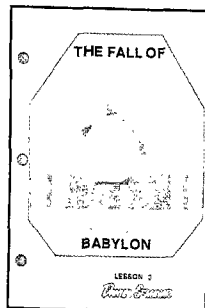
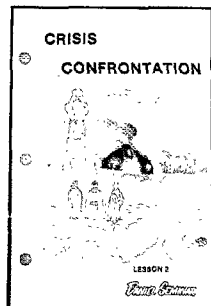
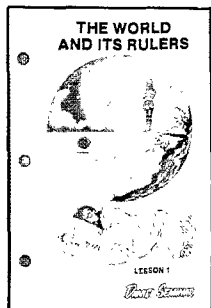


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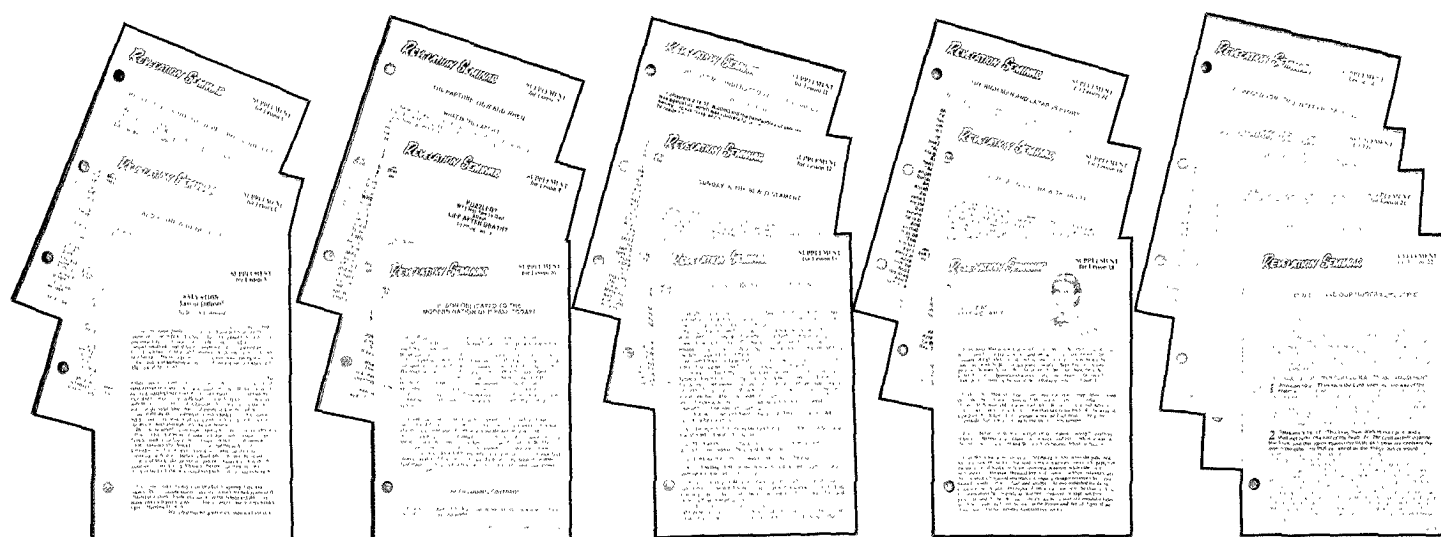
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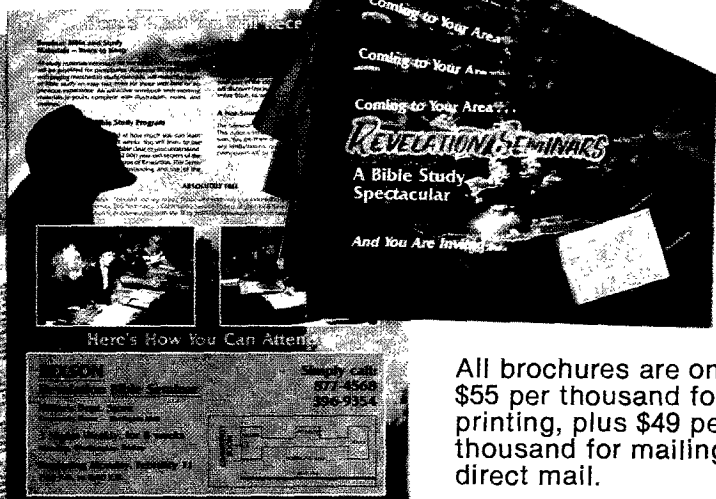
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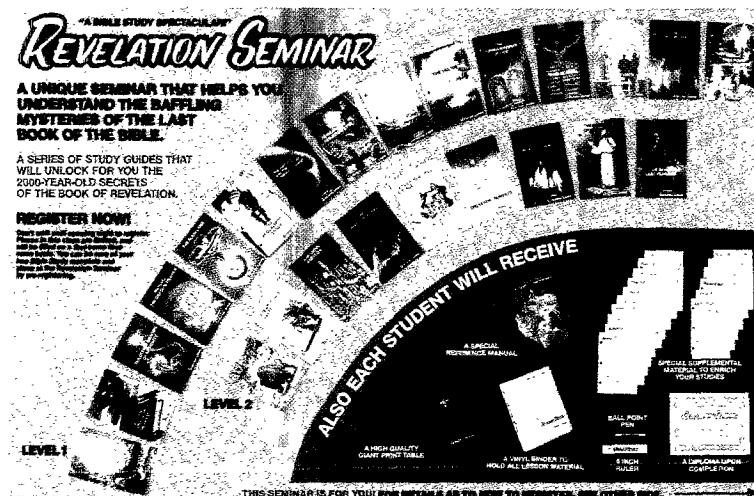


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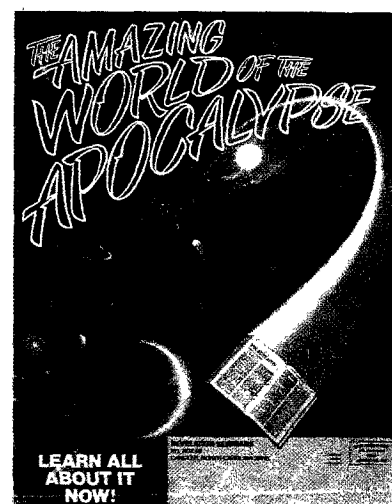


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Organizations also develop their own language. Their vocabularies determine what subjects they can discuss. If an organization's vocabulary excludes moral and ethical terms, these concepts will never enter the decision-making process. Organizations, often unconsciously, use their language to justify their position to the rest of the world. Doctors' offices, legal firms, business corporations, and churches rely on a unique language to present their services or messages.

But language may not only serve as a form of communication; it may also erect barriers to fruitful dialogue. Jesus taught in the common language of the people. Paul used vocabulary from the law court, the marketplace, and even the pagan temple to explain the gospel. As a congregation struggles with its presentation of the gospel, it must use relevant modern terms. Economics, sports, and current events offer modern settings in which to describe the gospel's truth. A mind that is bombarded with messages from the mass media can link the gospel's message to that which is familiar. The language congregational leaders use greatly determines whether their message will be heard, understood, and accepted. Choosing the vocabulary appropriate for its audience helps make a congregation's ministry effective.

Like its identity, the structure of an organization also grows from its purpose. Business organizations with the purpose of manufacturing a product will be structured differently from organizations that give medical attention to the sick. Organizations that lack a well-defined purpose flounder for meaning and accomplishments. Excellent organizations stress the importance of their purpose and require that every employee understand what the organization is attempting to accomplish. Such knowledge will help each make better decisions and work more effectively.

Congregations are organizations with a purpose. A congregation's purpose determines what activities and budget items its members will support and the overall identity of the congregation in the community. A large percentage of the members of a strong, active congregation can articulate its purpose (mission). And like the congregation, every program should begin with a statement of purpose. When the purpose is clearly understood, members can set goals, obtain resources, and define expecta-

tions. Agreement on their purpose can draw members together, uniting them in mutual ministry.

### The environment

A new theory in organizational studies examines the environment in which the organization exists. World and community events affect the manner in which organizations function, or even their survival. Create a demand for a new product and a new organization is created. Lessen the demand for an existing item and the size of the manufacturer declines. The explosion of the personal computer market and the declining demand for large cars illustrate how the environment affects organizations. Those that adapt to a changing marketplace survive, and those who refuse change cease to exist.

In 1978, George Gallup's survey on religion reported that the top three American religious concerns were (1) drinking and drugs at an early age, (2) marijuana, and (3) violence on television. Four years later a similar survey showed dramatic changes. The 1982 survey lists the top three questions as (1) Will there be lasting peace? (2) How can I be a better person? and (3) What does the future hold? Such a radical change in concerns demands change in sermon topics, classes taught, and pastoral approach to people. The environment in which the church lives affects its message and its ministry. It has even been shown that national and world events can influence the local congregation. Congregations need to monitor shifts in employment patterns, political activity, and the age of residents in surrounding communities if they are to remain vital.

In conclusion, secular organizational theory can contribute greatly to the church's understanding of its institutions. It suggests that bureaucracy, routine, and goals hold an organization together; that assumptions about others may mislead; that the local congregation has a personality which may attract or repel; and that the environment affects the questions raised in and the ministry attempted by a community of faith. Church leaders can enhance their ministry by using these insights.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Study*, 2d ed. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1979), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Harry Levinson, *Executive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 181.

## Key to dynamic ministry

From page 13

escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man' " (chap. 21:36).

Luke uses *proseuchomai*, the Greek word for the English verb "to pray," thirty-five times: nineteen times in his Gospel and sixteen times in Acts. In the Gospel eleven of the occurrences depict Jesus Himself praying. In Acts the Greek verb portrays the early Christian believers at prayer.

Luke's juxtaposition of prayer and ministry gives us a promising picture of what the church and the work of the ministry can become through prayer. Revival will come when we learn to pray as Jesus did. It happened among the early Christian believers. Luke records that prior to the expansion program of the early Christians, "all these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14). Were Luke to preach in our pulpits today, he would certainly counsel us, "Pray! Pray! Pray! Prayer opens the way to dynamic ministry!"

In this age of crowded schedules, pastors are constantly tempted to minister without prayer. But such a ministry will not be much different from the work of a baby-sitter lulling the church to sleep. When Jesus bade His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19), He had in mind a powerful, prayerful ministry. This call to prayer and ministry is addressed to every professed follower of Jesus Christ in every age.

Jesus will not commission the Christian church to perform impossible tasks. He has provided ways and means for us to finish His work. And prayer is the key that will make it possible for us to know and to implement His will.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father" (John 14:12). Ellen G. White wrote, "We must look to Christ; we must resist as He resisted; we must pray as He prayed; we must agonize as He agonized, if we would conquer as He conquered."—*Review and Herald*, Nov. 8, 1887.

\* Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

# Children of the parsonage

**What's it like to be a PK? The author's survey of a number of young people from pastoral families turned up some surprising responses—most of them quite positive. She suggests practical ways to help your children benefit most from life in the parsonage.**

**P**reachers' kids. They grow up in a fish-bowl, move frequently, and see all too clearly the human weaknesses of both parents and church. You hear a lot of criticism about how they turn out—the common lore being that PKs are more demonic than angelic.

"If your father is a minister, you have to give the impression that you are the soul of virtue . . . I learned to smile and lie beautifully—the first thing in a budding actor's agenda—and almost managed to keep my halo in shape," actor Laurence Olivier recently told a *Family Weekly* reporter.

However, little research has been done on what life in the parsonage is actually like for its younger residents. A review of religious periodicals turned up only three or four references in the past five years dealing with clergy children.

To get some reaction to life as a minister's child, I sent a questionnaire to sixty-five high school- and college-age children of pastors in the Mid-America Union of Seventh-day Adventists. Twenty-five young people responded.

Although they admitted that growing up in a parsonage is a mixed bag, 80 percent of them answered Yes when asked, "All in all, do you like being a PK?"

"I wouldn't want it any other way," reported an 18-year-old girl. "I'd rather be a PK than anything else in the world," enthused a 15-year-old boy.

Yet these young people sense that their lives are a bit different from those of their peers. Most of them said they felt

strong pressure to conform to church members' expectations, and 56 percent observed they are more involved in church activities than their friends are.

Eighty-eight percent replied that adults treat them differently because of their minister fathers. Eighty-four percent noted people pay more attention to them. Only 28 percent, however, said that their father's profession makes a difference in how friends treat them.

Although 56 percent answered that their house rules are different from their friends', an overwhelming 92 percent felt those rules were fair. Without a single exception, the young people said their parents treat them fairly.

Only 20 percent feel that many personal problems are related to being a PK. Eighty-eight percent expect their adult belief system and moral attitudes to be much the same as their parents'.

The questionnaire asked some open-ended questions about the advantages and disadvantages of being a PK. The responses showed thoughtful insights.

Among the advantages of growing up in a parsonage, the young people mentioned a wider exposure to people, places, and ideas than most of their friends have; a more spiritual family life; and greater understanding of and involvement in the church.

"I've had the opportunity to make a wider circle of friends than kids who have lived in one town their whole lives," said a 21-year-old son. "I think that's given me a more open mind."

A 19-year-old boy commented, "I always felt that Jesus was in our home and that He was able to help me and my family with problems. I knew I could be honest with my parents because they



Betty Gibb is the editor of *Current Christian Abstracts*. Her articles have previously appeared in *MINISTRY*. She writes from Columbia, Missouri.

would try to understand."

"I don't worry about divorce all the time like so many of my friends do," declared a 17-year-old girl. "I've had the happiness and security of a solid, loving family. Since my dad's a minister and my mom is a minister's wife, I feel they are dedicated to providing a Christian home. They are examples of having a relationship with Christ. I look up to that."

Several said they liked being part of the "real action" of the church, knowing some of its leaders as friends instead of just names and being a member of the family of church workers.

Almost half mentioned frequent moves as a disadvantage, although a few pointed out benefits. While the degree of trauma may vary, many of the young people experience moving as a loss.

"Just when you get to know people, you move," said a 21-year-old daughter. "It's really hard to make any close friends."

"Through the years, it's moving away from my friends that I've hated the most. It's so hard to leave a place just as you finally begin to feel at home there," commented another.

Preachers' kids strongly dislike being stereotyped. "People seem to assume that you are the extreme of either a saint or a hellion," voiced a 22-year-old. "Also, everyone assumes, if you're a fellow, that you're going to follow in your father's footsteps."

"I don't like people thinking I will or won't do something just because I'm a preacher's kid," said one 18-year-old.

Surprisingly, only one of the young people mentioned his father's time away from the family as a problem.

While ten of the young people said their position as a minister's child had made it easier for them to become a Christian, thirteen felt it had been a disadvantage. "It is much easier to see hypocrisy both in your own family and in the church," replied one.

"I've let people see what they expected. It's easy to fall into a role and not really mean anything by it," added another.

"I found myself in academy trying to prove that I was like everyone else. I started cussing just so I wouldn't be thought of as a goody-goody. When you live your life trying to keep up with (or stay ahead of) everyone else, it makes it difficult to come back to God," expressed a 20-year-old boy.

One girl said she felt she had been too sheltered. Now in college and on her own, she doesn't feel prepared for the decisions she faces. She also feels left out of many conversations because her background in music and movies is so different from her friends'.

When the respondents were asked what advice they might give a PK just turning 13, the same answer was repeated again and again—"Just be yourself." Maybe the majority attitude is summed up by this college sophomore: "Be normal. Don't be too goody-goody, and don't be too wild and terrible. Your parents are valuable to you, even if you don't think so now. Don't disappoint them. Don't flaunt the fact that your dad is important because he is the preacher. No one cares. You will lose friends, not gain them. Do enjoy your teen years as a PK. It is both a responsibility and a privilege. Not just anyone is a PK."

Another college student gave this advice: "Try to understand how confusing it is, even for adults, to combine religion as a way of life and a job. Try to be patient with church members who choose to forget that the pastor's family members have identities outside his ministry. Most of all, don't betray the trust the church puts in your father."

In general, it seems these young people feel they are managing their lives quite well. While some find certain problem areas distressing, most are satisfied with parsonage life.

Dr. Raymond Brock, chairman of the behavioral science department at Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri, says only 10 to 15 percent of preachers' children have trouble with their role.

"It's getting easier to be a PK as society and churches are changing their expectations," he says. "In general, church members are far less demanding on pastoral families than they used to be."

Brock offers several suggestions that might make life easier on the minister's children, adding that churches need education in their role also.

He suggests the pastor broaden the base of leadership families in a church to include those of elders, deacons, and others as well as his own. Together these families could discuss appropriate standards for Christian families; these standards are no different for a preacher's family than for others.

When church members criticize, Brock says children need to know how to be respectful and also to know that they

don't have to defend their behavior to church members.

A pastor's family must not live for the church alone, Brock says. A pastor should develop hobbies and friendships outside the local church. Some PKs go from Christian grade school to a Christian high school to a Christian college and never seriously touch the alien society around them. The minister's family should not be isolated from the community outside the church.

Communication is crucial, Brock states. Pastors must listen to their children and respond to their needs. They must accept their children as individuals in their own right, not products of church thinking. Children need to learn that spiritual values are personal. Families need to talk about beliefs and standards, not just impose them as part of church tradition.

Dr. Robert M. Stevenson, a pastoral care and counseling director in the United Methodist Church, writing in the periodical *Pastoral Psychology*, said the twin issues of isolation and pastoral moves are the greatest problems of pastors' children.

Stevenson suggests that greater attention should be given to the needs of young people in the moving process. "Children, as well as parents, need greater opportunity and time to deal with the grief of moving and starting again," he said. "Congregational farewells, for example, need to include the entire family in more than token ways."\*

He also suggests that church organizations need to provide greater opportunities for children of the parsonage, particularly adolescents, to make contact with each other and with people who understand their situation. He suggested special retreats for PKs, where they could get help designed to their needs and have a chance to share with others in like circumstances.

Perhaps the most important thing a pastor can do for the children of the family is express love. God has called ministers not only to preach, pray, and organize but also to love. Love will draw out personal gifts and potential. Love will set children free from expectations that fetter. If ministers sacrifice their children for their public ministry, they will lose both.

\* Robert M. Stevenson, "Children of the Parsonage," *Pastoral Psychology*, Spring, 1982, pp. 179ff.

# Content with crumbs?

**How do you react when the Lord seems aloof? The Syrophonician woman was persistence personified. She received a blessing because she knew her need. Her story can help us know our own need better.**

**S**he must have had a name, but no one thought it important enough to tell us. Let us call her Kuria, the Greek word for lady. Someone must have told her that the Galilean Healer had come over the hills into her country. Maybe one of her neighbors was in the crowd when the centurion's servant was healed. The news traveled quickly: "He heals everyone who asks for healing, not just Jews."

Jesus had come from another verbal encounter with the regular standing committees of argumentative scribes and Pharisees. He had made yet another withering exposure of their hypocrisy and had attacked their harsh system of rules and regulations, which totally ignored human need. A few miles away from all of this was the peace of the hills, and on the other side of those hills was a foreign land, Syrophoenicia. Never before in His adult life had He left the land of Israel, and now in the country of Phoenicia "he would have liked to remain unrecognized, but it was impossible" (Mark 7:24, N.E.B.).

Here Kuria found Jesus just as He was leaving the house where He had hoped to find quietness and peace in anonymity. (How He needed respite from argument and opposition!) Here she found Him, her last and brightest hope.

Life was difficult with a devil-possessed daughter. Kuria spent sleepless nights without relief. She endured nightmarish days watching her child trapped in long sessions of screaming and writhing. Mother and daughter were prisoners within their own home. Kuria

had devoted hours to pleading before heathen gods and shrines and had spent a fortune on votive offerings and sacrifices, all to no avail. In return for her efforts she had received only cold, unfeeling stares from eyes of stone.

Kuria's friends and neighbors knew of her tragic life, but what would they say if they saw her here seeking out this Jewish Healer? Would they condemn and shun her? Would they understand her fear and reticence as she approached this Stranger? Could they comprehend even faintly the desperation that drove her to make such a spectacle of herself as to follow Him and call out after Him? After all, Kuria was a Phoenician, child of a proud race, while He was a Jew from Galilee. With Him were twelve peasants, all men. What could they understand of the intensity of her anguished concern for a tormented child? And what hope could there be for her, a Gentile, unclean in Jewish eyes?

Her lack of knowledge militated against her. She had been reared in the worship of heathen deities, a total stranger to Israel's God and to Israel's Scriptures with their foretelling of the Messiah to come. She doubtless associated the name Jehovah only with Jewish exclusiveness.

Her birth was against her. When, many centuries before, the children of Israel had entered the land of Canaan, God had commanded them to wipe out the Canaanitish people with their abhorrent rites of worship. Israel failed to exterminate the Canaanites, and from generation to generation the hatred and bitterness had continued to fester between the two peoples. All this she had doubtless absorbed since childhood,



*Rhona Cooper, until recently a research assistant in the Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, first presented the contents of this article at a Women for Christ meeting during the 1985 General Conference session.*

a part of her cultural inheritance.

The disciples opposed her, wanted only to be rid of her, to silence her disturbing voice. From them she received only stormy looks and tones of irritation at what they considered her intrusion into the brief time they had hoped to spend in peaceful retreat with their Companion-Teacher.

Far more disheartening than all of this was the fact that Jesus Himself appeared to be against her. He had surrounded Himself with a wall of silence broken only by words of apparent rejection and dismissal.

But the thought of her desperately ill daughter (Matthew 15:22 tells us this was a particularly serious case of demon possession) caused her to forget everything else. Appearances, nationality, class—all were unimportant. Nothing and nobody must prevent her reaching this Man, the reports of whose healing power had spread beyond the borders of Israel.

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me, pity me," Kuria called as she followed Him at a distance, not daring to approach too closely for fear He would reprove her contaminating Gentile nearness. Time and again she called, "Pity me." But He was silent, and continued to walk ahead as though unaware of her existence.

The disciples thought it was time to take matters into their hands: "Send her away; she is an embarrassment to us. Give her what she wants and let us be rid of her!"

Now the Master speaks. "I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to them alone" (Matt. 15:24, N.E.B.). The disciples were silenced and nonplussed. We hear no more of them. In all the days and months they had spent with Him, they had never heard or seen Him even appear to reject anyone who came to Him seeking help. Strangely, they did not recognize the Lord's skillful portrayal of their own attitudes toward those not of the chosen race.

Kuria was not easily repulsed by either disciple or Master. Now she no longer followed from behind but ran ahead, kicking up little fans of dust as she ran. Her thoughts were racing too. Perhaps, perhaps, the fault was with her; maybe she was not presenting her case very well. His silence doubled her entreaties and His withdrawal drew her more strongly toward Him. "Have mercy on me. Pity me, pity!" she called. She had

reached the lowest depths of despair and had nothing more to lose. She fell before Him in worship, with head bowed low and eloquence in her clasped hands. "Lord, help me" was her artless plea.

Again the Lord breaks His silence, this time with words that appear so cutting, so final: "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (verse 26, N.E.B.).

Did the disciples hear correctly? Did she hear aright? Did He call her a dog? Was there worse to come? Was this the death knell to her hopes?

Something in His tone of voice told her to turn this apparent slight to her advantage, and with her native gift for repartee she let the words fall into the severe silence.

And then she countered: "I know, Lord, that I am only a heathen dog, and I'm willing to be a dog if I can have a dog's portion, the crumbs. I'm not asking for a loaf or even a morsel, just a crumb. One tiny portion of Your power would be enough for all my need."

Kuria was still at His feet.

She was still pleading with eyes, hands, and voice—magnificent persistence!

Still her faith refused to accept denial.

Then in a voice warm with heaped-up kindness and love for this alien woman the Master commended her for her faith and answered her prayers. "Kuria, you have great faith. Your request is granted. Your daughter is healed." The words fell like rain on a parched desert. This was balm from Gilead. It was as though the sun suddenly appeared from behind leaden clouds, bringing light and warmth and a lifting of her spirits. Now He sounded like the Jesus of whom she had heard, who had only kind words and abundant healing for all. This was the One who would not break a bruised reed or quench the smoking flax.

Johannes Bengel, the Lutheran New Testament scholar, remarks that Jesus marveled at only two things, great faith and great unbelief (Luke 7:9; Mark 6:6). This woman's monumental faith in the face of all odds caused Him to marvel, "Kuria, great is thy faith!"

Kuria had ignored all the barriers across her way, or had turned them to her advantage. When there was nothing left and in utter helplessness she worshiped in submission, she reached the place to which the Master had been leading her. He had in mind for her far more than she had ever thought of. Not only did He

provide healing for her daughter, He gave her healing for her own soul. Though she would have been satisfied with just crumbs, He wanted above all to supply her from His table, where there was "bread enough and to spare."

Kuria thought she was pursuing the Lord, while in reality He was, as always, the Divine Pursuer. He awaited only her realization of her helpless emptiness. Prayer is for the helpless.

That memorable morning when she left home in search of healing for her demon-possessed child, she had no thought of finding anything for her own soul. But she found a Saviour, and with Him the assurance of peace, light, and the wonderful freedom of the gospel.

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---

Martin Luther said, "We pray for silver, but God often gives us gold instead."

This was a day of glorious bounty. A child was freed from the demons that imprisoned her mind. A mother found release from intolerable burdens, and freedom from the tyranny of heathen worship. The disciples saw demonstrated the all-encompassing salvation Jesus had come to give regardless of national or denominational labels. Ellen White comments that Kuria "departed, acknowledging her Saviour."<sup>1</sup>

At times when we seek fellowship with Jesus we almost feel His actual presence. Why is it not always so? Why does He sometimes appear to treat us as He did Kuria? We come with all our urgent pleas. He says nothing to us, and we become spiritually dry. Our prayers gather vehemence and volume, but still

(Continued on page 24)

# Sickness in a bottle

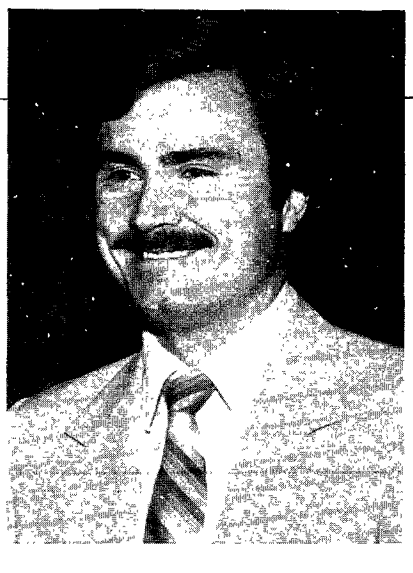
**G**eorge is an outstanding citizen, a pillar of the community in almost every respect. He makes a good living, has a nice family, and is a lay leader at his church. However, things have not been going well at home. Increasingly concerned about his drinking, George's wife has threatened him with divorce unless things change. Frightened, George turns to his pastor for advice, and he promptly informs George that excessive drinking is sinful and that he should "cut it out." Unfortunately George cannot simply cut it out. He has crossed the invisible line. George suffers from the potentially fatal disease called alcoholism.<sup>1</sup>

## **Alcoholism pervades America**

The above story sounds familiar to every counselor who deals with alcoholism (or dependence on other mood-altering chemicals), because alcoholism has risen to epidemic levels in this country. Alcoholism is a "democratic disease"; its victims can be male or female, young or old, successful or unsuccessful.

Some alcoholics drink daily. Others only "allow" themselves one bout a week. But there is a common denominator. All alcoholics both need to drink and are unable to control their drinking.<sup>2</sup> Currently, in the United States, one in ten who attempt social drinking will develop alcoholism. Churches that take a stand against drinking have, naturally, fewer drinkers per capita than the average population. However, the members of those churches who violate their

**"I have never been involved with a church in which alcoholism was not present," asserts the author. He suggests ways to recognize this problem, examines its causes, and points toward effective treatment. The first in a two-part series.**



*Tim Pierce pastors the Detroit Lakes Seventh-day Adventist church in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.*

beliefs and attempt social drinking face a risk factor not of one in ten, but of one in two.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, I have never been involved with a church, as either a layperson or a pastor, in which alcoholism was not present. It may have been hidden, but it was there. Conservative estimates place the number of alcoholics in the United States at ten million. Alcoholism exacts a terrible price. The death rate from all causes among alcoholics is two and one-half times that of the normal population. The rate of death by accident exceeds the norm by seven times.<sup>4</sup> And these figures do not take into account the nondrinkers physically injured by drinkers; nor do they reflect the massive emotional damage the families of alcoholics suffer. Clearly, pastors need an awareness of what alcoholism is and how it works in order to meet the needs of their flocks effectively.

## **How alcoholism begins**

To understand the problem drinker's plight, we must discover how alcoholism begins. Basically, alcohol allures because "it works, and it works every time."<sup>5</sup> The future alcoholic soon discovers that whatever his mood, ingesting alcohol makes him feel better. With it he can brighten a bad day or enhance a good day. Graph number one demonstrates the effect.

"The X represents the mood state of the subject before he begins drinking. A few drinks bring on a dramatic change that tends rapidly toward feelings of euphoria. He "sobers up," or returns to the normal state, as his body processes the alcohol. Naturally the positive effect is even more pronounced if the subject begins the drinking episode in a nega-

tive, or depressed, state.<sup>6</sup> The very dangerous attraction of alcohol is that the drinker can produce the positive mood swing at will, with no more trouble than a stop at the local liquor store.

Certainly, overdoing it brings obvious disadvantages—hangovers, injuries, and embarrassments. But the drinker can readily deal with these by the “never again (until the next time)” attitude he characteristically takes. However, something else happens at a far more subtle level. As his alcohol-induced euphoria fades, the drinker’s mood tends to fall below the level it held when he began to drink. As graph number two indicates, sobriety becomes decreasingly desirable.<sup>7</sup>

Naturally, as the drinker begins the drift toward the negative end of the scale he ingests increasing amounts of alcohol to find euphoria. But the euphoria that originally motivated his drinking becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. In fact, the later stages of alcoholism finds the individual drinking simply to return to what was once his normal mood state. (See graph number three.) At this point, apart from the chemical, life seems unbearable.<sup>8</sup>

Now the subject begins to drink at what he once considered inappropriate times (mornings, at work, while driving, et cetera). Alcohol has become his “best friend.” Apart from it, the alcoholic feels lost. He can no longer choose—he now feels that he *must* have the very thing that is destroying his life.

### Symptoms of addiction

Although addiction to alcohol produces myriads of symptoms, they fall into seven basic categories:

1. Excessive and inappropriate use, such as the morning “eye-opener.”
2. Harmful consequences, such as bent fenders and offended friends, from drinking episodes.
3. Loss of control—just one becomes a dozen.
4. Good intentions, such as “never again” or “I’ll quit tomorrow.”
5. Denial. (I once knew an individual who would admit that anyone who behaved as he did must have a drinking problem. But when asked if he had a problem, his answer was a clenched-teeth no. Denial in its various forms is a central issue in

recovery. We will examine it more closely in the next article.)

6. Progressive maladjustment. The individual finds it increasingly difficult to function effectively at work, home, etc.

7. Repeated occurrences of the above.<sup>1</sup>

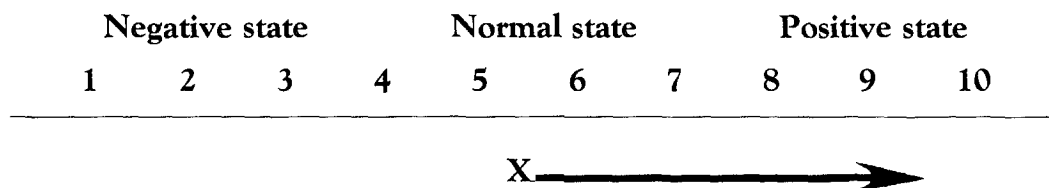
(One readily available diagnostic tool can be found in appendix B of Toby Drews’s book *Getting Them Sober*.<sup>10</sup> This series of specific questions was designed to help determine the likelihood of dependency.)

### Past approaches to treatment

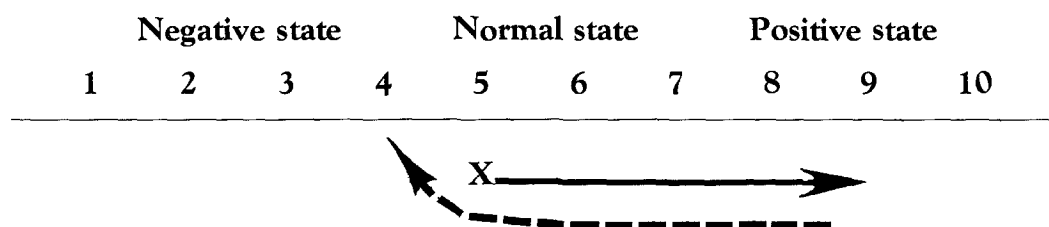
Three different models have guided those who have tried to help alcoholics defeat their problem. The first, and oldest, is the moral model. It views alcoholism as a sin and simply says the drinker must stop. It points out that nobody forced the alcoholic to drink. At some point in the past he made choices that led to alcoholism.<sup>11</sup> And so the alcoholic is responsible for his own condition—and its correction.

But the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous notes, “Though there is no

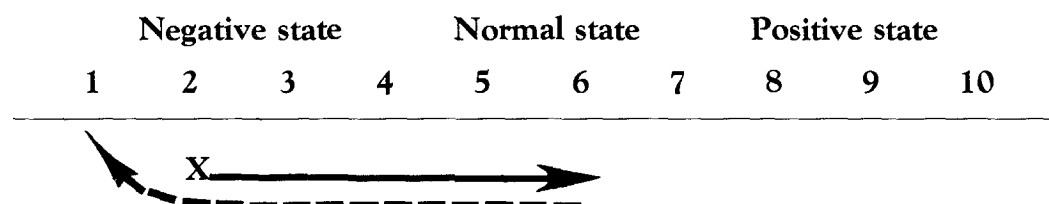
Graph 1



Graph 2



Graph 3



way of proving it, we believe that early in our drinking careers most of us could have stopped drinking. But the difficulty is that few alcoholics have enough desire to stop while there is still yet time."<sup>12</sup>

The major problem of the moral model is that once someone has become alcoholic, he does not possess the energy of will necessary for change and recovery. (That energy must come from a "Higher Power.") In fact, this approach is most often counterproductive because it adds to the guilt that the average alcoholic already carries. And the alcoholic knows one surefire way of relieving that kind of emotional pain.

Others rely on the psychological model. They hold that people take mood-altering chemicals to escape the emotional pain from some past traumatic event.<sup>13</sup> Once the alcoholic identifies and deals with the source of his pain, the alcoholism will "go away." However, there is simply no evidence that this is the case.<sup>14</sup> And this view presents three additional problems. First, it creates a sort of permission for use. The alcoholic can excuse himself by saying things like, "Yes, I drink too much. But it is my parents' fault—they abused me when I was a child." Second, the psychological model fails to take into account that mood-altering chemicals create their own form of insanity. The person who is under the influence of alcohol is not himself. Consequently, treatment of that individual without first establishing sobriety does not effectively help the real person. Third, it may lead the alcoholic to believe that once the emotional problem is dealt with he can safely resume social drinking. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In comparison to the other approaches, the disease model has proved to be extremely effective in treating alcoholism. Simply put, it views chemical dependency as "an identifiable illness—a pathological entity in and of itself—and [states] that it is a primary problem, not secondary to either psychiatric or moral problems."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the alcoholic has made moral choices. But even if he chooses to do so, he cannot quit. Perhaps he experienced emotional trauma. But even if that trauma was addressed, his drinking would continue. Questions of how, or why, or who is to blame are secondary to recovery. The alcoholism itself is the primary problem. It is to drinking what lung cancer is to smoking.

It must be dealt with directly if the victim is to survive. As the next article in this series will show, we must confront the drinker's alcoholism and aid him to sobriety before we can address his spiritual or psychological needs.

The disease model of treatment also recognizes that while alcoholism can be put into remission it can never be cured. "Chemical dependency is a chronic illness. It never goes away. Once developed it continues for the remainder of a person's life, and there is no known cure. It can be arrested or inactivated, however, through appropriate treatment which teaches affected individuals how to remain chemically free."<sup>16</sup>

In short, the problem is always there. In Alcoholics Anonymous language, the alcoholic must find a power greater than himself that can restore him to sanity. Without that power the alcoholism will come out of remission with vengeance. Tests such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) verify this by revealing that alcoholics retain an elevated chemical dependency pattern even after many years of sobriety.<sup>17</sup> The disease model works. Hazelden Foundation reports a significant improvement in 75 percent of the clients treated under this approach.<sup>18</sup>

### Hope for healing

Hazelden is not alone. By March of 1976, Alcoholics Anonymous reported a worldwide membership of more than 1 million in twenty-eight thousand groups active in more than ninety countries. And what pastor has not witnessed the healing that comes with a spiritual awakening?

There is indeed hope. The concluding article of this series will deal with intervention and recovery. As it reveals, the road to healing is essentially a spiritual one. At first the alcoholic may not understand—but he does not have to. When he risks reaching out to God, he will find the strength for recovery. "What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vernon E. Johnson, *I'll Quit Tomorrow*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1980), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hazelden Foundation, "The New Awareness," *The Caring Community Series*, vol. 1 (Center City, Minn.: Hazelden Foundation, 1975), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Raymond Larson, Family Freedom Center, Detroit Lakes, Minn., March 12, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Hazelden Foundation, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Lecture by Brad Laabs, Family Freedom

Center, Detroit Lakes, Minn., May 22, 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Hazelden Foundation, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Toby Rice Drews, *Getting Them Sober*, vol. 1 (South Plainfield, N. J.: Bridge Publishing, Inc., 1980), appendix B.

<sup>11</sup> Hazelden Foundation, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3d ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1976), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Hazelden Foundation, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Brad Laabs, Family Freedom Center, Detroit Lakes, Minn., May 5, 1984.

<sup>18</sup> Hazelden Foundation, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 28.

## Content with crumbs?

From page 21

no word. At such times we find it difficult to believe that we are secure in Him, or even drawn to Him, or that He has any spiritual blessings to give us.

If He were always easily accessible, easily elicited, His presence would not be so richly rewarding. It is in these very times of dry silence that we grow into a sense of our helplessness and impotence. They prepare us to receive the treasure of assurance He longs to give.

This materialistic age desperately needs us all to be godly women, women who daily feel our helplessness to meet all the demands made upon us and who depend totally on Jesus' sustaining power. He is the bountiful giver to us all. He delights to surprise us, and when we are thinking only of crumbs He gives a spiritual feast.

"Then in the hour of our desperate need

When we seek answers to our anxious plea

Our empty words seem echoes all in vain.

'I spoke to God; He never speaks to me.'

"Find that silence deep within yourself

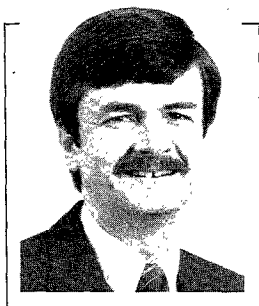
Where other voices never can intrude,

For God will speak to those who learn to hear,

Who wait for Him in silent solitude."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Richard R. Smith, "In Silence," *Christian Herald* (March, 1985), p. 17.



# Martha and the Beast

**H**ow many times have I started a day of ministry with a brief season of prayer ended with the laconic plea "Lord, help me today to do *Your will in Your way!*" then rushed off to attack my mental list of "must do" items with a resolution to spend more time with the Lord "later"? I fear I am by nature more of a Martha than a Mary. My natural workaholic temperament gets great satisfaction from seeing jobs finished, and rails against the part of me that says, "Stop! It's time to sit and learn at the feet of Jesus!"

Early in my ministry I was afraid to be seen sitting down without an open book in hand, for fear that someone would think I was loafing. Then one day I discovered that Abraham, the friend of God, had his closest encounter with the Lord one day while he was sitting in the shade. The Bible doesn't say whether Abraham was napping or meditating, but when he looked up he saw three men, one of whom was the Lord Himself. (See Genesis 18.)

Immediately he jumped up and invited the men to stay, then ran to put Sarah and his servants to work getting a sumptuous meal ready. Abraham must have gone back and conversed with the Lord for as long as it took his household staff to prepare a meal from a whole calf and eighty-four cups of flour. Sarah kept herself busy in the kitchen, and it is here that this story has a fascinating parallel not only with the Martha-Mary story of Luke 10 but also with one of Revelation's most important prophecies about the end of time.

Sarah has much in common with Martha in that both of them got stuck working in the kitchen to *serve* the Lord while the other chief character in each story had time to sit and listen to the

Lord. But Sarah's story is especially interesting because it goes on to show the results of her busyness for the Lord. Later that afternoon when God made the most wonderful promise of miraculous providence that Sarah could ever hope to hear, she laughed it off!

Was her faith in God's ability to provide her with a son weaker than Abraham's because she had spent her time working for the Lord instead of listening to Him? If it had been socially acceptable for her to leave the pots and pans and join the male conversation, might her faith in God have been stronger?

There is an important lesson for me here, because it comes much more naturally to me to busy myself "serving the Lord" than to take time to sit and listen for His instructions and promises to provide.

And it is here that I see an important parallel to Revelation 13. That chapter predicts that at the end of time, when everyone has to decide whether or not to accept the mark of the beast, the two-horned beast's main coercive thrust will be to take away the buying and selling rights of those who reject the mark (verse 17). In other words, those who refuse the mark will have to trust solely in God to provide their earthly needs when the beast's decree is enforced.

The real danger I perceive in getting "trapped in the kitchen" with Martha and Sarah, doing good works for the Lord, is not that I will see the works as meritorious, but rather that I will allow working for God to become more important than cultivating a trusting relationship with Him.

The contrast between the saved and the lost in Revelation 13 and 14 is drawn between those who follow the Lamb and receive God's imprint upon their minds (chap. 14:4, 1) and those who bow to a

*man-made* image and receive the beast's imprint upon the mind or hand (chap. 13:15-17.) (That the beast's number typifies the incompleteness of man's works is a related fact that space does not permit my delving into here.)

The challenge I see here for myself is the challenge of maintaining my walk with the Lamb, when by nature I get such satisfaction from being out in the kitchen with Martha and Sarah. Certainly busyness and worship are both important, but they must be kept in proper balance.

I was spiritually blessed by the part I had in preparing this issue with its emphasis on the pastor's devotional life. My own devotional life was strengthened as I read and reread the articles, and I hope yours will be too.—K.R.W.

## Fair, fat, and 40

**B**eing somewhat precocious and a natural born worrier I entered my mid-life crisis shortly after I turned 30. The trauma that birthday brought was quite unexpected. Ten years have now passed. I "celebrated," a bit more apprehensively, my fortieth birthday a few weeks ago. That, and an editorial due for MINISTRY's January issue, occasioned some reflections on the passing of time and on aging.

I suppose that even for the Christian, the fear of death lies at the roots of the fear of aging. (Scripture calls death an enemy and says it loses its sting only at the resurrection.) But even aside from death, aging holds its anxieties. I don't look forward to the inevitable physical and mental deterioration.

That, however, has not yet become a

problem. What bothers me now is the narrowing of my world—the realization that my options for the future are steadily dwindling, that my time is not unlimited, that some of the optimism and hopes of my youth are unrealistic and will not be satisfied. There's so much I'd like to do, to experience. But the older I grow, the more unlikely it becomes that I'll be able to fit it all in.

My musings led to curiosity as to what Solomon, the "wisest man who ever lived," might have to say about aging. I read through the book of Ecclesiastes, and at first found it rather depressing. The Teacher doesn't offer much hope. "Meaningless! Meaningless! . . . Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.' What does a man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever" (chap. 1:2-4).<sup>\*</sup> "It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart" (chap. 7:2). "Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. . . . The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise. . . . No man knows when his hour will come" (chap. 9:9-12).

But Solomon's reputation was not ill-founded. In a theme that recurs throughout his book, he suggests three secrets of a contented life: Enjoy present blessings, find satisfaction in your work, and don't worry about or even reflect too intensely upon the future. (See chaps. 9:1, 10; 2:24; 3:12, 13; and 5:20.)

Solomon summarizes his conclusion as to how to live a full life in the familiar words "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (chap. 12:13), and in the next verse adds a reminder of the judgment we must all face. (Probably not coincidentally, Heaven's final appeal to men bears a striking resemblance to Solomon's summary of man's duty. Compare Rev. 14:7, 12 with Eccl. 12:13, 14.)

Jesus in His sermon on the mount gives similar advice to that of the Old Testament sage. Noting that worry is futile because it cannot add a single hour to our lives, Jesus directs us to invest our energies first in God's kingdom and His righteousness. And Jesus counsels us not to worry about the future, but to live one

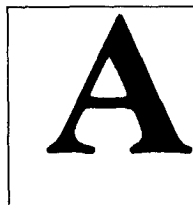
day at a time. (See Matt. 6:27, 33, 34.)

So what have I learned about being happy though aging? With no guarantees as to consistent practice of these ideals, I'll try to maintain a clear conscience, keep myself involved in something interesting and meaningful at all times, allow myself to enjoy the good things God's world still does offer, learn to be content with my circumstances (see Phil. 4:10-13), and look beyond old age and death to the Christian hope.

Anyone have a copy of *Life Begins at Forty* they'd be willing to lend for a few weeks?—D.C.J.

<sup>\*</sup> All the Scripture quotations in this editorial are from *The New International Version*.

## SDA telecasts in 1986



As a member of our Seventh-day Adventist Media Center board for the past five years, I am thrilled to see our facilities in Thousand Oaks, California, being used for the production of top quality radio and television programs for the spreading of the gospel. The television section of our outreach is gearing up for major new advances in 1986. Adventist Television Ministries—comprising our three telecasts: *Breath of Life*, *Faith for Today*, and *It Is Written*—is becoming one of the church's most powerful gospel seed-sowing tools.

*Breath of Life*, presently on twenty-one stations, will greatly expand its audience in 1986 by procuring time on the Black Entertainment Network, a satellite system with outlets throughout the United States. The telecast also recently secured releases on local stations in Jefferson City, Missouri, and on the island of Jamaica.

*Christian Lifestyle Magazine* is the title of the new series developed by *Faith for Today* last year. This interview-type program is now appearing on forty-one stations and on the Lifetime Cable Network in the United States and Canada. Viewers are responding enthusiastically to the new Bible course

follow-up materials designed to complement CLM programs. Demand for *Christian Lifestyle Magazine* is ever increasing.

An advertising blitz is planned for 1986, built on the successful publicity program carried out last November in Portland, Oregon. Bus posters, a two-page *TV Guide* ad, and radio spots promoted the *Christian Lifestyle Magazine* telecast throughout that metropolitan area and dramatically increased the number of viewers.

The *It Is Written* telecast, broadcast on eighty-three stations in North America, is viewed by more than one million individuals each week. *It Is Written* has completed new programming for 1986 aimed at appealing to viewers' felt needs. A new miniseries will deal with three of the great killers we face today: cancer, heart disease, and alcoholism. Speaker/director George Vandeman will interview medical experts who give practical advice on how we can "dodge the cancer bullet," improve the "state of the heart," and help those "battling the bottle." Other new programs will aim at helping people adjust to the loss of a loved one, find their "irreplaceable role" in marriage, and face persistent, hidden sins.

A miniseries on the book of Revelation will be telecast by *It Is Written* nationwide starting this month. The series, entitled *The Rise and Fall of Antichrist*, begins January 12 and will run for eight weeks, ending March 2. *It Is Written* telecasts on the subject of prophecy have been drawing a large response. There is a growing interest in eschatology among Christian and non-Christian audiences.

The present miniseries covers several topics of vital interest today: the problem of human suffering, the nature of eternal life and eternal death, the origin of the Antichrist, the current attempt to build a "Christian nation," and the nature of earth's final conflict.

Pastors should find the new programming developed by the Adventist television ministries to be a useful teaching tool in their evangelistic efforts.

Outreach of this type is what each of the telecasts at our Media Center strives to make possible. Aiding the local pastor in his work is their bottom line. Your enthusiastic support of the Television Ministries Offering on February 8 will greatly help them in achieving this end.—J.R.S.



## How science discovered Creation

**I**n the first article of this series we shared the fact that theoretical physicists today are making great strides toward understanding the origin of our universe. We discussed the grand unified theories that attempt to unite the understanding of the four basic forces in the universe into one set of laws. And we concluded by observing that many physicists are coming to the conclusion that all the matter in our universe very probably was created from nothing in less than a second's time.

Conservative Bible students have, of course, believed in such an ex nihilo creation all along, and they should welcome the long-awaited corroboration now coming from scientific observation. But it takes a long step of faith to move from belief in ex nihilo creation to belief in the Genesis account of the origin of life on our planet. In fact, the mere belief that everything came from nothing does not in itself have anything to do with belief in God or a creator. And physicists who would rather not evoke the supernatural to explain the natural are more than willing to assume that such creation from nothing came about as a mere accidental quantum fluctuation with no cause whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

But when other recent developments in physics are added to belief in ex nihilo creation, the case for an intelligent and involved creator becomes stronger, and the arguments of those who choose to banish the supernatural from their equations begin to require a longer leap of faith than the arguments of those who

are willing to accept a creator if the evidence points to one.

Some of the arguments in favor of belief in a creator are revampings of familiar arguments that have been around since before Thomas Aquinas systematized the five a posteriori proofs for the existence of God. Others are as new as the results from yesterday's experiments at atom-smashing particle accelerators. Together they form a convincing case for belief in a Creator who cares.

### Reality demands an observer

Perhaps one of the more esoteric arguments calling for belief in a creator is the one deduced from the logical extension of a little-understood but thoroughly documented aspect of quantum theory. It is based on Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.

Simply stated, this principle postulates that it is impossible to predict exactly where a given atom or subatomic particle will be at any time. The reason is that it is possible to answer only one of two important questions about any atomic particle: Either you can answer the question of how fast it is moving, or you can answer where it is. But it is impossible to answer both questions.

The extension of this well-documented and repeatedly proven principle leads physicists to conclude that atomic and subatomic particles do not actually exist anywhere until they are observed existing there! While that may seem a bit hard to swallow, it is a fundamental principle of the quantum theory, and it has been demonstrated in the laboratory by many different types of experiments.

An oft-used illustration of this principle calls upon the common phenomenon of fluorescence observed in television picture tubes. The picture on a television screen glows because certain fluorescent compounds inside the tube give off light

when bombarded by electrons. In the neck of the tube a hot tungsten filament gives off billions of electrons per second, and these are directed toward the screen by charged grids that direct the electrons to the front of the tube in patterns determined by the signal fed to the grid.

The screen reproduces a sharp, predictable picture only because of the law of averages. Because so many electrons are directed in the desired path, enough of them arrive where they are supposed to to create a picture. But it would be impossible to predict where, when, or if any individual electron would arrive at the screen.

It is impossible to predict where a given electron will arrive because it is impossible to know both its position and rate of travel.

The reason for this is that all subatomic particles exhibit the properties of both waves and particles. In other words, in some ways they behave like the ripples on a pond caused by a falling drop of water. In other ways they behave like the drop of water that caused the ripples. And it is not fair to ask whether an electron is a wave or a particle unless you are prepared to, by your very observation, make it into one or the other.

This fact has been recognized, at least as it relates to photons—the most elementary unit of electromagnetic radiation—ever since the early nineteenth century. But its implications for the nature of reality and causality have only recently come to be widely recognized.

In the example of the electron emitted from the picture tube filament, if that electron should strike a wire along the way and be deflected, it would be impossible to know in which way it was deflected until it was observed either to the right or left of the wire. And quantum theory actually goes so far as to state that the electron actually went to both sides, and only our act of observing

*Daniel Lazich was recently appointed principal engineer of the kinetic energy weapons project of the United States Strategic Defense Command. Kenneth R. Wade is assistant editor of MINISTRY.*

it on one side or the other forces it to materialize at that point. If that seems difficult to accept, remember that electrons exhibit characteristics of both waves and particles. A wave would divide and go to either side. A particle would not.

The mysteries evoked by this uncertainty principle are so sublime as to be almost unfathomable. Since the route of the electron is unknowable until it is observed, and since the probability of observing the electron either to the right

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**In a very real sense we have found light at the other end of Galileo's telescope. Astronomers tell us that observations confirm what creationists would expect: The universe is more highly ordered than could be expected to result from chance.**

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or left is equally great, our observation can in a sense be said to not only discover but actually to *decide* which direction the electron went.

When the principle is applied to photons that travel for thousands of years on their way to earth, the earthbound observer might actually be said to rewrite the epic history of the photon simply by choosing to record its arrival as either a wave or a particle. Those unwilling to allow that we can rewrite history solve the riddle in a different way. They simply say that the photon never really existed as either a particle or a wave until we observed it here on earth and forced it to quantify itself into one or the other.<sup>2</sup>

The mystery deepens even further when you realize that the same thing is true of all atomic and subatomic particles. They literally do not exist until they are observed! The orderly world of cause and effect that we observe is founded upon a capricious and chaotic, totally unpredictable subatomic world.

Another example may be observed in a lump of uranium. Uranium decays into

lead at a highly predictable rate. Thus it is possible to assign a half-life to uranium. The half-life figure is the number of years it takes for half of a given lump to decay into lead. But if you could isolate one atom from the lump, it would be impossible to predict when it would decay. And, in fact, you would not know whether it was a uranium atom or a lead atom until you observed it closely. And actually it would not even *be* either a uranium or lead atom until you observed it closely. Before your act of observation it would actually exist as both, and would be forced to become one or the other only by your act of observation!<sup>3</sup>

Admittedly all this theory seems a bit flighty and abstract. And if you find these postulates of quantum theory difficult to accept at first reading, you are not alone. In fact, you are in the good company of no less a genius than Albert Einstein. He fought against the implications of quantum theory until his dying day because he felt that its implications were too shattering to his conception of reality and creation. His running debate with Niels Bohr, one of quantum theory's leading proponents, continued for many years, but Einstein was unable to disprove any facet of quantum theory.

In the words of physicist Paul Davies: "The Bohr-Einstein debate is not just one of detail. It concerns the entire conceptual structure of science's most successful theory. At the heart of the subject lies the bald question: Is an atom a *thing*, or just an abstract construct of imagination useful for explaining a wide range of observations? If an atom *really* exists as an independent entity, then at the very least it should have a location and a definite motion. But the quantum theory denies this. It says that you can have one or the other but not both."<sup>4</sup>

### **Quantum and causality**

But what does all this discussion of quanta and subatomic physics have to do with questions of causality and creation?

A lot, really, when you apply quantum theory's implications to ultimate questions of reality. Those who best understand quantum theory's implications are now saying that our universe *really* exists only because it is observed. In phraseology reminiscent of an Orwellian 1984 scenario, physicist John Archibald Wheeler describes his "recognition physics" theory of the past, present, and reality: "We are wrong to think of the past as having a definite existence "out

there." The past exists only insofar as it is present in the records of today. And what those records are is determined by what questions we ask.' This is the special sense in which the act of observation is 'an elementary act of creation.'"<sup>5</sup>

If, then, our best powers of observation and calculation force us to accept the fact that our universe would not exist if it were not observed, does this not in and of itself necessitate an overall observer who is able to bring everything into the sharp focus of reality?

If such an implication were the product of an ardent creationist's musings, it would be suspect. But Wheeler himself concludes that "it may be that we could not have anything that would be meaningful existence in default of some community of [intelligent biological or mechanical] observers.'"<sup>6</sup> Other physicists have concluded that quantum theory demands that an overall intelligence has to be observing our universe in order to "collapse" it into reality.<sup>7</sup>

And when you put the necessity of an observer together with the realization that the universe appears to have been created from nothing, what is there to prevent you from going the next logical step to the assumption that the overall observer is also the creator?

Admittedly, many scientists are not willing to take this next logical step. Whether they are motivated by prejudice or simply by a desire to figure out a "better" answer to the riddle of reality, they have proposed various solutions. One postulates that there is no such thing as one reality, but that genuine reality is composed of every one of the nonillions of possibilities for reality that ever could have occurred, and that we are simply locked into one branch of this infinite reality.

Other scientists admit to the necessity of an observer but doubt that the observer must be intelligent or able to interact with its universe.

Here is where two other recently substantiated facts about our universe come into the picture and add their weight on the side of belief in a creation by an intelligent, caring creator.

### **The orderly universe**

The overall orderliness of our universe has been cited as one evidence for the existence of God for centuries. But recent observations by astronomers have given far more weight to this argument

than it had in Aquinas' day. Before the days of spectroscopes, radio telescopes, and microwave communication, mankind's conception of the universe's orderliness was founded merely upon day-to-day observation. Since no one had ever seen two stars collide, it was assumed that the stars had been placed in orbit about the earth in such a way as to preclude collision.

When Galileo challenged one tenet of this conception of earth's relationship to the stars, the battle line between scientific observation and religious persuasion was quickly drawn. Other early telescopic observations also seemed to go against the comfortable, geocentric, ordered cosmos ideas that had kept humans smugly confident of their importance to the Creator who had placed them at the center of the universe.

But today the battle against acceptance of scientific teaching concerning our place in the universe is no longer being fought. We've come to accept the fact that our solar system is just one among a hundred billion in a galaxy which is one of several hundred billion in the universe.

And in a very real sense we have found light at the other end of Galileo's telescope. For astronomers now tell us that their observations confirm what creationists would expect: The universe is a very highly ordered system, much more highly ordered than could possibly be expected to result from a mere chance big bang.

This observed fact has challenged the best scientific minds for several generations. If the creation of the universe were a random event, the material that emerged from the big bang would have to be in thermal equilibrium (maximum entropy) with no order at all.

So how did the universe get into the state of high order (low entropy) that we observe today? Reluctant to invoke divine selection, scientists have proposed a number of accidental possibilities. Theoretically, it can be expected that an orderly system will eventually appear out of maximum disorder. However, the time required for this to happen by chance is estimated to be at least 10,000,000,000<sup>80</sup> years.<sup>8</sup> Astrophysicists' best guess as to the time elapsed since the universe began put the figure at no more than 20 billion ( $2 \times 10^9$ ) years.

Related to this study of entropy and order is the study of the probability of a big bang yielding a universe such as we

observe. The most probable result of a big bang would be a universe composed of millions of black holes and very few stars, because gravity would naturally congeal most of the matter of the universe into masses too dense to emit light. The probability of our universe emerging from the big bang in the state we now observe has been variously computed to be one chance in 10,000,000,000<sup>30</sup> or one chance in 10,000,000,000<sup>1241</sup>.<sup>9</sup> All in all, the probability that what we see came into existence by chance is very slim indeed. It seems it would take a giant leap of faith in fate to believe our universe could come into existence without an intelligent designer. And keep in mind that these physicists' figures do not include factors for the probability of intelligent life evolving in the universe once it arrived in its present state.

### Fundamental constants

The final piece in the puzzle of origins that science has supplied recently is the understanding of the fundamental physical constants that make up the laws of nature. One example is the strength of the strong nuclear force that binds the proton and neutron together in the nucleus of deuterium, an essential link in the nuclear reaction ongoing in the sun and other stars. If this force were infinitesimally weaker, the sun would be drastically altered and possibly would flame out.

Another example of the delicate balancing present in our universe is seen in the relationship between gravity and electromagnetic forces. The majority of the stars in the universe belong to the main sequence of stars like our sun. On one end of this sequence are the blue giants, and at the other end are the red dwarfs. These stars are held together by gravity, while electromagnetic force allows them to radiate their energy. If the force of gravity were to be altered by only one part in  $10^{40}$ , all the stars would become either red dwarfs or blue giants.<sup>10</sup> Our sun could not exist, and neither could life as we know it on earth.

Paul Davies contends: "The delicate fine-tuning in the values of the constants, necessary so that the various different branches of physics can dovetail so felicitously, might be attributed to God. It is hard to resist the impression that the present structure of the universe, apparently so sensitive to minor alterations in the numbers, has been

rather carefully thought out. . . . The seemingly miraculous concurrence of numerical values that nature has assigned to her fundamental constants must remain the most compelling evidence for an element of cosmic design."<sup>11</sup>

### Conclusions

What, then, are we to conclude from the growing body of scientific evidence about the origin of our universe? Has science indeed discovered Creation, as the title of these two articles implies? In a strict sense, of course not. But in a loose sense, yes. The mounting weight of evidence has persuaded many astrophysicists and cosmologists that it is not only possible but probable that our universe was created from nothing by an intelligent designer.

But in the end, does that really have anything to do with Genesis 1? Does acceptance of ex nihilo creation several

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**The evidence has persuaded many astrophysicists that it is not only possible but probable that our universe was created from nothing by an intelligent designer.**

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billion years ago have anything to do with the Bible's seven-day Creation week?

Yes. For several reasons.

1. If we can accept that a creator created and organized all the matter in multiplied billions of galaxies in less time than it takes a light wave to cross the street, surely creating organisms on this earth would be a small problem for such a being.

2. This possibility, combined with other evidences for the inspiration of the Bible, gives us reason to believe its account of how things began.

3. Genesis 1 in no way denies the possibility that God created the universe long before He placed life on this planet. And the view that our universe has a finite beginning does not preclude God's

eternal existence. The Creator had to exist before the Creation.

4. The geocentric view of the Genesis 1 creation is, according to quantum theory, the only reality that counts for our earth. If the sun and moon became visible on earth's surface on the fourth day of Creation week, then for all purposes of practical reality, they came into existence on that day. As far as life on earth is concerned, they literally did not exist previously because they were not observed previously! Genesis 1 simply relates the story of Creation as it would have been observed from the surface of the earth.

5. The very fact that intelligent life on this earth has an innate need to worship and a natural striving to discover God, when added to other evidences of Creation, makes it easy to conclude with Augustine, "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee."

We have a long way to go before we can say that science and the Bible have been totally reconciled. But the progression of knowledge, as we perceive our universe ever more clearly, is tending toward agreement rather than disagreement. We still see only through a glass darkly, but as our tools for viewing the universe become more and more refined we can expect to see more and more confirmation of God's creatorship.

And on that final day when Christ comes to remove the veil from our eyes, what a spectacle of His eternal workmanship will greet our senses!

<sup>1</sup> I see, for example, James Trefil, "The Accidental Universe," *Science Digest*, June, 1984, pp. 52-55, 100.

<sup>2</sup> John Gliedman, "Turning Einstein Upside Down," *Science Digest*, October, 1984, pp. 39, 96, provides an interesting thought experiment to illustrate the photon riddle.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), pp. 102, 103.

<sup>5</sup> In Gliedman, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Brackets in original.

<sup>7</sup> See Davies, *op. cit.*, chapter 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Penrose, "Singularities and Time-asymmetry," in S. W. Hawking and W. Israel, eds., *General Relativity: An Einstein Centenary Survey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), suggests the lower figure. Dietrick E. Thomsen, "The Quantum Universe: A Zero-Point Fluctuation?" *Science News*, Aug. 3, 1985, p. 73, reports that Frank N. Page, of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, suggests the higher one.

<sup>10</sup> Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 188. For further discussion of the complex crucial numerical relationships necessary for life to exist see Davies' book *Accidental Universe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> Davies, *God and the New Physics*, p. 189.

# Information retrieval



When I bought my computer I knew that it would soon make my sermons take on a shiny new luster far beyond anything I could achieve without such a cranial annex. In a very limited sense the dream came true in short order. In another sense it is still striving for fulfillment.

The shiny new luster that arrived early in my experience was limited to outward appearances. I loved preaching from manuscripts without pencil scratchings and eraser dandruff between the lines. With my word processing program I could add in the Friday night inspirations and reprint the whole sermon on sparkling white paper that made me feel organized and efficient.

But my dream went beyond clean paper and neat print. The luster I really wanted would derive from the computer's ability to store, sort, and retrieve information—particularly illustrations and research data. I believed that a computer data base could be just the thing I needed to file information and illustrations to bring my sermons alive.

After talking with other ministerial computer users, I've concluded that I'm not alone in this vision. But the application has been a bit slow in coming, at least for me, because the data base I first used proved to be totally inadequate in retrieval capability, too limiting, and too time-consuming.

I've hit upon a new, simpler system now, but I'm not totally satisfied with it, either. I'll share my system here. If you have a methodology that works better, I'd like to hear from you. Perhaps by working together, we can develop a system that really works for pastors.

What I do now is simply set up my word processor and printer to fit twenty-six lines (seventy-two characters wide) onto 4 x 6 cards. Then as I take research notes I put them first into an electronic file, then print them out on the cards. One advantage of having them in the electronic file is ease of search for specific references. Another is that when I write up the results of the research I can just copy directly from the file instead of retyping. And when taking multiple notes from the same source, I don't have to retype my bibliographic information; I simply use the copy function.

I have purchased an inexpensive search program that will set my computer to look through specified files for a given word. The program then develops a special file with every card that contains that word. Next I am planning to set up a method for easily putting just the card headings into a file for quicker searching. I usually head each card with multiple topic titles, so a plain alphabetical card file isn't sufficient to find all my topics.

If you're interested in seeing just how my system, developed for a CP/M computer with WordStar word processing, works, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to me here at MINISTRY, and I'll send you a complete description. If you have suggestions for a better system, or a data base that really works for preachers, I'd appreciate hearing about that, too.

I'd also like to hear from you if you'd like to be a part of a dream I have. I'd love to see a standardized data base, card-file base, or whatever, with many pastors supplying new information, illustrations, and research results that could be useful to other pastors. Let me know if you'd like to participate in that dream!

## Who needs help?

If you think you have trouble determining which of the people who come to your door really need help, you can imagine that a pastor in Las Vegas, Nevada, would hear a wide variety of hard-luck stories in a year's time. Pastor Jim McLeroy, of the First Baptist church in Las Vegas, uses a form with the following questions to help determine just what type of help his church should give.

1. Are you a church member? 2. How were you referred to us? 3. What is your need? Be specific. 4. Who is your closest relative? Relationship. 5. Where does he/she live? 6. Does he/she know of your need? 7. Are you receiving any aid from a governmental agency? What kind? 8. Have you been employed locally? Where? 9. Are you

willing to work if a job is available? 10. Do you attend church? Where? 11. What is your minister's name? 12. Have you sought help from any other church in this area? If so, where? 13. If we are unable to help you, what other options do you have? 14. If we are able to help you, how many people are involved? Please list family members. 15. Do you have some form of identification? If so, list. (Of course, there are also blanks for name, address, telephone number, and date.)

At the end of the form is the following statement: "Please remember, our church is *not* a government-assisted agency. All available resources are a result of direct donations from our congregation."

Pastor McLeroy also responded to our Parson question about help-

ing the needy. His answer appeared in the November, 1985, issue of *MINISTRY*.

## Bible study helps

The Biblical Research Institute has produced numerous small pamphlets to aid pastors and laypersons in their study of the Bible. Some of these pamphlets have appeared as special inserts in *MINISTRY*. They are still available from *MINISTRY* Services.

"On Esteeming One Day Better Than Another," by Raoul Dederen, was first published in 1971. It deals with interpretation of Romans 14:5, 6 and addresses the questions of who the "weak" are and what days Christians were esteeming or not esteeming.

"Which Version Today?" by Sakae Kubo and Walter Specht, provides a good,

concise review of the principles that should be applied in choosing a good Bible translation for reading and study. It divides many of the more recent translations into various categories and contains brief evaluations of many modern versions.

"The Unity of the Bible," by Gerhard F. Hasel, provides evidences and arguments in favor of treating the Bible as a whole rather than excerpting only a few parts to preach from. It gives special emphasis to the unity between the Old and New Testaments, and the principle of reciprocity in interpretation between the Testaments.

Order from *MINISTRY* Services, Box 217, Burtonsville, Maryland 20866. Prices are US\$1 each for individual copies and 75 cents each for orders of ten or more, postpaid.

# Ministry Professional Growth Seminars

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February 4, Miami  
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call Bob Kachenmeister  
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**Participants Receive Continuing Education Credit**

## Ascending Liability in Religious and Other Nonprofit Organizations

Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr., and Philip C. Sorensen, edited by Howard R. Griffin, Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia, 1984, 147 pages, \$14.95. Reviewed by Thomas E. Wetmore, Office of General Counsel, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The specter of ascending liability has caused grave concern to church administrators, especially since the United Methodist Church agreed to pay \$21 million in an out-of-court settlement. Claims against the church arose out of the bankruptcy of Pacific Homes Corporation, a corporation formed by the Methodist Church in California to administer a number of retirement homes. As a result of this and subsequent cases, many religious bodies could be found liable under the theory of ascending liability "for the contracts and torts of thousands of schools, hospitals, homes, colleges, and agencies." Unfortunately, the law adapted to govern the for-profit sector is increasingly applied to the nonprofit, charitable sector, despite fundamental dissimilarities.

The authors have developed a helpful commentary, giving practical guidance to ministers as well as administrators and attorneys in understanding ascending liability and formulating strategies to protect the church from liability.

This incisive legal study is of interest primarily to administrators and attorneys, but it is recommended reading for pastors as well. The essence of ascending liability is that responsibility for the effectiveness of a religious denomination's governing body begins at the base of the organizational structure, the local congregation.

## Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and Its Confrontation With American Society.

Herbert Schlossberg, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1983, 320 pages, \$14.95. Reviewed by Pastor Wayne Willey, Amesbury, Massachusetts.

This may be one of the most significant critiques of American society in this generation. Writing with a fervor

akin to that of the Old Testament prophets, Schlossberg sees the messages and methods of the prophets as providing the key to dealing with the idolatries of contemporary America. Yet this is no fundamentalist diatribe against the declining state of morality in America. Schlossberg is just as critical in his judgments of the "right" as he is of the "left." He sees both as idolatrous substitutes for Biblical Christianity, and calls for a truly Biblical remnant that refuses to be owned by any of the world's systems, but is willing to speak and obey the truth.

Schlossberg sees contemporary America bowing before the idols of history, humanity, mammon, nature, power, and religion. His strongest words seem to be directed against the idols of religion. He identifies the process by which religious institutions become idolatrous with statements such as "ecclesiastical structures that depart from the faith do so by the loss of distinctiveness, the gradual conformation of their thought and life to that of the larger community" until "the master of the American church is likely to be whatever cultural or intellectual fad has gained the ascendancy" and "there is little to distinguish what the churches say from what other institutions teach."

Schlossberg calls the church to refuse subservience to the world, and to return to the Bible, which "destroys the myths of the age, any age" by portraying God as the Lord of both history and nature—the two sources of all idols.

This book should not only be read by every pastor but should also be kept at hand for periodic review.

## Recently Published

Be Our Freedom, Lord. Edited by Terry C. Falla, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984, 376 pages, \$9.95, paper.

A collection of 220 modern English responsive prayers, readings, and litanies from every part of the world. Designed for active congregational participation, the selections are arranged according to theme, appropriate part of worship, and the church year. Indexes of titles and Scripture references, and a

thorough bibliography of sources, are included.

Ventures in Discipleship. John R. Martin, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1984, 304 pages, \$12.95, paper.

Based on Biblical material and Anabaptist insights, this book proposes to develop true concepts of discipleship in the modern church. The book is designed to be used by individuals or groups and includes individual and group exercises to aid in developing particular discipling skills.

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