

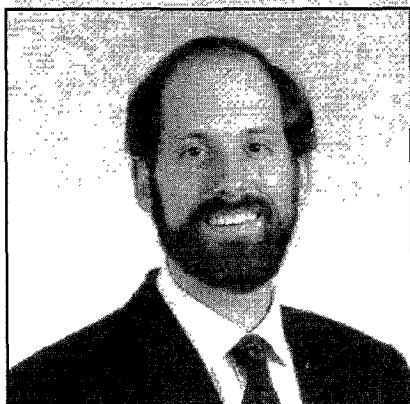
Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

May 1992



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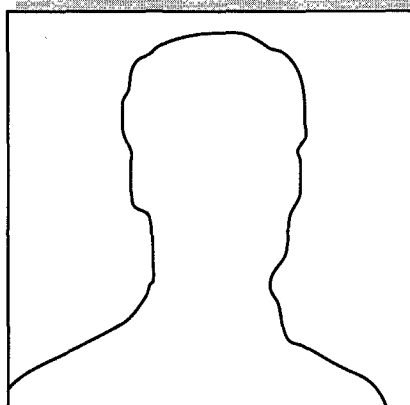
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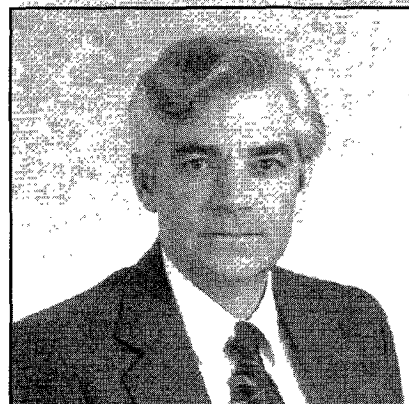
HECTOR MARTINEZ



JOSEPH JACKSON



PAULA JONES



JIM CLEVELAND

I Used To Be A Pastor

All things to all (wo)men

Helen Pearson's experience ("All Things to All [Wo]men," January 1992) is not an exception. It is even worse for those of us who are female and single. We really get no recognition from the male leadership of our churches. I can count on one hand how often in my lifetime I have had any recognition that single women in the church have problems and gifts different from men or married women. The only way I have found to cope with this issue and not get discouraged with a male-dominated church is to remind myself that my God loves and appreciates single women even though His church doesn't.—Dolores J. Adams, Gentry, Arkansas.

■ It is most unfortunate when someone feels that the worship service, of all experiences, least meets his or her needs. When Helen Pearson says that such is the case because she is a woman, I believe it reflects more on the attitude she brings to the worship service than the service itself.

She finds the worship experience less fulfilling because men "conduct" the service, "looking down" on her and her family from a raised platform (which I thought was intended to help me see the speaker from row 5). She further states that such men are "more like her father and her brother than like herself," and they put only a minority of women on the platform. She looks at such men with a critical eye to see if there is any vestige of "ministerial macho." After reading all this, I was somewhat surprised that she complains about male theologians not discussing theology with her!

I believe we as humans are more alike than we are different. Cultural differences may be a greater barrier to sharing the gospel than race or gender. Whenever we come to worship God in the spirit of a humble learner we will see the messenger not so much by

gender or race or style, but as a servant of God to whom He has entrusted a message to meet our need. Let us not rebuild the broken wall of partition (Eph. 2:14).—James Peel, Kingsport, Tennessee.

■ Helen Pearson's article was disappointing and sad. She doesn't seem to understand a difference in roles of a man and a woman in Christian conduct and service in the church. She speaks of the platform that places the speaker above the rest of us, but that is not so. The raised platform is for the convenience of seeing the one who is speaking to us.—Chris Slye, Irving, Texas.

Sex in the forbidden zone

Dr. Peter Rutter's article "Sex in the Forbidden Zone" (January 1992) is timely and long overdue. It is well written and on target. Rutter appears to imply that his resistance and nonacquiescence were because of his psychological as well as professional barriers, but one wonders whether it didn't involve some other values.

What about his spiritual life? What about his wife and family? His social relationships? He hardly touches on these influences, but were these null and void in his decision-making? Did they in no way direct him in this matter?—Charles B. Hirsch, Yucaipa, California.

■ I was shocked to read an article on such an important subject and not find in it any reference to God, spiritual strength, or personal commitment. Peter Rutter's concluding paragraph directs us to "the intact, untapped resources inside all of us." Is this actually where *Ministry's* editors believe we will find our protection? Please remind us as pastors that our strength and safety are derived not from psychiatric gymnastics or from inner resources, but from daily spiritual

renewal and devotion.—Ron Carlson, Centralia, Missouri.

■ Of all the periodicals I receive and read, *Ministry* is by far the best. Thank you for the article "Sex in the Forbidden Zone." This counsel is long overdue! With the world so near its end and the media flaunting sex all the time, we certainly need to guard all the avenues to the soul. Dr. Rutter made the point straight and clear. I admire him for admitting his own close call and giving counsel on how to avoid it. I believe Satan is going to try to take as many of God's people with him as he can in just this way. May God help us to keep ourselves pure and unspotted from the world and by thus doing help many others find the kingdom of God.—Joyce Patton, Hagerstown, Maryland.

■ Dr. Rutter's article was thoughtful and well-written. Published in a journal for ministers of the gospel, however, it seemed to have omitted the most important and compelling reason for chastity in relationships.

One's sexuality is a gift from God. Returning control of that gift to Him by choosing chastity, even in extreme temptation situations, allows the individual to retain an open and joyful relationship with Jesus Christ. Succumbing to temptation not only harms the other involved but also impairs that love relationship with our Lord.

There's no getting around it—sin separates us from Him. If we take control into our own hands and sin willfully, it may take months or even years to regain the open, trustful communion with Jesus that we once experienced, even with the reality of His forgiveness.—Ruth Wright, Vienna, West Virginia.

■ I am extremely disappointed in the article. Dr. Rutter states: "What matters

(Continued on page 30)

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.

I've never met James Ayars, the Presbyterian minister who writes about "Advocacy Evangelism," but I'd enjoy flying up to Massachusetts just to have lunch with him. Thanks to *Ministry's* Ultra Slimfast budget, however, I'll have to content myself with the rest of you in feasting upon his article. I don't know when I've read anything more insightful and helpful into the basic approach we must have in personal soul-winning. More important than technique is one's attitude toward the lost.

How close a friend can the pastor be with lay leaders? There are limits, suggests Robert P. Fry, Jr., in this month's feature for local church elders. He explains why pastor and elder should be friends but not best friends.

I'm not sure I agree with everything Charles Scriven writes in "The Gospel and Global Mission." I'm worried that his concept of liberating society from social wrongs could possibly divert attention from the fact that each soul must find personal salvation at the cross or be lost forever. Nevertheless, Scriven's compelling call to social responsibility should trouble our conscience.

Your heart will break when you read "I Used to Be a Minister." It doesn't seem right that a successful, consecrated member of the clergy should be out of a job because of church finances. That's the way things go in this old world. Praise God that He always manages to work everything for good, even when we don't know just how He's doing it.

Martin Weber

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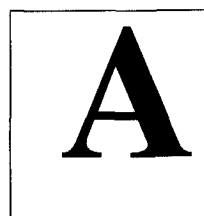
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Volume 65 Number 5



The role of the minister's wife

Ellen Bresee



Attaching a specific role to a minister's wife these days is like tying a tin can to a dog's tail. It causes considerable discomfort, frustration,

and howling on the part of the recipient.

A member asked a new pastor's wife, "Are you an elementary school teacher?" The wife said, "No." "Well, do you play the piano?" Again: "I'm sorry, no." The member turned on her heel and stomped off. After that she seldom spoke to the pastor's wife. Evidently the previous pastor's wife had done both these things, and this dear lady just couldn't accept anyone different.

Three ways wives cope

How should a minister's wife respond to role expectations in her church? We may look at three possible models: the *everything wife*, the *nothing wife*, and the *something wife*.

The *everything wife* tries to meet every congregational expectation. She shares equally with her husband his zeal and mission. She may say she feels "called" to be a minister's wife. One pastor's wife said she felt sorry for the next pastor's wife, because she had labored tirelessly for the church.

The *everything wife* can actually get into trouble by being too involved. One minister's wife was asked to serve as elder. At first she declined. However, the nominating committee kept insisting, so she finally said yes, and it split the church.

The second category, the *nothing wife*, is fortunately in the minority. She is neither interested in church involvement nor supportive of her husband's profession. She claims she married her husband

because she fell in love with a man who happened to be a minister. She may have become bitter against the church or the ministry. This wife can prove to be an obstacle to the gospel, especially if she is not religiously inclined. Typically, her attitude eventually pulls the minister out of his work or breaks up the home. Studies show that pastors rely heavily on their wives for support in ministry. When that support is lacking, they usually leave the ministry.

The third category, the *something wife*, may be just as supportive of her husband's work but not inclined to take as active a part as the *everything wife*. She doesn't buy into the concept of "two fer"—two ministers for the price of one. She may be career oriented and have little time or energy left for an active role in the church. Or she may have small children that she feels need most of her time.

The *something wife* loves her Lord and His church, but she insists on her right to choose prayerfully where and how much her involvement should be. She does not feel obligated to assume automatically whatever position others force upon her just because she is the minister's wife. Even so, she wholeheartedly supports her husband in his work.

Whichever role she feels she should fit into, *everything* or *something*, the pastor's wife has the right to choose for herself. She needs the courage and strength to be herself. She ought to accept gracefully the church work for which she is gifted and comfortably say no to positions she isn't suited for.

Most wives are extremely loyal to their husband and the church. Though recent years have brought many changes in the role of pastors' wives, most say they are happy in the parsonage and

would again marry a man of the cloth. Many have gifts uniquely suited to church ministry. They testify that service-oriented work gives self-fulfillment that nothing else in life can give.

Two ways husbands can help

Sometimes the *nothing wife* started out supportive but became discouraged because of her husband's overinvolvement with the church. She came to feel rejected for another lover—the church. She gave up competing but can't yet forgive her competitor.

Pastors should work hard, but they need to check their motivation if they've become workaholics, neglecting their families. Are the long hours necessary, or is the ministry a way of gaining affirmation by basking on a pedestal? At church the pastor may be a man of God; at home he is only human.

Second, the minister's wife usually feels her main role is to be supportive. That is fine, but to keep her husband happy, she must be happy herself. Pastor, make your wife happy by being up-front with your congregation from the beginning. Introduce your wife the first Sabbath in a new congregation something like this. "My wife is my best friend and closest supporter. She is very gifted and loves working for the church. On the other hand, she does not feel she has the gift of teaching, and she's not musical. Her talents are in the area of hospitality, and she would love to be involved in that aspect of church life." People are more accepting when they know where you stand from the beginning.

We can help our ministers' wives be happy. Let's allow them to use their own gifts and choose their own role. Then let's support them in their choice. ■



Strength to live or die

John M. Fowler

Derek Humphry's *Final Exit* is a disturbing book. It's as simple as a cookbook. The recipes are easy to follow. The ingredients are clearly described. The procedures are detailed enough. The results are guaranteed: quick, painless, and sure.

The book in a way reflects the priorities of our culture. We want quick exits from difficult situations, and in the process who cares about who gets hurt? Who cares about guilt? Who cares about anything, except that the "I" be allowed to reign supreme, end what is not its to end, affirm its own vulgarity of power, and deny the existence of the other or the supreme?

The book shows how to die by one's own hand. It does not show how to face death. Nor how to cope with the perils of living.

The problem, though, is not death. The problem is not even life. The problem is how to face the extremities of life or death. It is how to help others (our parishioners, for example,) look at life or death and not be overwhelmed by the impossibility or the horror of it all. It is to find a balance between anguish and serenity when perils of life or the certainty of death come knocking at our doors.

I find my answer on the cross. The Man hanging there provides the perfect approach: agony and peace, fear and fulfillment, anxiety and composure are reflected in the way Jesus faced His ultimate crisis. On the one hand, there was the dread of abandonment: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).^{*} On the other, there was the breathing of assurance: "Father, into thy

hands I commit my spirit!" (Luke 23:46).

The Word

Pastoral counseling and preaching can draw from the cross event lessons on the art of living as well as dying. First, we note that Jesus found His strength in life as in death in the inspired words of Scripture. He knew His Bible. From childhood He was a diligent student of God's Word. In His boyhood confrontation with the rabbis, in His dramatic victory over Satan's assault in the wilderness, in teaching the disciples the meaning of His kingdom, in expounding the great truths of redemption to the multitudes, in defending the meaning of His life or the method of His mission, and now on the cross (Ps. 22:2; 35:1), Jesus found His defense and strength in the Word of God. Where the Word is cherished, strength is assured.

The mission

Second, Christ's serenity at the cross may be understood in terms of an accomplished mission. "It is finished," Jesus reported to His Father (John 19:30). Throughout His life Jesus was conscious of His mission. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34) was the driving force of His life. Every step of His way, every day of His life, God's work possessed Him. On the sea, in the desert, in the Temple, on the streets, among friends or foes, Jesus had one single goal: to finish the work given to Him. His mission was one of revelation and reconciliation: to reveal God to the human race, and bring the human race back to God. With this one purpose Jesus overcame every trial, met every onslaught, suffered every agony, and "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). Where

the mission of reconciliation is accomplished, strength is assured.

The submission

Third, we note that the Man of the cross was a Man of submission to God's will. The words "Father, into thy hands" (Luke 23:46), are the ultimate in commitment. God's will was paramount in Christ's life, and He died fulfilling it. The affection of His mother, the zeal of the disciples, the constant distraction of His enemies, the arduous struggle of His mission, the agony of Gethsemane—nothing distracted Him from going to the cross. The way of the cross was the only option open to Him to fulfill the will of the Father, and that settled all issues of life and death for Him. Where submission to God is total and unconditional, strength is assured.

The empowering

Finally, life and death in a Christological context take on a new meaning in what happened after the cross. The Resurrection is the empowering act of God: defeating death, on the one hand; enabling full and eternal life, on the other.

Because it is a divine act in human history, Easter is not something one finds in science. Zoologists cannot tell us about resurrection. They may talk of life. They may talk of death or even postpone death—but after that the ways must part. The scientist's work stops at the grave. Test tubes do not function in the tomb. Cybernetics cannot probe beyond the embalming table. No electronic device can come up with resurrection. That is the privilege of the Christian faith.

Resurrection, therefore, is not for the weak or the timid. It is for the strong—
(Continued on page 30)

“Please get help!”

Robert Peach

Professional counseling can help clergy find relief from much of the emotional baggage that burdens their relationships and threatens their effectiveness.



Robert Peach, D.Min., is the director of the Kettering Clergy Care Center, Kettering, Ohio.

Jim and Sally had only minor complaints about their marriage during its first seven years. Three years later, when Jim accepted a new pastorate, their relationship took a plunge.

Trouble had already threatened their marriage during the battles Jim fought at his previous church. He found himself disillusioned and hurt by complaints and conflicts from his church members. He felt particularly wounded by Sally's suggestion that some of the members' complaints were justified. She urged him to stay and work out the problems. Instead, over her protests he quit his 175-member rural congregation and accepted a staff position in a city.

A year following the move, Sally and Jim were growing ever more distant in their relationship. Sally suggested seeing a counselor together. Jim refused. "If you need counseling, fine," Jim said, "but count me out."

When Sally did enter counseling, however, Jim felt angry. He was upset that his wife was telling their private business to a stranger. As for Sally, she became happier and less sarcastic in her comments to Jim. At work she developed friendships that made Jim feel increasingly nervous. When she received a promotion with more money than Jim earned, he began worrying that she might think of leaving him. He contemplated confiding in a fellow minister, but couldn't think of anyone he trusted. Only briefly did he toy with the idea of seeking advice from the denominational executive in his district, quickly dismissing even that thought for fear of future implications on his employ-

ability. He considered calling his wife's counselor, but felt embarrassed about what Sally had told him of their problems.

Jim felt helpless. He tried throwing himself into his devotional studies, but his mind kept wandering to his worries about Sally. Jim was depressed. He even had trouble falling asleep at night.

One evening Jim came home to find a note from Sally directing him to a TV dinner in the freezer; she was taking the kids shopping and for pizza at the mall. That evening after the children were in bed, Jim complained to Sally about the tasteless dinner she left him. Somehow this set her off, and she made a sarcastic remark. Jim responded with a string of expletives. Sally cried and left the room.

After Jim cooled down, he felt terrible about his lack of control. It had been years since he had used some of the words he had just hurled at Sally. Remorsefully he approached her, but all she would do was shake her head and say, "I don't know what to do, Jim. I feel so distant from you, so angry. I feel like I don't even know you. Jim, please get help!"

Will Jim heed his wife's pleas and get counseling? It is hard for most people to ask for help. Clergy are no exception.

This is unfortunate, particularly for someone like Jim. His marriage would certainly benefit from counseling. Without help, Jim will become ever more impaired both professionally and personally.

What are some barriers that prevent clergy from getting the aid they need? My list is divided into two sections, external barriers and internal barriers. I will first identify a barrier and then offer a response to it. My aim is to stimulate clergy awareness of their problems and

the need to get help.

External barriers to getting help

Barrier. Job expectations. Because of expectations for "unblemished" clergy, our society attaches a stigma on those who demonstrate their "weakness" by seeking counseling. Clergy, particularly, feel that they are not allowed to have weaknesses, especially those requiring the intervention of a professional. After all, parishioners go to seek help from their pastor when they are troubled. They don't want to know that the one they expect to help them is also in need of assistance.

Response. Maybe there is more bark than bite to this problem. In a study conducted several years ago, David and Vera Mace found that the view clergy had of parishioners' expectations of them was not nearly as stringent as the clergy themselves perceived.¹ Maybe pastors project their own fears onto their church members. No doubt some parishioners do have unrealistic expectations, but perhaps clergy tend to interpret the attitude of the minority as representing the majority.

Henri Nouwen's "wounded healer" concept² also helps to overcome the expectation barrier. Heightened pastoral empathy can come from clergy who have themselves been wounded. Church members receive benefit from the healed wounds the pastor has suffered.

Barrier. Job environment. The average clergyperson's working environment fosters isolation. Most serve as solo pastors without benefit of colleagues immediately available. They get used to being "Lone Rangers" in their approach to ministry. Professional consultation is often avoided. Other clergy could be of tremendous support in time of need, but the relationship bridges are not usually in place, ready to facilitate such emotional traffic when needed.

Response. At Creation God looked down and said that it was not beneficial for humans to be alone. Jesus was also careful to send out His evangelistic field school participants, 70 in number, in teams of two. No one person has the ability to handle every situation or even understand every circumstance. Different personalities, perspectives, and abilities are found in different people. One minister bound by his or her own limitations can greatly benefit from another person's viewpoint. This does not mean others are somehow superior or more

capable; it just means they are different.

Counselors are taught to seek supervision from a colleague when they run into difficulties in their work. Likewise clergy should also seek consultation. Pastors must build bridges with other colleagues and professionals who can understand their perspectives. Lunch with a fellow minister, regular participation in the area clergy association, leisure activities with other clergy or professional families, all help to build bridges that can be very important when heavy traffic needs to roll across them at a later time.

Barrier. The grapevine. Most ministers complain about the ease with which gossip circulates within their fellowship. They have heard (or passed along) embarrassing information about the personal difficulties of fellow pastors. No wonder they are afraid of confiding in people with access to the denominational grapevine, lest their sensitive information begin to make this circuit.

Response. This difficulty troubled the apostle James as well: "But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).^{*} Maybe James himself got burned by the ecclesiastical grapevine! How can you handle the dangerous potential of the loose tongue, while not building thick walls between yourself and your colleagues?

The first requirement is to be responsible yourself. Practice the golden rule in your outgoing communications. Treat information about other people as you would like similar information about you to be treated. Don't pass along gossip. If in doubt, check with the subject of the information before proceeding. Be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove. You should not isolate yourself from others when in a time of need, but don't be foolish in your choice of the person in whom you confide. Be specific about indicating to the one with whom you speak that you are talking in confidence. If the issues are so sensitive that you should take no risk of the grapevine gaining access, then select someone of another denomination, and perhaps not in your immediate community. Choose a professional counselor who is trained and ethically bound to keep your confidence.

Remember this: If you fail to get help and try to keep everything inside, wishing you can control it, the resulting explosion could produce worse fallout than the grapevine ever could by itself.

Barrier. Finance. Getting counseling

can be expensive. Fees per session can often range from \$60 to \$100. This can be a significant barrier if insurance is not available.

Response. When you have a physical problem causing pain and distress, you are willing to pay for expert medical care. Physicians' fees are expensive—more costly when computed by the hour, since you see your physician for only 10 or 15 minutes. It takes more time to deal with emotional difficulties. Accept the idea that fees for counseling time can be money well spent. However, don't be afraid to be a wise consumer. Call potential counselors' offices and ask about fees. Determine if your health insurance plan will help with the cost to a large enough extent to make counseling possible. Many counselors can work with a sliding scale or tailor a financial plan to meet your particular economic situation. Also, you can check to see if your denomination has a counseling assistance plan. In any case, don't just assume that counseling would be a waste of money or that you cannot afford it.

Barrier. Vocational vulnerability. Many denominations have reported an oversupply of ministers during the past decade. The fact that new candidates are waiting to fill any vacancy creates an atmosphere of job vulnerability. Pastors quit or are forcibly terminated, and the employing organization has no problem finding replacements. The jobless pastors just seem to vanish, often with little care provided by the church for healing wounds and preparing them for future employment. Knowing all this, clergy tend to keep their problems bottled up inside.

Response. The answer to this must come from two fronts. First, the administrators responsible for hiring or recommending clergy must work from a theology of the importance of people. Even if a significant pastoral labor pool exists and finding a replacement might solve the immediate problem, administrators must continue to care about the well-being of the minister with problems. Of course, administrators cannot assume all the responsibility. The pastor also bears responsibility for solving his or her own difficulties. The pastor's share becomes easier, however, when administrators do their part to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Doing this will create a less vulnerable job climate for clergy.

Many ministers have a strong perfectionistic streak, even when they reject perfectionism theologically.

The second front: emotionally, you must not live in mortal fear of losing your job. The more anxious you are about your performance and the threat of losing your job, the poorer will be your performance. Anxiety diminishes quality. If there is a clergy oversupply in your denomination, be aware of it; but then mentally choose to focus on doing ministry for the joy of it! Don't let the oversupply intimidate you.

Barrier. Development crises. Many pastors do not receive adequate training in understanding and dealing with various adult developmental crises.³ This lack of preparation makes an unexpected crisis especially painful. Ministers, like everyone else, tend to consider their own pain unusual, and that they are the only ones suffering from any given problem. They can also believe that the presence of the problem indicates some defect in themselves as adequate members of the profession or even the human race. Naturally they are ashamed to expose their supposed inadequacies to someone else, especially a stranger.

Response. Seminary curriculum planners must include material that will acquaint future pastors with the concept and process of adult development. Seminary graduates would then be better prepared to handle various life-stage crises that come to them as time, ministry, and family all change and force them to confront the change. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Personal barriers to seeking help

In addition to these external factors, pastors also face several internal, personal barriers to seeking help.

Barrier. Fearfulness. Fear incapacitates many actions that impaired indi-

viduals could do to help themselves. Fear takes many forms: fear of revealing one's need to another person because of the expected embarrassment and reduction of stature in the eyes of the other, fear of facing the "proof" of personal inadequacy and a feeling of worthlessness, fear of admitting problems to a colleague because of a sense of competitiveness with other ministers.

Response. Fear is one of the most powerful emotions people experience. It has the ability to immobilize us almost like the helpless prey of a stalking tiger becoming riveted in terror to one spot. Fear of the exposure of personal inadequacy is a common fear. It must be identified for what it is and then exposed to the truth of Jesus. The fearing one must consciously choose to see the caring face of God. Christ's love has the power to cast out all fear. "Fear not" is one of the most often repeated promises of God. This is true in the midst of all our failures, weaknesses, and inadequacies.

Barrier. Perfectionism. Many ministers have a strong perfectionistic streak, even when they reject perfectionism theologically. They have a hard time accepting the present painful evidence of their fallibility. They tell other people that they should not expect to be free from mistakes, but they have a difficult time taking their own counsel. They don't want to deal with their own errors, and so, refuse to seek help from some other person because that would necessitate facing such errors.

Response. We must have the courage to face our own imperfection—not as an excuse for our wrong behavior (i.e., simplistically pleading "nobody's perfect" when faced with a personal failure), but rather as an acknowledgment of our sinfulness. This allows us to confront our needs and set a goal for change. The assurance of God's love and acceptance makes progress possible. Self-honesty allows clergy to seek help and encouragement from another person when needed, rather than remaining stuck in their denial of need.

Barrier. Reason for choosing ministry. One psychologist working with clergy and clergy candidates noted that the profession of ministry is selected frequently by persons with a significant need to please other people.⁴ This makes it threatening to reveal a darker side of yourself.

Response. People are often attracted to ministry because of the compliments

they get from people for their involvement in church activities. They erroneously believe that pastoring will be an endless parade of grateful people expressing their thanks for what the clergy person does. This does not reflect the real world of ministry. The actual ministerial experience does have compliments, but also brings one into contact with members who have axes to grind. People interested in the ministry would do well to seek out psychological testing and advice concerning personality factors that could indicate a career mismatch. Pastors already in the ministry should seek help if they note a pathological level of people-pleasing qualities in themselves.

Barrier. God will take care of it. A theological rationalization is often used by pastors who want to avoid telling another person about their concerns: "God is the only helper I need." This internal barrier has a very pious ring to it. Clergy do not want to exhibit a lack of faith in God's ability to help them through a problem.

Response. The Bible teaches us to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2) and to confess our faults to one another (James 5:16). The wise man instructs, "Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend does so by hearty counsel" (Prov. 27:9). In order to invoke a caring person's hearty counsel, this person must be able to hear our story—he or she must know about the burden we bear. God, of course, is our ultimate friend. We should share with Him our pains. We must tell it all to Jesus. But that does not mean that we should not seek help from others. God created us to need and help one another, and ordination does not exclude anyone from this fundamental human truth.

Barrier. Crippled spirituality. Something in the vein of the plumber whose own plumbing is greatly in need of repair, the minister who is seen by the community as the spiritual specialist can himself or herself be struggling with a crippled spirituality. If spiritual formation and growth were in a healthy state, the fears and denial mentioned above might easily fade away.

Response. The apostle Paul expressed a personal caution about his own ministry, expressing the hope that "I have not run in vain or labored in vain" (Phil. 2:16). He answered his own caution by saying "Hold fast that word which I

preached" (1 Cor. 15:2). The Bible and the spiritual issues with which it deals are the stock in trade of the minister's vocation. But it is so important that personal spiritual growth and vitality not give way to a weekly grind for new sermon ideas and the agonies of preparation. Pastors must be healthy spiritually for their own well-being, and not just because good ministers are required to be spiritually alive. Having the spiritual sap flowing richly and pushing health, assurance, and vigor through the vessels will give the security and openness a minister needs to seek counsel and consultation with others. Why not take 24 hours, a Bible, your praying heart, a quiet place away, and listen for the still small voice?

Barrier. Pessimism. By this I mean anything that fosters an internal sense of hopelessness. Perhaps your personality has this negative bent; you never expect that good results can come from some effort at creative problem solving. Maybe the mid-life crisis you are experiencing makes feeling at peace again seem unattainable. Depression from whatever source can create a very strong feeling of hopelessness. These examples of pessimism can provide a significant emotional barrier, hindering the clergyperson from taking the risk of seeking help through the care and interest of a friend, colleague, or professional.

Response. If your ministry is troubled by periods of depression, the following symptoms may be present during these times: a sense of listlessness and discouragement, an urge to cry more easily than usual, any kind of sleep disturbance, a blunted response to people or situations, or suicidal thoughts. If these are occurring, seek treatment immediately. A mental health professional can provide needed help. Your physician can evaluate for any physiological causes for the depression. A pessimistic attitude can be a subtle form of self-hate. Expecting that nothing will work can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you believe you cannot be helped, you may unconsciously sabotage any attempted intervention to ensure the fulfillment of your prophecy of doom. Such pessimism is usually ingrained by nature and can be difficult to change. The place to start is a willingness to consider change, recognizing the potential benefits of approaching life with a positive attitude. Take the risk of discussing your pessimistic attitude with a friend or trusted counselor to get feedback.

As you can see, clergy must overcome many barriers in order to get encouragement and counseling for themselves. But as we clergy endeavor to change our own attitudes, it will become easier for Jim, Sally, and all of us to get the help we need and deserve. ■

* Bible passages in this article are from The New King James Version.

¹ David Mace and Vera Mace, *What's Happening to Clergy Marriages* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), p. 55.

² Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972).

³ Several sources can be consulted for adult developmental information: Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978); Lillian E. Troll, *Early and Middle Adulthood* (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1975); Elizabeth Carter and Monica McGoldrick, eds., *The Family Life Cycle* (New York: Gardner Press, 1980); Robert Peach, *Caring for Clergy in the Context of Their Families*, dissertation (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1985), pp. 81-94.

⁴ L. Rebecca Propst, "Reflections on Philosophy of Science and the Pastoral Care of Pastors," *Pastoral Psychology*, Winter 1988, pp. 103-114.

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I used to be a pastor

Dwight McDonald

I used to be a pastor. My separation from the ministry is so recent that it doesn't seem real to me yet. It's like when someone close to you dies; often the denial phase continues long after the reality of the funeral. But it's true, and I must learn to accept it. I *used to be* a pastor.

I see the question in your eyes, and I hasten to add, no, I did not cheat on my wife; no, I did not embezzle church funds; no, I did not teach heresy; no, I am not suffering from burnout. A subtle shift in your expression, but the question is still there: "Then why?"

Perhaps you belong to the same generation as I do and believe as I believed: the call to the ministry is for life. Barring a serious moral or physical collapse, the young pastor should grow into the seasoned worker, retire after 40 years or so, and then continue to serve the church on a voluntary basis until at last he or she is called to rest.

But this was not to be. My layoff was for economic reasons. The letter from the conference president described the financial problems of the organization necessitating my dismissal. Several other pastors, Bible workers, and conference employees received similar notices of lay-off.

I was sad and horrified. Ministry was my calling, and now to leave the work I loved so much! I appealed to the conference administration to work something

out. I Federal Expressed resumes all over the United States to other conferences. I kept AT&T in business by phoning conference presidents. I am still hoping to receive a call. I am still praying. But at this point I must accept the reality: I used to be a pastor, and I may never be one again.

You see, the economic climate has changed. There are more students graduating from the seminary than tithe funds can accommodate. It used to be fairly easy to get a call. It is not anymore.

Recently I talked to a minister who had pastored numerous churches, served in the mission field, and was in conference leadership until the constituency decided to make a complete change in leadership, and he was not returned to office. Since then he has been trying to get back into the ministry. He is willing to take a three or a four-church district. He is willing to move anywhere. He is still hoping, still praying. It has been six years.

A stressful situation

I have listened to similar soul-wrenching stories from other ministers who were laid off. Leaving the ministry is painful in itself. But the pastor involved had to bear other burdens as well—often cruel, unchristian, and unnecessary. My own experience helped me identify some of these stressful situations.

1. *Reaction of family, friends, former classmates, church members, other ministers.* I've had to repeat the story again and again and confront the same questioning eyes. Could there be another reason other than economic for my dismissal? Could it be that I am hiding

something? Even the best of friends can become silently skeptical.

It wasn't easy to tell my parents. They worked hard and sacrificed much to put me through school, to see me trained for the ministry. Now they are elderly—and they are hurt. They don't understand how this could happen.

I am fortunate that the church I was pastoring when this crisis came about is one of the most loving, affirming congregations I've known. Their support and complete acceptance of me have helped me more than they will ever know. I wish I could stay and continue to be an active part of this church, but for financial and personal reasons I must relocate in another state. I wonder how I will be accepted in a new church once they learn that I used to be a pastor. Will I be met with suspicion? Will I have to constantly prove myself? Will those with a personal ax to grind against church or conference try to get me to side with them?

2. *Rumors.* The grapevine is an intricate one, and rumors travel fast. Little bits of truth get mixed in with little bits of error, and before you know it the stories become downright laughable—except the person at the center of the rumor isn't laughing. I have heard stories about me from persons half a continent away.

3. *Stress on family.* The stress on a pastor's family when he or she leaves the ministry is unbelievable. My wife and I have gone through physical, emotional, and even spiritual trauma during this period. Our faith in God, our confidence in the church, our relationship with each other and with friends and family—all have been tested to the limit. We have lived with uncertainty for months. We have often had our hopes built up, only to

have them dashed again. We have undergone the most painful soul-searching of our lives as we struggled with anger, fear, grief, and guilt. As we were packing to move out of the parsonage, we still didn't know where we would live or what kind of work we would do or how we would keep our children in an Adventist college.

The stress on the kids is the hardest burden for us as parents to bear. Recently I heard a mother's pain-filled voice tell of her daughters who have left the church because they felt their father, a denominational worker, had been unfairly fired. None of us wants our kids to go through that. We want to shield them from the hurts but we can't entirely do so. My own kids have coped pretty well with our situation. I believe this is partly because of the loving, accepting environment of the local church which still holds our membership.

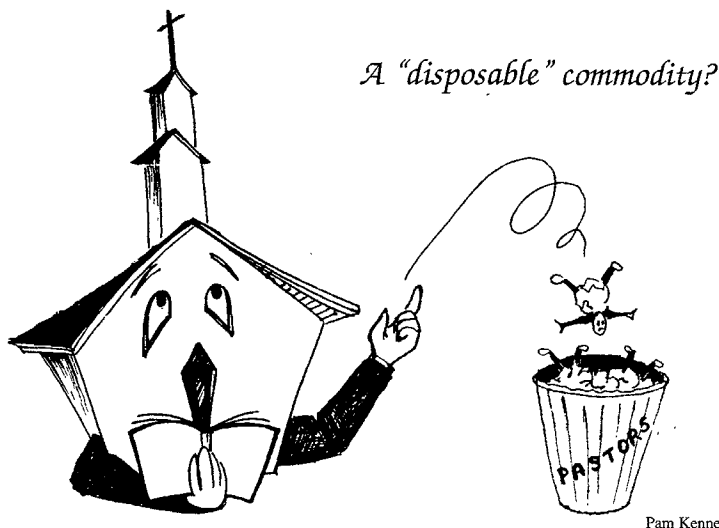
4. *Internal stress.* I feel as if a part of myself has been amputated. And this emotion is not unique with me. I've picked it up from all the former pastors I've talked to. The ministry is not just a job. Being a pastor is not something that you do; it's something that you are. Just as I cannot think of myself as not being a man, as not being a son, as not being a husband or father, I cannot think of myself as not being a pastor. It's part of my self-identity.

5. *Self-concept.* Causes outside myself led to my separation from the ministry. I didn't quit. I didn't commit any grievous sin that caused the termination. My ministry was successful. My church was healthy and growing. I was not a failure. But in my darkest moments I feel like a failure. I struggle with feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

6. *Finding another job.* I have been a professional person all my adult life, but I have been educated and trained for one profession only, the ministry. What skills do I have to offer a secular world?

Many former pastors become salespersons. A logical choice, I suppose, since ministry involves "selling." Yet as a pastor I am absolutely certain that my "product" is good for the customer and never more expensive than anyone can afford. Can I be that certain of real estate or insurance or any other commodity?

I know I can make a living for my family. The point is, finding a job that gives personal satisfaction while filling the financial need is not easy, particularly in middle age.



Pam Kennedy

7. *Overcoming anger.* When I feel my rights have been violated and there is nothing I can do about it, my helplessness turns into anger. Yet I know that no one has been personally vindictive toward me. Perhaps some in leadership have made mistakes. So have I. I endeavor to practice the forgiveness I have preached for 23 years and to take personal responsibility for my problems instead of blaming someone else. Still, the more dead ends I run into in my search for employment, the more difficult it is to maintain a positive attitude.

What can you do to help?

Some former pastors have urged me to do as they have done and get into therapy with a good Christian counselor. Others have found ways to cope with the pain and frustration and to make the necessary adjustment without going to a professional. There is much that you—friend, relative, fellow church member, former classmate, local church pastor—can do to help with the healing process. The underlying principle is, of course, the golden rule. Treat the former pastor as you would want to be treated if you were in the same situation. To help you in applying that timeless principle, here are some specific do's and don'ts.

1. *Respond to the individual person—not to a category.* Each pastor's reasons for leaving the ministry are different. Each pastor's way of adjusting to new life is different. Don't assume that because you heard about a minister who became bitter and left the church, all ex-pastors will do the same. On the other hand, don't assume that all will accept the change easily. Learn to know this person as a unique individual.

2. *Do not make assumptions as to the reason for the change.* I can't emphasize enough how important it is to form perceptions based on firsthand information, rather than on preconceived ideas or on rumors. The person may not want to discuss all the reasons for leaving the ministry. The reluctance is probably not because of any dark secrets, but simply because of the pain associated with dredging up the past. And the person wants to get on with life! Respect that desire for privacy.

3. *Do not pay attention to rumors or pass along gossip.* You may believe your source of information to be the most reliable in the world. That doesn't mean that everything you hear is fact. I have had trustworthy people who like and care for me nevertheless pass on gossip about me that wasn't true. My friends were not lying and they were not being malicious. They were simply misinformed.

4. *Do not sit in judgment.* You weren't there. You can't get inside another person's soul and know his or her motives. Maybe the pastor was wrong. Maybe the church was wrong. Maybe the conference was wrong. All those maybe's are pure speculation. Only God knows the heart. A negative, criticizing, blaming, or gossiping attitude never helps any cause or person.

5. *Listen with your heart.* The former pastor may want to talk about what has happened. He or she may be angry or bitter, and may come across as cocky and arrogant. It is important that you listen, and hear the pain behind the words. Let the person know that you understand the feelings involved. Provide acceptance and assurance that your friendship is not based on what he or she does for a living

but on just being friends.

6. *Don't feed the person's anger with your own.* The pastor may feel that the church or the conference or both were not fair in the handling of the issue. You may feel the same way. Or you may have your own complaints about church or conference leadership. But don't make the situation worse by adding to the pastor's anger. That person should be allowed to work through his or her feelings, and find solutions to the problems. Unresolved anger destroys; forgiveness heals.

7. *Show unconditional love.* Do not ask or expect changes in this person before you offer friendship. What the person needs is not a critic or an analyst, but an understanding friend.

8. *Be sensitive to the pastor's needs.* Some former pastors stay active in the local church, serving as an elder or in another church office and preaching occasionally. Some need to pull back for a while, regularly worshiping with the church family but not actively participating. Still others go through a time when attending church at all becomes difficult. Whatever the pastor's need, do not criticize. If you haven't been through this experience yourself, you can't know the feeling of walking into church and not stepping up to the pulpit. Some are able to cope by making the transition from pastor to active layperson, still up front, still exercising leadership. Others need solitude to come to grips with this drastic life change. There is a danger, of course, that the one who stops attending church regularly may never come back, but all the criticizing in the world will not bring that one back. Continue to be a friend. Invite the former pastor and family to your home for dinner or other social activities.

9. *Offer practical help more than advice.* Advice is plentiful. I have been advised to stay in the ministry no matter what (the adviser didn't say how to accomplish this). I have been advised to go out and get a "real" job making "real" money (again, the how-to wasn't given). I have been advised to sue the conference, to be humble, to have faith.

I have also received help, strength, and a show of concern. "If you and your family need a place to stay while you're looking for a position, my home is available." "I have a friend who might have a position for you. Let me call him." "I want to help with your kids' tuition this year."

10. *Assure the pastor about the larger*

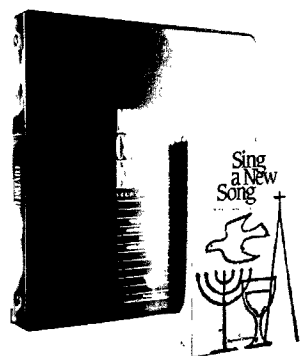
meaning of ministry. We are all God's ministers whether we are paid workers or not. If your conference president does not object, invite the former pastor to go with you to a workers' meeting. This kind of association provides a sense of belonging. Encourage the person to be active in gospel work. Show your continued acceptance of him or her as a fellow worker for God. As a symbol of this acceptance, perhaps you may offer to pick up the subscription to *Ministry* magazine, which the conference may discontinue.

Yes, I used to be a pastor. But I am still, and always will be, a Christian. I am still, and always will be, a worker for God. Whatever the future holds for me, my assurance of salvation is certain. What I need from you is friendship. What you need from me is friendship. Together we can overcome the hurts and disappointments that come our way until we enter the gates of the City—where the only thing we "used to be" will be sinners, and the only thing we *are* will be children of God. ■

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Advocacy evangelism

James Ayers

The best we can do is be on people's side and let them discover for themselves the power of the gospel in human lives.



James Ayers, a Ph.D. candidate in patristics at Boston College, pastors the First Presbyterian Church in Waltham, Massachusetts. He is the author of The Gifts of Evangelism: God's Purpose and Call for the Evangelists in Your Church.

The summer I worked second shift at the factory, I didn't enjoy much social life. Early afternoon was the only time I had for visiting with

people, but all my friends had daytime jobs and weren't available. One day, just for someone to talk to, I drove to the house of my high school English teacher.

In school we had talked several times about faith: I with the rough fervor of a new Christian and he an agnostic. The good teacher that he was, he always urged me to explore an issue fully, and he did it with the mild cynicism of someone who had seen more of life than a know-it-all 17-year-old. On this particular afternoon he invited me out to the picnic table in his backyard, and over sandwiches and a game of chess we talked about my upcoming plans for seminary and ministry. He spoke about his fears that teaching might be a dead-end career for him. He worried that once he finished his master's degree the salary would still not provide an adequate living for his family. He admitted his frustration: he had set goals that he could never reach.

I had done some reading since high school, and it seemed like the right time, so I asked where the problem might be. God created each of us with a specific purpose in mind. If we deliberately choose not to explore the nature of that purpose, we are bound to be frustrated. Whenever we try to do something other than God's best, we can't help feeling like we are missing something.

My remarks brought an immediate response. All his objections to Christianity came tumbling out. Some were easier

to answer than I expected; others were complex. After a while I said, "You've asked some wonderful questions. I don't know the answers to all of them, though I've got some ideas about where to look them up. Even so, it will take some time to work through them. I'm certainly willing to try. But let me ask you something first. If we eventually succeed in answering all your objections so that you become confident in your own mind that Christianity is in fact true, would you become a Christian?"

"No," he replied. "I don't think I would."

"That's a strange answer," I said. "It seems to me that you have something other than intellectual objections."

By then I was almost late for work, and so we had to leave it there. When we visited again on several occasions, we were never able to get past that point.

Responding to people's opposition

The issue fascinated me ever since. Even when the right answer is obvious, many people have a hard time accepting it. They insist on holding on to their opinions, right or wrong. Even when they discover that one of their beliefs is wrong, they prefer to go on believing it anyway. To them truth is not as important as their opinion.

For many the real hesitation about commitment to Christ is not intellectual reservation concerning the truth of Christianity, but the demand of that truth on their lives. Coming to Christianity demands a change in the direction of life: from being under the drift of self to coming under the command of Christ. That's not easy.

Faced with indifference and resis-

Provide opportunities for him to know that the death of Christ frees us from guilt.

tance to accepting truth, church members often hope for a secret formula so that when they say the right words people will give up their hesitation and freely and gladly accept Christ. Such a hope is unrealistic for two reasons.

The first is the experience of God Himself. God calls His people, but they keep turning away. There doesn't seem to be anything that He can do about it other than express His distress: "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?" (Hosea 11:7-9, NIV). In spite of their rebellion, God invites His people to reason with Him and be forgiven, but to no avail (Isa. 1:2, 18, 21-31). Christ anguishes over Jerusalem, longing to gather the people like a hen gathering her chicks under her wings, but they will not let Him (Luke 13:34). God wants all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9), and yet He cannot do what He wants: some will choose Him; others will not (2 Peter 2:3, 12). If the resistance that people can marshal against God's love is such that even He comes to the limit of what He can do, then can we who are human come up with a magic formula that will automatically convince people to give their hearts to Christ?

The second reason is the reality of the power of resistance. Human inclination is to say no to God. Adam and Eve said it (Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:6). So did Pharaoh (Ex. 5:2). So did Israel (Num. 13:30-14:10; Judges 2:11-13; Neh. 9:6-37). So did Jerusalem (Matt. 27:22) and Christ's own disciples (John 6:66).

How do we deal with such situations? Our natural response is to be more forceful and persuasive, hoping somehow that we will win them over to Christ. In the process, we would hardly notice the shift in emphasis from Christ to winning. In our intention to defeat the opposition, we would search for a sure-fire method that would compel them to acquiesce.

That, however, was not the style of Jesus' evangelism. He consistently placed Himself on the side of the people with whom He spoke, instead of opposing them. He was counted a friend of sinners (Matt. 11:19); He ate and drank with them (Matt. 9:10). He treated with dignity the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11). He befriended and helped the woman at the well (John 4:7-26). He talked to and touched lepers (rather than healing them from a safe distance), and encouraged them to be reintegrated into society (Mark 1:44).

Jesus did confront people directly when this was necessary. He denounced the religious leaders of Jerusalem forcefully (Matt. 23:13-36; John 8:13-59). And yet He could deal gently with a Pharisee like Nicodemus and confront him with his lack of insight (John 3:1-11). Here Jesus was more like a teacher, wanting to challenge His students to further growth, rather than a critic tearing down an opponent.

When we see ourselves as people's advocates rather than opponents, two things happen. First, we will be less confrontational with people and more oriented to ministering to their needs. Second, we will view everyone as potentially on the side of the gospel.

Ministering to people

The Scriptures describe our inmost being as deceitful, and incurably so (Jer. 17:9). Yet from that inmost being we thirst for God, longing to come and behold His face (Ps. 42:1, 2). To be human is to experience this mixture of conflicting desires, thoughts, and emotions. Many of these feelings are self-centered and antagonistic to God. But others motivate us to be quite open to discovering His purpose for us.

As people interested in people, we can help them affirm the desires they already have to experience God's purpose coming to fulfillment. Since these aren't their only desires, they will feel a sense of conflict, but it certainly doesn't need to be between them and us. Let me emphasize this: the primary debate isn't between what they want and what we want, but specifically in their own mind as to what they really want. The real conflict is within themselves. Rather than being the adversary of some of the things within them, we can actively choose to be the advocate of some of the other things within them.

Consider, for example, Bob, who has developed a pattern of lying when circumstances go awry. Bob knows that lying is wrong and that it only makes things worse. He has tried to break this habit many times. Again and again, though, he finds himself lying. He feels guilty. His deepest pain arises from the realization that he is going to keep on lying because he doesn't have the strength to change.

We might tell Bob that the Bible says that he shouldn't tell lies (Col. 3:9). Or we might assure him that his sins can be forgiven (Mark 2:5). But wouldn't the gospel cause be better served if we suggested that in Christ's power he could overcome his bondage (Phil. 4:13)?

How do we do this? Begin with some encouragement. Gently move Bob to set for himself a goal of living a life of truth. Show that God can give him the strength to overcome his weakness. Let him see within the body of Christ an ongoing, supportive community where he can sense freedom from his bondage and the power to change. Provide opportunities for him to know that the death of Christ frees us from guilt and that God's grace is sufficient to meet all needs, particularly Bob's own desire to be a man of integrity.

Take the case of Maria. She cares for her family well. She serves on the PTA. She bakes a casserole for her neighbors when there is an illness in their family. She is a model wife and mother. And yet she feels her life lacks meaning. What's wrong? Why doesn't her life seem fulfilling? Should she go back to school? Should she go back to work? She knows people who have done both; some love it, some hate it, and some say it actually comes out about as frustrating as being at home. What do we say to Maria?

Instead of the usual talk about the problems of a sinful world, begin with her feelings. Say something like this: "Your feelings do convey a message. I believe God created each one of us with a special purpose in mind. If we can discover that purpose, if we can learn how to fulfill God's will for our lives, then our lives will become truly satisfying. I think I've found out a few things about what God wants me to do, although I'm not always too good at following through on them. And if you like, I'd be glad to share with you as to how that happens, and maybe we can both learn more together."

Maria may tell you she doesn't think God exists and be angry for suggesting

He does. Even then, if you ask her why she feels the way she does, you may be in for a fascinating conversation. More likely, however, because of the genuineness of her search for answers, she may well say something like "You really believe that, don't you? All right. I would like to find out more about this will of God. If He has one for me, I would like to know about it."

Viewing people as on our side

The second consequence of viewing our evangelistic selves as people's advocates is this: If we are on their side, then it follows that they are on our side. That, in turn, means that we ought to treat them that way.

Rebecca Pippert offers an example of this experience seen through the eyes of Stephanie, a friend of hers who was drawn into the faith through watching her struggle to live as a follower of Christ. "You know what affected me most? All my life I used to think, *How arrogant for someone to call himself a Christian, to think he's that good.* But then I got to know you—and Becky; you are far from perfect, yet you call yourself a Christian. So my first shock was to discover you 'blow it' like I do. But the biggest shock was that you admitted it, where I couldn't. Suddenly I saw that being a Christian didn't mean never failing, but admitting when you've failed. I wanted to keep Christ in a box and let you be religious during Bible studies. But the more you let me inside your life, the more impossible it became to keep the lid on Christianity. Even your admission of weakness drove me to Him!"¹

As we talk to people we need to understand that they are in the midst of the same struggle we are in. If we have come further in the faith than they have, it is only a little further, and it is only because of His grace. Therefore, rather than judging that they are heathen and that we are not, we need to respond to them as people who have begun the long process of hearing and accepting the truth of the gospel.

How do we do this? Welcome the hesitant ones warmly to the body of Christ. Play the role of an advocate. Provide them opportunities to know, to follow, and to grow in Jesus. Invite them to worship or study, not with a sense of paternalism or condescension, but with a genuine feeling of sharing and friendship.

Seeing people as on our side means asking them to pray for us. Whenever I have done this, people often express the feeling that their prayers are not as good as the preacher's. But the fact that I requested them to pray would help motivate some to go ahead and pray—and to discover that God was interested in listening to their prayers just as much as mine.

Seeing them as on our side means asking for their advice on issues we are facing. They may well have genuine spiritual insight, and in offering that counsel, they will come to believe in it themselves.

Seeing them as on our side means that we will let them see our own need of grace and forgiveness in our struggle with sin. When people see our authentic desire to live a life directed by the grace of Christ, they would see in themselves a similar longing, and seek to experience that same grace in their lives. C. S. Lewis, speaking to an Anglican conference on apologetics, commented on the difficulty of convincing ordinary nonreligious people of their sinfulness. Harping on sins that they don't commit or sins that they don't feel are wrong doesn't do the job. Honesty about our own temptations and failures often turns out to be far more useful. "I cannot offer you a watertight technique for awakening the sense of sin. I can only say that, in my experience, if one begins from the sin that has been one's own chief problem during the last week, one is very often surprised at the way this shaft goes home."²

Seeing people as on our side also means encouraging them to speak about their faith to others. It may seem strange to suggest that those who have not yet made their own public profession of faith in Christ should be recruited as evangelists. Yet not so strange! Long before the disciples believed Jesus to be the Christ, they were called to be fishers of men (Mark 1:17; 3:14; Luke 5:10). How complete was the awareness of the Twelve (Mark 6:7) or the seventy (Luke 10:1) when they were sent out to tell the message of Christ? Apollos was a notable evangelist even before he heard the entire message (Acts 18:24-28).

If we had to wait until we comprehended the message of the gospel fully before we could say anything at all about faith in Christ, none of us would ever get to talk—and as a result none of us would ever get to hear—about the kingdom. As

Suddenly I saw that being a Christian didn't mean never failing, but admitting when you've failed.

it is, with the best effort in the world, we only get to listen to imperfect proclamations of the gospel.

In his study of communication, persuasion, and evangelism, Em Griffin suggests that one of the most effective ways of getting high school kids to consider the Christian faith is to ask them to come up with reasons a person should be a Christian. Not that they necessarily have to agree with those reasons; they simply help make a list of "the benefits of being a Christian." They come up with dozens, and they tend to remember best the ones that they themselves suggest.³

Asking people to talk about their faith, regardless of how deep it is, gives them an opportunity to grow in that faith. Instead of making them dependent on our reasons for believing, it gives them an opportunity to develop their own.

When people have a strong inner sense of opposition to the gospel of Christ, like my English teacher, we will not be able to overcome the antagonism from the outside. We cannot win them over by being antagonists in faith. What we can do is be on their side and let them see the power of the gospel released in human lives. Jesus placed Himself on the side of the people He talked to. He saw no need to place Himself in opposition to them. He gave them the opportunity to receive the things they wanted most: forgiveness, purpose, healing, restoration. He was their advocate. We can be no less. ■

¹ Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker: Evangelism as a Way of Life* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), pp. 29, 30.

² C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 96.

³ Em Griffin, *The Mind Changers: The Art of Christian Persuasion* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale Press, 1976), p. 93.

The gospel and global mission

Charles Scriven

Viewpoint is designed to allow readers an opportunity to express opinions regarding matters of interest to their colleagues. The ideas expressed in this feature are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or the opinions of the Ministry staff.—Editors.



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veryone yearns for a world of exuberant, joyful peace. And that, according to Scripture, is exactly what God intends to establish. The divine

goal is blessed communion, the healing of the life we share with one another. God's pledge, as Jeremiah said, is to bring in a day of song when "there shall be heard again the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness" (Jer. 33:10, 11).*

This is good news indeed. To affirm it is a wonder, and to diminish it a shame. Unfortunately, in our own Adventist circle we diminish it, as evidenced recently in the document on Global Strategy—or as we are now saying, Global Mission—approved at the 1989 Annual Council. Here good news is reduced, sadly reduced. I wish to explain what I mean and then, in love and hope, raise a voice of protest.

In large part, God's pledge of peace is about justice. "For I the Lord love justice," declares the author of the "everlasting covenant" (Isa. 61:8). Justice opens the doorway to joy for the oppressed, the hungry, the lonely; it gives rise to song and celebration (Ps. 146). In the Bible, justice is as basic as bread. According to Luke, it was the theme of the first sermon Jesus ever preached (Luke 4).

God's pledge of peace is also about partnership. In summoning Abraham, God said, "I will bless you," and added that Abraham himself would be a mediator of blessing to "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 12:2, 3). When Zechariah sang his song, predicting that God would soon

fulfill the covenant, he said this was in order that we ourselves might serve in holiness and justice (Luke 1:72-75). The idea is that we should be God's collaborators in the building of blessed communion.

God does not merely save souls; God saves *life*—the life that men and women share. It's also the *rejuvenation of society* to which God calls us.

Wholistic outlook

To me, therefore, it's alarming that we focus virtually our entire mission upon solitary souls. The document of Global Mission, meant to be our guide for the quinquennium now beginning, reflects and confirms this fact. Although this blueprint for evangelism affirms every Christian's obligation to minister wholistically to others, it never mentions justice and it never mentions peace. That may explain, too, why it never mentions joy. In Scripture these three are linked together; they constitute the fruit of God's redeeming action. A Global Mission in which they never figure diminishes the gospel.

In the Bible, God and the friends of God try to change *everything* for the better—not just persons but also politics, not just the way we live alone but also the way we live together. For the Bible is wholistic, recognizing that the quality of personal life depends substantially on the quality of public life. When we recognize this ourselves and begin to speak of peace and work for justice, our joy in God will grow. Otherwise it will not.

My alarm at the church's refusal to work for justice would be matched, I realize, by the alarm of those who dis-

agree with me. But the commonplace objections to what I'm saying will in no case bear up under biblical scrutiny.

Objection: You make the gospel social, and the social gospel has no place in the church. This is true only if the Bible has no place in the church. Under God, Moses changed the social world of his people. The prophets put justice—social justice—at the center of moral concern. Jesus made Herod, the political leader of Galilee, so nervous that Herod wanted to kill Him. None of this means the gospel is merely social. That would be heresy. But the fact remains that from beginning to end, the Bible challenges societies as well as individuals.

Objection: You preach liberation theology, but that's a call to violent revolution, and Jesus didn't believe in violent revolution. All the way through, the Bible is about the liberation of the oppressed. Read about the Exodus. Read about Jesus at the Temple. It's true that some (though not all!) liberation theologians sanction violence. But they are wrong, for the Bible is a story whose climax is Jesus—and He says no to violence (Matt. 5). We can work for justice without hating or hurting the enemy, and we should.

Objection: You speak of justice, but that's a smoke screen for socialism. It's true that socialism upholds justice as a central principle. But the Bible upheld it long before socialism did. Moreover, the Bible spurns the massive pride, the recourse to violence, and the abuse of power typically found in socialistic states. The point to be drawn from the gospel is that God works—peaceably—for the well-being of everyone, and He wants us to do the same. The Bible does not ask for socialism; it asks for justice.

Objection: You endorse a value that requires God's children to bear a witness to the state, but the church should keep itself separate from the state. It's true that the church should stay separate from the state. But this means the church must not identify itself with any state. It doesn't mean that Moses should have bent to Pharaoh's wishes or Jesus sidled up to Caesar. The great biblical heroes didn't bow and scrape before kings and governors, nor does God want us to do so.

Objection: You would divert energy from evangelism when that is the church's true business. I agree that the church's business is winning converts. The gospel commission is a summons to enlarge the circle of disciples, and even if the theol-

ogy and methods of evangelism need review, this fundamental imperative remains intact. But it's a mistake to think that winning converts is the church's only business. God's wish is to heal all of life, building a blessed communion. Moses and the prophets understood this. So did Jesus, who challenged Herod, among other things, and even rode a colt into Jerusalem announcing a peaceful revolution (Luke 13:31f.; Mark 11:15-19; cf. Zech. 9:9, 10). No part of Scripture, least of all the New Testament, limits our mission to the saving of souls.

Objection: You put attention on peripheral matters instead of on salvation, where it belongs. On October 22, 1990, the San Bernardino (California) *Sun* quoted a Seventh-day Adventist as saying that gender and racial discrimination are relatively unimportant. Both "consume" time better spent on other matters. Neither has anything to do with salvation. But in the Bible, salvation includes the rescue of individuals and the transformation of social life. For Moses and his people, the God who rescued them from Egyptian slavery was precisely the God of salvation (Ex. 15:2). In the Gospel of Luke, the Jesus who announced liberty for the oppressed was precisely the agent of salvation (Luke 4:15; 19:10). Biblically, salvation and justice are inseparably bound together.

Objection: You overlook the fact that God makes all things new at the Second Coming and we are presumptuous to try to do so now. This is a half-truth. James Watt, U.S. secretary of the interior under Ronald Reagan, once told environmentalists not to worry about the environment because Jesus would soon be here. Watt won no respect for that remark, nor did he deserve to. Confidence that Jesus will return does not entitle us to abandon the partnership God announced to Abraham and affirmed through Jesus. It's true that God will awaken joy by building peace and justice. But God's "I will bless you" does not negate our job of mediating blessing. The prospect of Christ's coming helps us to imagine a better world and to be dissatisfied with the present one; at the same time, it gives us confidence and energy to work today as God's collaborators for peace and justice.

The Adventist heritage

All these objections are well-worn and threadbare. By diminishing the gospel commission, they diminish the God

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who gives the gospel. In Scripture, God offers not only forgiveness of sins and empowerment for growth but also peace, replacing want with plenty, bigotry with justice, fear with fellowship. And the fact is that important elements of the Adventist heritage actually suggest this. I will mention two.

The first is the idea of a great controversy between Christ and Satan. This is prominent in Adventist consciousness for the priority given it in the writings of Ellen White. It is prominent, too, in the New Testament. First John 3:8 affirms, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." But this controversy, or battle, motif bears the tidings, unmistakably, of peaceful revolution. According to Colossians 1:13, God "has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." First Corinthians 15:24 tells us that Christ's work of deliverance goes on until the destruction of "every rule and every authority and power." God's purpose in Christ, the same letter declares, was "to bring to nothing things that are" (1 Cor. 1:29), or as *The New English Bible* puts it "to overthrow the existing order."

Ellen White's own treatment of the great controversy suggests that the whole world, not just private individuals, undergoes healing at God's hand. The lyrical ending of her last work on the series of books referred to as the Conflict of the Ages series imagines a universe finally cleansed of sin, in which a single "pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation."¹ This assuredly is the fruit of the undiminished gospel.

The idea of the remnant is a second element in our heritage that supports

He did not act as many of His fellow Jews expected the Messiah to act, He certainly condemned social and political abuses.

what I am saying. For in Scripture the bond between the remnant and the renewing of society is never broken. According to Amos 5:15, the true remnant “hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate”—establish, that is, what we today call “social justice.”² This is the will of the God who hates mere ritual and tells the people, “Take away from me the noise of your songs. . . . But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream” (verses 23, 24).

In the latter part of Isaiah the remnant is the house of Jacob, the servant of God. A comparison of Isaiah 46:3 with Isaiah 44:1 will show this, and a look at Isaiah 42:1, 4 reveals the mission of the remnant: to “bring forth justice to the nations” and to establish “justice in the earth.” This latter, according to Matthew, is the very prophecy that Jesus brought to fulfillment (Matthew 12:17-21, where Isaiah 42:1-4 is loosely quoted).

The book of Revelation takes up the questions of hope and faithfulness. The author describes unsettling and even precarious circumstances: the “powers that be” caught up in blasphemous self-worship, stooping to violent persecutions, abetting flagrant economic inequalities (Rev. 13, 14, 18). Against all this the “remnant” (Rev. 12) must persist, confident in Christ’s victory, loyal to Christ’s way. Indeed, according to the three angels of Revelation 14, collaboration with these powers is the road to eternal damnation. The true saints risk disadvantage and even death in public loyalty to Christ, repudiating the religious, social, and political evil around them. The true saints keep the commandments of God and bear the testimony of Jesus—the very Jesus who upheld the prophetic vision of peace, joy, and justice for all. The true saints

anticipate a new society, a new city, where the voice of gladness sings and the sound of mourning dies away.

Adventist example

Not only do these two examples from Adventist belief suggest concern with the healing of society. Our practice does so as well—at points. Consider, for example, two of the greatest of all Adventist missionaries. In the year 1909 Fernando and Ana Stahl set foot on South American soil. What they found in the highlands around Lake Titicaca was a social system that kept 92 percent of the people in near total subjection. Over them were the landholding families, a minority who saw themselves as superior for being White or partly White instead of Indian. The Stahls at first sold magazines, but soon realized how few of the people could read. Spurred on by an Indian convert and visionary named Manuel Camacho, they turned from selling magazines to building schools and clinics and markets. The privileged minority fought against them with bribes and beatings and imprisonments. Literacy was a threat, for it gave new powers of understanding and imagination. With these powers, exploited people could resist the suppressive system. But against the disapproval of landowners, town judges, and local priests, the Stahls persisted. They had a lively feeling for the wide embrace of God and for the goal of joy and justice.

Scholars from around the world have been drawn to the region where Fernando and Ana Stahl did their work. They agree that the Stahls awakened the highland people to their rights and changed the social structure for the better. It’s a story that Charles Teel, Jr., of Loma Linda University, is beginning to tell.³ The story is full of risk and care, hope and loyalty. It shines like the light of Isaiah’s remnant.

Or consider two little-remembered documents of witness. One is from the year 1921. That is when the Autumn Council of the church’s General Conference authorized the sending of a letter to United States president Warren Harding, expressing, from loyalty to “Him who is the Prince of Peace,” the church’s support for “a limitation of armaments.” The letter affirmed the hope that “the vast sums spent for armaments of war may be devoted to the amelioration of human woe and to the advancement of peaceful pursuits.”⁴ Another is from 1985, when

the church’s Annual Council produced a statement asking Seventh-day Adventists to help “remove underlying causes” of social discord, build respect for “human rights,” advance “social, cultural, and economic justice,” and urge nations to “beat their swords into plowshares.”⁵

Yet despite these signs of concern for justice, peace, and joy, the dominant ethos in our circle seems to overlook these things. None of these words appear in the document on Global Mission. Even in the statement of fundamental beliefs adopted in Dallas in 1980, the word “peace” never appears, nor does the word “justice,” except once in remarks about the vindication of God. By such neglect good news is reduced, sadly reduced.

The quest for personal conversions has always driven Adventist mission. It is crucial that we persist in this quest. Ellen White was surely right when in a famous paragraph she said that the cure for social and political abuses “must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.”⁶ She was also right in denying that Jesus sought “temporal dominion” as a means of establishing His kingdom. But it’s still the case that Jesus addressed questions of government and politics. Even though He did not act as many of His fellow Jews expected the Messiah to act, He certainly condemned social and political abuses. And He sought the exuberant, joyful peace that can be found only in blessed communion, the healing of the life that men and women share.

Let us enter full partnership with God and the Son of God. A Global Mission without justice and without peace can never build the joy that the undiminished gospel promises for all. A quote here or a text there can never invalidate this point. The overall witness of Scripture is unmistakable. ■

* Bible texts in this article are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

¹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 678.

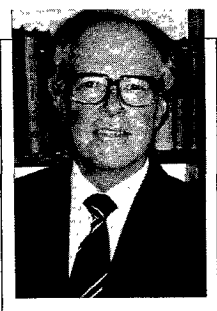
² On this see Gerhard Hasel, *The Remnant* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1972), pp. 174, 197.

³ See, e.g., Charles Teel, Jr., “Missionaries, Visionaries, and Revolutionaries,” *Adventist Heritage*, summer, 1988, pp. 3-14.

⁴ A copy of this letter may be obtained by writing to Bert Haloviak of the Department of Archives and Statistics at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

⁵ *Adventist Review*, Dec. 5, 1985, p. 19.

⁶ Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1940), p. 509.



Must our church members give a second tithe?

Is there any biblical evidence?

Eric C. Webster

To what extent, if any, are we obliged to return to God a second tithe? The ancient Israelites participated in many and varied sacrificial gestures, including freewill offerings for different projects and tithe from produce and animals. Which features of their Old Testament stewardship system remain obligatory in the Christian church?

Actually, the Old Testament does not use the term second tithe. It consistently speaks only of tithe or tithes. Then how did the concept of a second tithe originate?

Some Bible students see an apparent contradiction in the tithe laws of the Old Testament. They see one code calling for the tithe to be given to the Levites (Num. 18:21-24) and another suggesting that the tithes could be consumed by the worshiper (Deut. 14:22-26; 26:12-14).

Perhaps there were two different tithes—the first one was sacred to the Lord, reserved for the Levites (Num. 18:21-24; Lev. 27:30-32), while a second tithe was for sharing with the fatherless and widows (Deut. 14:22-29). *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* suggests that the talmudic rabbis had this understanding of the tithing system.¹

Some scholars even see the concept of a third tithe in the Old Testament. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* suggests that after the first tithe went to the Levites, “the remainder of the harvest was then divided into 10 new parts, and a second tithe was carried by the head of the household to the sanctuary to serve as a sacred feast for his family and the Levites. If the journey

to the temple was unusually long, money could be substituted for the offering in kind. At the triennial tithe, a third decimation was made and a tenth part was consumed at home by the householder with his family, the Levites, strangers, and the poor. This triennial year was called the year of tithes (Deut. 26:12).”²

The *Book of Tobit* (second century B.C.) appears to support this concept of multiple tithing: “Tobit reports that when he was a young man, prior to his having been taken captive by the Assyrians and transported to Nineveh, he would bring first fruits, tithes of the produce, and first shearings to Jerusalem. He also gave three tithes: he presented the first tenth to the Levites (as required by Numbers 18), offered the second tenth in Jerusalem (as required by Deuteronomy 14), and gave the third tenth to the needy (as specified in Deuteronomy 14 as well).”³

As far as the Bible is concerned, we lack conclusive evidence for the obligation of a second tithe. Since Moses is accepted as the author of the first five books of the Old Testament, it is strange that he did not clearly differentiate between the tithe of Numbers 18 and Deuteronomy 14, if there is indeed a difference. Some might find it easier to see differences in these two passages on the basis of time and usage. We grant that Jewish tradition, accepting the unity of the books of Moses, did come to distinguish between a first and a second tithe.

Now we come to the core issue: if ancient Israel did return a double tithe, what should be required of Christians today? Ellen White saw no clear mandate. She referred to the second tithe in describing how the Israelites cared for the poor, never explicitly stating that the practice is required of the church today.⁴

Those who urge a second tithe based

on the Israelites’ example of giving a quarter or even a third of their income for religious and charitable purposes should remember that the theocracy of Old Testament times did not collect separate civil taxes. Gifts to the sanctuary system supported the total religious and secular life of the nation.

Today, citizens of most countries pay taxes that contribute toward education, welfare, benevolence, and hospital services. Thus, those who consider their income taxes a portion of their second tithe should not come under condemnation. We should also respect the convictions of those who believe that church school fees are for charitable and benevolent purposes and thus apply toward their second tithe. Others might justifiably use their second tithe in supporting a widow or orphan. In the light of Deuteronomy 14, this type of liberty and freedom belongs to church members.

In summary the concept of a second tithe as promoted by some in the church has no doubt resulted in financial gain for our churches and in spiritual advancement for many members. However, we must acknowledge the possibility of feeling unnecessarily guilty when one cannot reach that standard of stewardship. Harmonizing the Christian principles of liberty and sacrifice might discard a strict second tithe concept for some but could lead others with ample finances to return even a third or fourth tithe. ■

¹ Marcus, “Tithe,” *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Isaac Landman (New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Inc., 1943), vol. 10, p. 254.

² “*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912 ed. See also G. W. Bromiley, gen. ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988), Vol. IV, p. 863.

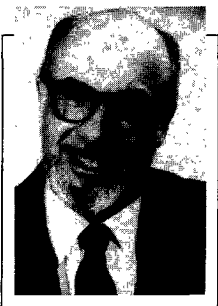
³ “*The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1987).

⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 530.

The Book of Members

Robert J. Versteeg

A timeless message from a timeless document: each is different from the other, but all a part of one body for His glory.



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In a mayonnaise jar unearthed in the southwest corner of the churchyard I discovered what appears to be an ancient manuscript of the long-lost *Book of Members*, Codex Cincinnaticus. The book is thought to contain esoteric commentary on the twelfth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. After years of diligently translating the document into the vernacular, I am now ready to begin making its contents available to the waiting world.

You recall that in the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul assures the believers that they are the body of Christ and individually members of it. The practical benefit and the excitement of our discovery of the *Book of Members* is that now for the first time you will be able to identify exactly which member of the body you are.

The basics

Paul mentions first of all the foot. In the church, the foot member is basic. If you know what foot soldiers in the army used to be, you know how important foot members are. They are the troops, the marchers. They're the members we take for granted, so long as they do their job. They plod along step after step, day after day, week after week, year after year, one after the other. They carry all the weight and movement of the church. The foot people are the sole support of the church. Note, however, that foot people, like foot soldiers, have also been known to do a lot of kicking.

A specialized branch of the foot corps are the toe members. Praise God for the members who keep the church on its toes, alert to new opportunities and new direc-

tions! Unfortunately, because they are the leading members, they are often the ones who get stubbed when the church in its forward march encounters some unforeseen obstacle.

In this connection the *Book of Members* calls attention to the shin members—very sensitive persons who seem to get bumped every time we turn around.

But if the shin members will only stay closely connected to the knee people, they'll come out OK, because the knee people are our members who specialize in kneeling, the members who keep the body in prayer and devotion. As we know from sports medicine, the knee is a vulnerable part of the body, easily knocked out of commission. Without healthy knees, the body is crippled and lame. Therefore, in some ways these are the most needed members of the body.

Hip members are those who know what's going on out there in the real world. They are in touch with the world's trends and concerns, and so they can help the church be relevant—they are in the world, but not of it.

The *Book of Members* does not pass over the ankle members, those who along with the wrist and elbows specialize in connections. The ankles are good-looking members, pleasant to have around. Elbow people are not so good-looking, and although they are prone to be a little more pushy than ankles or wrists, they are the same sort of members, flexible connectors, and every body needs some flexible connectors; they are the ones who help the rest of the members work together.

We have tendon and ligament members—the ones who hold the body together; we have muscle members—the ones who make the body move; and we have skin members—temperature regu-

lators who keep the body alternately warm when it's chilly out and cool when things get hot.

No atlas of the church would be complete without tribute to our shoulder members, those responsible ones who always carry the burdens.

Backbone members keep us upright and furnish the resolve that nerves us to take a strong but flexible stand when the whirlwinds of injustice rage.

The apostle singles out the hand. What a special member the hand is! Like the foot members who support the church with underpinning, the hand members are the people who serve. How could the body do the will of its Lord without its servant members?

The torso

Now up in the church's torso are housed some important organs. Of these organ parts, the heart is essential. If it stops, everything else shuts down shortly thereafter. In biblical terms, the heart is the seat of courage and faith. No question but our members who pump up courage and faith keep our church body alive!

The stomach is a very demanding part of our body. This is the member that acts as if all the other members of the body should work to fill its needs. Of course, it's a powerful source of motivation. But even though the stomach seems to be selfish, God has so arranged things that the greedy stomach actually—if unintentionally—provides nourishment to all the rest of the body. You have to be careful, though, because if the stomach member becomes too prominent and domineering, it tends to deposit unhealthy fat on the hip members.

The lungs. These are Spirit-filled members who breathe in the breath of God and with it ignite energy in the body's every part.

That brings us to the organs of elimination (where Martin Luther located himself)—in the bowels. Kidney members help drain off waste and poison; they purify the body. Bladder people—they're the ones who really get you—because they're always putting on the pressure at the most inconvenient times. But try living without them! They actually provide the body needed relief.

The *Book of Members* straightforwardly discusses the sex organs (you were perhaps wondering about that, or worrying about it). Yes, indeed the church body is very sexy (we're talking sex and

not lust here; neither are we talking body shame). We feel sorry for people for whom sex is such a bad experience that they use its terminology for bad words. Paul speaks of our "unpresentable parts" as worthy of honor and modesty. These are our members of ecstasy, the ones who are filled and thrilled with the joy of the Lord. It's because of them that new Christians are born.

The Head

Now the Head of the church is Christ, but the Head Himself has members that Paul mentions and the *Book of Members* elucidates.

The eye members are the people of vision. We need them to direct where we shall go and how we shall serve. They visualize what and where and how the church should be. Without them, the church would be blind and the entire body would be in darkness. Even our dreams are visual; these are our members who see visions and dream dreams.

A seldom noted but clever little member is the eyelid. With the eyelid, God has made this body capable of winking, because there are some things even God overlooks. The eyelid protects the eye.

The apostle also singles out for special mention the ear. How we need members who are good listeners!

We even have nosy members, but everybody knows about them.

And we have lip members—kissy-kissy, lovey-dovey types who delight or embarrass us with the smiling obedience to the biblical injunction to greet one another with a holy kiss.

The lip members like to hang around the mouth members. Mouth people, with the help of the tongue and teeth, both feed the entire body by what they take in and express the body's spirit by what they speak out. The word gossip originally denoted good speech (literally, "God speech"). What today we think of as gossip is actually nasal that is, nosy speech. The church's mouthpiece, unlike Dame Rumor's, should not be connected to the nose or even to the greedy stomach, but the church's mouth should be directly connected to its lungs so that the church may speak the Spirit of God.

Of course, we have our brainy members. We need the brain healthy so that it can be a fit instrument for the mind of Christ to do its thinking with.

But the proper carriage of the head depends upon the neck, and of all the

members listed in the *Book of Members*, my favorite is the neck type. What is a church that can't or won't stick its neck out? There are too many broken-neck churches, paralyzed, afraid to try anything, afraid to commit, afraid to risk. They have lost their voice and can whisper only, "We've never done that before" or "We tried it once, and it didn't work" or "If we did that, we might upset Mrs. Cochlea." Good neck people have confidence that Mrs. Cochlea will be mature enough to keep her balance. Good neck members give the church a firm, bold voice. Good neck members stick it out and thrust the head ahead, and it is a rule of body mechanics that where the head goes, the body will follow. Neck people know that if they get the body into trouble, Christ is the body's Saviour.

Some may think that the *Book of Members* leaves out the appendix. By no means: there it is right where it belongs, at the back of the book. The church has appendix members, too—the useless ones who maybe once upon a time had some vital function but who now just hang around. In fact, they may never be seen. We used to remove them indiscriminately but now we would prefer them to remain, in spite of their apparent uselessness, just because God has nevertheless made them part of us. However, if they become inflamed and threaten the health of the body and there is no cure for it, there comes a time when they have to go.

Each needs the other

With this overview of the *Book of Members* in mind, I hope that you are able to identify which part of the body of Christ you are. Whatever kind of member you may be, we need each other. One member cannot be the whole body. We share one life.

Of us individual members God has created a living body. If I cut myself off from the body, I die, even if the diminished body lives on. In the worst case, if I am so essential to the body that my amputation or removal cripples it or kills it, God even so will raise it up a new body to do His will.

But God created us to be one intact body; not only some members, but all of us, each different from the other but each a part and all together.

The *Book of Members* amplifies one major theme from First Corinthians: You are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ■

Pastor or CEO?

Johnny V. Miller

How do you shift styles when you pastor a super church?



Johnny V. Miller, Th.D., is the president of Columbia Bible College and Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. At the time of writing this article he was the senior pastor of the Cypress Bible Church, Cypress, Texas.

S

omething funny happened on the way to my pastorate—I became a CEO.

To be a chief executive officer was never my plan or

goal. I had wanted to be a simple teacher of the Bible and a shepherd of the sheep. Now I find myself a manager of flocks and a trainer of sheepdogs.

This church started 16 years ago with 35 people who had outgrown a Bible study. That was fun; I knew everyone, loved everyone, interacted with everyone. Within two years there were 200, and I was stretched membrane-thin, so we added our first staff member.

Now, six staff members, three secretaries, and about 1,800 people later, the pastorate is a computerized business and a “successful” ministry that leaves me longing for that original simple vision. I’m tired of long-range planning and budgeting and staffing and record-keeping. Instead of pastoring people, I oversee people—in fact, I oversee people who oversee people who pastor people. As Woodrow Wilson once said: “By the time anything gets to me, it’s a problem.”

And the accumulation of problems or demands seems to give each one of them the weight of the whole. If you have one piece of paper on your desk, it’s easy to pick it up to read. But if there are a thousand pieces, then the one on the bottom that has been there the longest has the weight of all the others pressing down on it, and it’s that much heavier to pick up. That’s how I feel as the sheer numbers of demands stack up, each wanting (maybe

deserving) all the attention of the single sheet.

Ministry a business?

I’ve concluded that some people are born to be ranchers; I’m not. I think the explanation for that is as much a matter of energy level as a matter of giftedness. To investigate that theory, I took a four-month sabbatical last summer and visited some “successful” churches to talk to pastors who also had started small and had worked through the transition to bigness. What I discovered helped me understand my own tensions.

I started each interview by explaining my frustration: “I find I’m a CEO instead of a pastor, and I want to know how you cope with that tension.” I found out that they did it simply by giving up either pastoring or teaching in order to adjust to being the administrator—the CEO.

“What do you think the seminary graduate today needs that he isn’t getting?” I asked one, the leader of a nondenominational work that has exploded to several thousand. “Business,” he responded. “The ministry today is a business, and the successful pastor has to be a businessman.”

“Are you content with that?” I asked. “That’s the church today,” he said. “That’s serving the Lord.” He does it well, but he studies only a couple hours for a sermon and waits until the morning before to prepare it.

“When do you schedule time to study?” I asked a denominational leader who has invested three decades at the same church, developing a multimillion dollar plant and a congregation of more than 2,000. “I

don't," he said. "I catch a few minutes here and there when they're available. Usually between 10:00 p.m. and midnight."

Those two seem typical of the high-energy, intensely focused (some would say driven) people who survive the stress-filled years of piling people, programs, pennies, and problems onto their ever-expanding agenda.

To put it bluntly, they are freaks—good freaks. They are blessed with enormous personal energy that is fed by, not spent on, their daily demands. They get by on half a night's sleep, seldom take a day off, and rarely take a vacation of more than a couple days. They hold an audience with minimal preparation, are gifted in telling stories, speak with an air of certainty and authority, and exude personal concern.

They also seem to lure money; they are the shakers and movers whose self-image demands a share in something big. So they build monumental campuses that imitate medieval cathedrals and force the little church at the bottom of the hill to emulate just to hold its tiny market share. That means everyone is building proportionately bigger and better, adding amenities, pursuing the shrinking dollar. Indebtedness grows, financial pressure intensifies, fund-raisers multiply.

The average pastor now finds himself sucked into all the grinding pressures that the super-church pastor faces, since that is the standard he is measured against and that is the kind of church he is expected (or expects) to produce if he is successful (read that "called of God and blessed"). It's crushing, both within and without. The average pastor simply lacks the physical and emotional energy to keep up the pace and still do any pastoring at all. In fact, as long as the senior pastor wears the CEO badge, the character of any church is probably going to be entrepreneurial rather than ministerial. It's one thing to assert glibly from the pulpit (or on TV) that you really care for people you've never met; it's another to have time to sit with them and listen to them and get entangled in their spiritual lives.

I'm ready to trade in my multiple staff for a shepherd's staff, get a tetanus shot, and tangle with some sheep. I would like to go back to taking instructions from Scripture instead of Schaller. But I recognize that stepping down may be as hard as stepping up. I am not sure it can happen in a church this size. The level of

expectations are too high. There are too many who depend upon the current ministries for either spiritual or financial support. We have gone too far just to suddenly stop and turn around.

Limited options

It seems that my options are fairly limited. The easiest one would be to quit and start over somewhere else with a group of ministry-minded people who would agree that the church should constantly divide when it reaches optimal size for personal ministry. That is easier said than done because it can feel like trying to decide which of your kids you would be more willing to do without. But this approach can and has worked.

A second would be to get a new staff member to do all the CEO functions, releasing me just to pastor and teach. But that would work only if the rest of the church would allow him to actually have the authority (and headaches) that go with such a role. And for myself, the pastoring needs would still be overwhelming if I simply tried to jump into where there are felt needs.

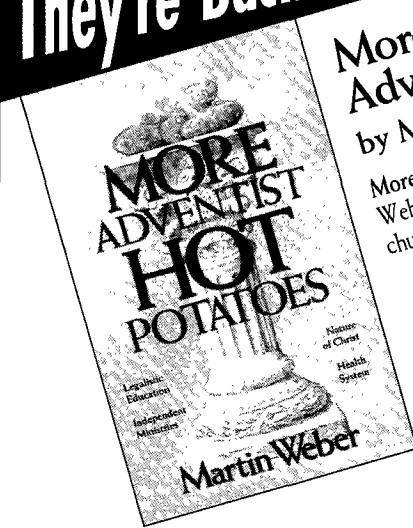
The option I have chosen for now is to pick one very limited group (a portion of the single adults) with whom to identify as their pastor. We meet bimonthly for sharing, prayer, and Bible discussion. I am committed to them and available to them, a church within the church. I steer

I'm ready to trade in my multiple staff for a shepherd's staff, get a tetanus shot, and tangle with some sheep.

other needs to other staff members—at least one of the benefits of still being the CEO—and try not to feel responsible for those hurts I can't touch.

I think that it is time to again prize the gift and calling of pastor-teacher, to spotlight the people builder and not just the church builder. We need to honor as heroic those who labor with limited energy and/or gifts to build up the sheep in contrast to multiplying flocks, recognizing that this is the heart of the ministry. That should be evident when we see the number that God has called and equipped to do that ministry but who are frustrated because they can't (or won't) live up to the expectations of a CEO. A CEO has a crucial role to play in today's church, but no more crucial than that of leader and feeder of the sheep. ■

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More Adventist Hot Potatoes is a continuation of Martin Weber's quest to find balance in the issues that tend to make church members a little hot under the collar. With charity and an open mind, Weber asks:

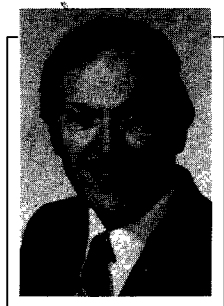
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Church leadership—I: leadership versus lordship

Floyd Bresee

P

astors may be many things, but there is one thing they must be: spiritual leaders.

Research indicates that growing churches usually

have strong pastoral leadership. This does not mean dominating or manipulative leadership. We must not confuse leadership with lordship.

The Jesus model indicates that, whereas worldly rulers are *over* those they lead, Christian leaders are to be *among* those they lead. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles *lord* it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your *servant*. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matt. 20:25-28).

Leaders as servants

Christian leadership is servant leadership. The Gospels speak of servant leadership at least seven times. When tempted to use their leadership role to exercise power over their people, ministers need to remind themselves of how contrary this is to the teachings of Christ.

Servanthood, of course, is not servitude. Servitude is demeaning because it is a status forced on you by others, depriving you of the freedom of choice. Servanthood, on the other hand, is a voluntary action. It is choosing to be of service to others.

Personality and leadership style

Personality and leadership are so inti-

mately related that we seldom adopt a leadership style different from our personality. To the best of your ability, however, you need to adapt your leadership style to the church or churches you lead. When your present leadership seems much less effective than your leadership in a previous congregation, you need to ask yourself if it is because your present church requires a different leadership style. Servant leadership demands the flexibility to adapt your leadership to meet the needs of differing congregations.

We could hardly imagine a stronger leader than Paul. He understood this principle of servant leadership: "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; . . . to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you" (1 Cor. 9:19-23). Servant leadership demands adaptation and flexibility.

A church board made up of educated, professional people who are used to weighing big issues and making important decisions may not allow the pastor a dominant role in decision making. A board made up of people who work for others and are accustomed to obeying orders may accept a very different style of pastoral leadership.

We sometimes say there are four types of leadership style: telling, selling, consulting, and participating. The telling or selling style may work fairly well with the second group above. The consulting and participating style is much preferred

and will work with both groups.

Management principles

Here are four management principles well adapted to pastoral leadership:

1. *Visualize.* Arriving in a new church or church district, you need to ask a lot of questions. Where has the church been? Where is it now in terms of mission, programs, facilities, and finances? Where does the church want to be a year from now? Five years from now? Visualize what is and what ought to be.

2. *Organize.* How can the church get from where it is to where it wants to be? What programs are needed? What personnel are available? There's little value in making plans unless the church has the personnel with the skills and interest to carry them out. How can these programs be most effectively organized?

3. *Deputize.* One reason pastors don't delegate more responsibility is that it requires that they also delegate authority. This they are reluctant to do. Servant leadership does not feel threatened about sharing authority.

4. *Supervise.* Give assistance at crucial times. If someone is failing, find a way to help him or her succeed. Reward performance. "Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit" (Rom. 12:10, Phillips).

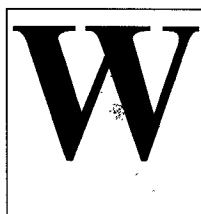
In summary, leadership must be based on the Christian concept of servanthood. Management mechanics are important, but leadership style is not nearly as important as leadership spirit. How you lead attitudinally is far more important than how you lead mechanically. ■

Unless otherwise stated, all Bible passages in this article are from the New King James Version.



Being your pastor's friend

Robert P. Fry, Jr.



Why is it that many pastors—the people we respect and admire most—lead lonely lives? And why do many lay leaders feel frustrated in their attempts to build a relationship with their pastors?

On one hand, there is the tendency to canonize the pastor in a way that Catholics wisely reserve for those long dead. However, in many congregations the pastor is also the target of criticism. If the sermon is too long or the hymns too new, if the denomination is too liberal or there is not enough parking, the pastor takes the heat.

We all recognize that our pastors need people who will accept them and enjoy them as they are, without either awe or arrogance—in short, friends. And most of us would like to be friends with our pastors. But what exactly does it take to be their friend?

During the past seven years I have enjoyed becoming good friends with my pastor. Our relationship has developed solely through the church; as a result, I find myself relating differently with him than I might with other people. Over this time I have developed, unconsciously, some “rules” for being a friend to my pastor.

Rule 1: Preserve confidentiality

I make it a practice not to share with others things the pastor has shared with me personally. Why? A friend is first of all someone with whom you can speak freely. If our pastors cannot be assured that we will keep confidences, they will not feel safe talking with us.

If you have enjoyed a private conversation with your pastor on a given subject, you may know more than should be publicly known. That information simply cannot be used in conversations with others.

Rule 2: Avoid public confrontation

As far as I am able, I never criticize my pastor in front of other people. The pastor's ability to function depends largely upon the respect he commands in the congregation. Anything I do to lessen that respect diminishes his effectiveness. Consequently, I try to avoid arguing with him publicly.

This is something I have not always done well. At an officers' retreat several years ago, our pastor was leading a discussion of the church's master plan. I thought the plan was incomprehensible and of little utility, and I said so, in essence, through a couple rather pointed questions.

By publicly criticizing my friend and pastor—or at least the work he was doing—I broke my own rule: my remarks were public and not private. Had I said nothing, the discussion would have ended sooner and we could have spent time on a more useful topic.

That blunder renewed my commitment to present concerns privately, par-

ticularly if I think my pastor is headed down a wrong path. In private he has a greater opportunity to change his mind without appearing to buckle under pressure.

Rule 3: Never just complain

Rather than simply complain and become a burden to the pastor, I attempt to propose a solution. I think of the time he and I were on a nominating committee seeking an associate pastor for our church. It was a long, tiring process. One evening, in a private conversation after the meeting, he suggested to me, “I think we've done enough. Let's just call Joe”—our leading candidate at the time.

I disagreed and suggested a name on a newly submitted resume. My pastor knew the man, but did not realize he had applied for the job. He quickly agreed “Oh! We have to talk with him.” As all good stories end, that man is now the associate pastor at our church.

The point here is that rather than simply complaining, I proposed another solution. And I did it privately on an issue of spiritual significance.

Rule 4: Don't try to be “best friends”

This leads me to the hardest rule of all: realizing that I simply cannot be my pastor's best friend. To require that would burden him with another commitment among his many responsibilities to the church family. To be real friends with our pastors, we have to be more concerned about loving and serving them than the benefits our relationship with them might offer us. In so doing, both their lives and ours will be richer. ■

Robert P. Fry, Jr., is an attorney in Irvine, California, and a member of Irvine Presbyterian Church. This article is reprinted from Lay Leadership III, 1989, and is used by permission of the author.

The Church That Refused to Die

Roger L. Fredrikson, *Victor Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1991, 189 pages, \$7.99, paper.* Reviewed by Chad McComas, pastor, Corvallis and Philomath churches, Oregon.

Why would a pastor with a successful ministry including multiple worship services, multiple staff, and other ministries take a church that had gone from 4,000 members to just under 400?

Fredrikson accepted a distinct call from God that took him from his South Dakota ministry to a needy church in Kansas. After a devastating split, the First Baptist Church in Wichita had lost its morale, its name in the community, and its ministry.

Fredrikson shares the steps he used in helping First Baptist make a comeback. But at the same time he isn't afraid to write about his failures at church and at home. He reminds us that compassion and love enlarge congregations more than programs.

This book encourages pastors facing challenges and disappointments in their ministries.

Fredrikson expresses his joy in helping people become part of the kingdom of God. He shares stories of changed lives. As I read this enjoyable book, I could replace certain names in it with those of persons I had ministered to. *The Church That Refused to Die* inspires us to keep loving people.

Choices: Making Right Decisions in a Complex World

Lewis B. Smedes, *Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1991, 122 pages, \$7.95, paper.* Reviewed by Danny R. Chandler, pastoral assistant, Columbus, Mississippi, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The language of *Choices* is quite ordinary—almost too simplistic, sometimes bordering on slang.

The author does a good job of using appropriate object lessons and hypothetical situations to stress his points. But at other times his train of thought drifts from the chapter's theme. For example, in the chapter "Consider the Consequences," he includes an extensive discussion on happiness and human needs—survival, growth, freedom, etc. After several pages of this, one feels that either the chapter was mislabeled or someone (either au-

thor or reader) has missed the connection.

I do like Smedes' approach to his subject. He appeals to logic and reasoning in making choices. He avoids being preachy, dogmatic, or rigid, and he uses his facts well. If he presents a situation with more than one possible outcome, he suggests the best one, but invites readers to make their own decision. When he gives an opinion, he makes sure the reader understands that it is his own. He therefore refrains from clouding facts with opinions.

I began reading *Choices* with intense interest, for the title led me to expect great things. Being able to make responsible choices without second-guessing myself has been my desire for a long time. At times my excitement turned to boredom as the chapter discussions drifted, and I began scanning the material rather than ingesting it.

Although the book has genuine merit, I think it could have been condensed to half its length and retitled *Choices: Guidelines to Making Decisions*.

The Gift and the Promise

Peter Schmiechen, *The Pilgrim Press, New York, 1990, 86 pages, \$5.95, paper.* Reviewed by Kaz Mosley, Newbury Park, Calif.

The Gift and the Promise gets at the heart of cultural, social, and personal problems, seeing them as representing crises of faith and trust. But Schmiechen avoids prescribing merely symptom-relieving religious medicine. The book does not start on a practical level, but the reader gradually comes to appreciate its depth of insight.

Schmiechen asserts that actions arise out of the way people define themselves. Therefore, we need to understand their thought processes and feelings rather than just their actions. He uses examples from Paul's ministry to the Corinthians.

Schmiechen emphasizes the cross as being at the center of the solution to human problems. He defines "cross" as an instrument of new life, new identity, and a new mind and heart in Christ. This comes as an additional gift from God and does not consist solely of a reshuffling of what we already have.

The author tells us to center our value system on a God who cannot be controlled, bribed, or manipulated. He suggests that the true meaning of Sabbath

rest (as opposed to only physical rest) includes liberation from self-criticism. This happens, Schmiechen maintains, as we experience the freedom that comes from recognizing that a power not our own has placed us in a new reality where God claims us by His gracious love. In His divine graciousness we learn to forgive ourselves and others. When we take on the mind of Christ, we see ourselves and the world differently. This change in us begins a change in our world.

Schmiechen believes that all religious culture should belong exclusively to God and not be possessed by any one societal group. His awareness of cultural problems and analytical style remind me of Francis Schaeffer or Jonathan Edwards. Though Schmiechen may not make as strong an impact as a Schaeffer, his writing provides a meaningful experience for thoughtful readers.

Savage Future—The Sinister Side of the New Age

Kenneth R. Wade, *Autumn House, Hagerstown, MD, 1991, 155 pages, \$3.95, paper.* Reviewed by Herbert Kiesler, associate director of biblical research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

As a sequel to *Secrets of the New Age*, this book purposes to come to grips with the meaning and importance of the New Age movement and its role in the final drama between antichrist powers and Christians. Wade's study of the ancient religious sites of the Aztecs and Mayas has helped him gain a better understanding of the movement that borrows heavily from these ancient cultures. He observes in both a devaluation of human life. In some of these early Western cultures the annual number of human sacrifices could run as high as 20,000 victims. They used sacrifices to assure their future safety and prosperity.

Our contemporary culture brands such ritual unthinkable. But Biblical prophecy convinces the author that conditions developing today could set the stage for spiritual warfare between God's people and their enemies. Wade refers to Revelation 13, Daniel 7, and 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 as indicating a time when those who refuse to bow to satanic powers and receive the "mark of the beast" will be faced with the death penalty. He feels the

New Age movement could play a role in this final conflict.

The author argues that this movement appears to be open and tolerant, but only on the surface. In reality it displays a growing intolerance for traditional Western religion. Thus it could open the door for a conflict between antichristian forces and God's commandment-keeping people. In view of this possible scenario, the follower of Christ ought to be prepared for any eventuality.

Obviously the New Age movement does exert a powerful influence on the thinking of many Americans and others concerning the value of life. But one can only speculate on the precise role this movement could play in earth's final drama. We agree that satanic forces use this movement to delude, but other even more powerful and deceptive movements and philosophies have the potential to undermine the Christian faith.

I applaud the author's creative attempt to construct a viable model of the end-times that appeals to a wide audience. But I wish he had provided a careful exegetical study of the prophetic passages he cites. An exegetical study of the text at the beginning of the book would enable the reader to delineate the issue more precisely and better identify the powers opposing true Christianity. The author, however, starts with a recent phenomenon and fits it into the schema of biblical prophecy, leaving the reader with a vague picture of the final drama.

Counseling Teenagers

Dr. G. Keith Olson, Group Books, Loveland, Colorado, 1984, 528 pages, \$15.95, paper. Reviewed by Angela Elwell Hunt, Christian writer and pastor's wife, Largo, Florida.

I suppose that professional counselors have many books like this one. Too often youth workers counsel kids on "gut" feelings alone, but in *Counseling Teenagers* Olson instructs them how to integrate those feelings of concern with a proper therapeutic approach.

The thickness of the book may deter casual readers, but it makes a useful resource book. Olson lists typical problem areas in his table of contents, including family relationships, suicide, adolescent sexuality, anger, depression, grief, and communication.

My only concern is with the book's intended audience. Non-professional counselors such as youth workers, par-

ents, and laypersons may simply become bogged down in data. For example, a desperate youth pastor who wants to stop a kid from committing suicide would not use the "Index of Potential Suicide Interviewer Form." In what I've seen of youth work, youth pastors and parents who can't solve a kid's problem with casual counseling send the young person to a professional counselor.

But if a professional Christian counselor is not available, concerned parents and youth workers can find valuable information in *Counseling Teenagers*.

The Cross and the Crescent

Phil Parshall, Scripture Press, Amersham on the Hill, England, 1989, 225 pages, £5.95. Also available through Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Borge Schantz, director of the Centre for Islamic Studies, Newbold College, Bracknell, England.

Parshall has ministered to Muslims outside the Middle East for almost 30 years. He believes Christians have a witnessing responsibility to the Muslims. Writing from this stance, he uses his material well. He purposes to help Christians understand not only the Muslim mind but also Islamic beliefs. He hopes to enhance understanding and appreciation of Islamic theology and practices, thereby making evangelism more efficient. Topics include the concepts of God/Allah; Sacred Scriptures; worship; sin; holiness and suffering; folk Islam; Jesus as Messiah and prophet; and hell and heaven.

Parshall chooses appropriate illustrations and stories to explain Muslim theology and practices to Christians. However, these stories could not be used in dialogue with Muslims. In most cases they use terminology based on Western Christian theology. The author makes important comparisons between Islamic and Christian worldviews. He deals honestly with the weaknesses of "folk Christianity." Unfortunately, the author tends to be too zealous in dealing with Roman Catholics. And did he need to be so sensational and detailed in his exposé of certain TV evangelists? The book often stereotypes women (all girls are pretty; sexual temptations and sins are disproportionately mentioned).

I recommend *The Cross and the Crescent* as being worth more than its cost. It explains Muslim behavior to Christians; it brings to the reader, clearly and suc-

cinctly, interesting aspects of Islam and Muslim/Christian relationships.

Grief Relief

S.B.P. Press, St. Louis, Missouri, 1991, 124 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Richard Tibbits, Kettering Medical Center, Kettering, Ohio.

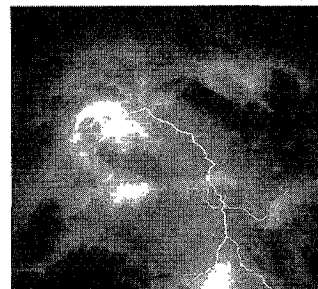
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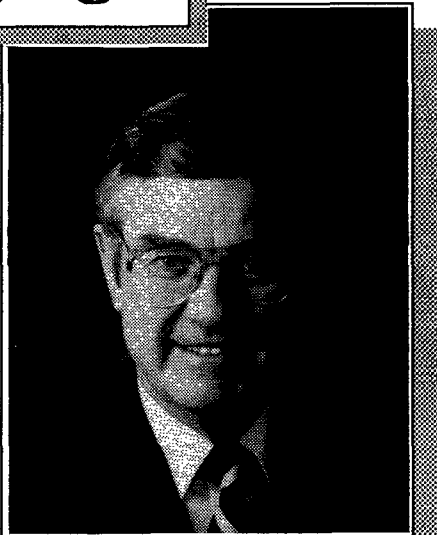
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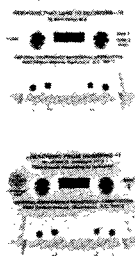
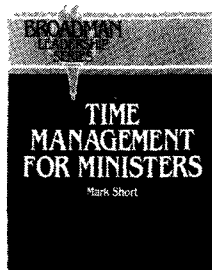
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What it lacks in depth it makes up for in touching upon each major grief issue and how to approach it as a caregiver. *GriefRelief* will stimulate your interest in pursuing further information on the valuable ministry of grief support.

Creative Preaching and Oral Writing
Richard Carl Hoefler, CSS Publishing Company, Lima, Ohio, 1988, 185 pages, \$7.95, paper. Reviewed by John L. Casteel, professor emeritus of practical theology, Union Theological Seminary, Muncie, Indiana.

Hoefler has written a concise, sound, and helpful book. The author, professor of preaching and worship and dean of the chapel at Lutheran Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina, defines preaching as the event in which "God speaks and the people hear and are moved to act in a new way." Preaching is thus "part of God's redemptive act in Christ 'here and now,' " calling people out of the world and then sending them back into the world to be "God's living body."

Hoefler sees the sermon as an event created by the preacher and the listeners in cooperation. The listeners do not just hear a sermon, but create the sermon in their minds. The preacher is not simply "on top of the text," but "in the text and saturated with it." The sermon comes alive, being "experienced in the pulpit now."

The author discusses four attitudes essential in preaching and eight steps in sermon preparation. In developing his ideas, Hoefler draws occasionally on the counsel of modern eminent preachers.

This book will benefit new pastors with limited training in homiletics. Experienced ministers wishing to reexamine their style in light of sound, basic instruction will also find it helpful.

Temptations Men Face

Tom L. Eisenman, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1990, 258 pages, \$14.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Len McMillan, Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Staunton, Virginia.

The temptations range from sexual lust to the wielding of power, from love of money to being perfect, and to being macho. I found the most compelling chapter to be the first one, "Set Free." Eisenman makes a good case for sanctification by grace. He points out that if we go through a very difficult experience and come out of it realizing we are no

better at sanctifying ourselves than we are at saving ourselves, then all is not lost. With these words of encouragement, Eisenman then offers concrete biblical and spiritual solutions for the temptations common to men. (While many of these temptations can also be common to women, he addresses them from a uniquely male point of view.)

I found Eisenman's analysis of the temptation to be perfect especially interesting. He points out that Pharisaism is always a problem with the serious Christian. One of the prices we pay for perfectionism is that we often pass along the curse to our children. For some, this chapter will be difficult reading; but for most, it will be liberating—freeing their families as well as themselves. Eisenman does not advocate disobedience. Quite the opposite. He brings us face-to-face with a biblical truth that we tend to forget: There is nothing we can do that will make God love us more than He does right now.

Eisenman devotes an entire chapter to God's power to deliver. He writes another interesting chapter for women married to men facing one or more of these temptations. For conservative Christians this book will stimulate thinking and perhaps trigger misunderstanding. But those who read it to its conclusion will be led to a closer walk with God.

America's Only Hope: Impacting Society in the '90s

Anthony T. Evans, Moody Press, Chicago, 1990, 168 pages, \$14.99, hardcover. Reviewed by Kevin L. Jenkins, pastor, New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church, Brooklyn, New York.

Those familiar with Anthony Evans will remember his excellent pamphlet series Urban Concerns, which addresses issues relevant to the urban church community. Evans continues to discuss his concern in *America's Only Hope*.

The author gives an outstanding analysis of the condition of the American church as it heads toward the twenty-first century. His conclusions are not flattering. He blames the church for failing to counter moral and social deterioration.

Evans suggests that the church has failed because it remains ambiguous concerning its function and purpose, especially in relation to race and society. He rebukes the church for being blinded by its proud Laodiceanism. Using a literary style that communicates well to both

theologians and laypersons, he makes a passionate and dramatic appeal for the church to "stand up in the nineties and be counted."

The author does not leave us languishing with problems, but gives practical solutions for solving the church's glaring discrepancies and contradictions. He divides his text in three parts: the problem, the solution, and the program.

America's Only Hope is a sobering yet inspirational book that strikes a balance between the biblical and the practical aspects of church ministry. The reader will be challenged by the author's insightful analysis and deep concern as it relates to the Christian church.

Recently noted

James, Faith That Works, *R. Kent Hughes, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1991, 352 pages, \$13.95, paper.*

This commentary on James is the sixth volume in Crossway's *Preaching the Word* series. Hughes provides good illustrations and follows the text closely. More homelitical than scholarly, the book can be a valuable resource for pastors.

"Christian" England, What the English Church Census Reveals, *Peter Brierley, MARC Europe, London, 1991, £10.99, paper. Also available through MARC, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, California 91016, \$19.95.*

Brierley presents and interprets the results of a church census undertaken by MARC Europe that identifies the status of the Christian church in England. Written for pastors and church leaders, the author identifies trends to help churches plan for the future. A companion book, *Prospects for the Nineties* (£10.00), gives tabulated statistical information on the English church.

Sermons on Suicide, *James T. Clemons, ed., Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1989, 160 pages, \$11.95, paper.*

With over 50,000 suicides a year in our society, this volume prepares pastors for that difficult sermon they may one day be forced to give.

Recently noted videos

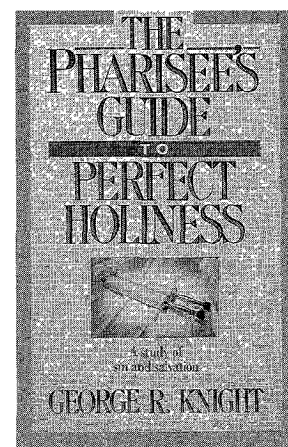
Effective Youth Ministry in Black Churches, *Hosted by Buster Soaries, Group Publishing, Inc., Loveland, Colorado, 1991, \$49.95, VHS.*

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youth ministry, gives specific ideas for building an effective ministry to black teenagers. He presents methods that have worked for other experienced youth workers.

The Chronicles of Narnia, *C. S. Lewis, Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 1991, \$29.99 each, VHS.*

Multnomah has made available three videos of time-honored children's stories by C. S. Lewis, one of this century's most beloved Christian authors. They are *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (174 minutes), *The Silver Chair* (174 minutes), and *Prince Caspian and the Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (165 minutes). First shown on public television, these character-building parables are acted out rather than animated. The stories provide good video programs for homes as well as for church family fellowships, but the Christian symbolism needs explaining for young children.

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Strength to live or die

From page 5

those who are ready to accept the unacceptable, believe the unbelievable, and follow the unreasonable. It is for those who believe that in Christ life and death have meaning and purpose; for "he is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Where the power of the resurrection abides, strength is assured.

Where, then, is our strength to live, our strength to die? In the Word, in being reconciled and reconciling, in commitment to His Will, in the power of the resurrection. Hence the apostle's triumphal assurance: "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39). ■

*All Bible passages in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

Letters

From page 2

in the forbidden zone, however, is not keeping sexual thoughts away, but maintaining a boundary against sexual contact so that the unique potential of these relationships can be realized." This statement is contrary to the teachings of Christ and Paul. Christ says, that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). Paul says, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4, 5).

I can speak from personal experience that victory over our thoughts occurs only when we completely renounce all compromise with the world and live up to all the light that we have available to us.—Harry A. Knopper, M.D., Pasco, WA.

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Easing the trauma of moving

A pastor is expected to give serious attention to a call for ministry in another church. When he or she accepts it, either willingly or by persuasion, the spouse often faces a problem—particularly if he or she gave up a good job and moved to a place without any prospects of immediate reemployment. That's when the trauma of moving hits the family the most! Is there something church administrators can do to ease the pain?

A caring show of interest is a good place to start. Perhaps the church organization can arrange employment for the spouse in the new place or provide information on job availabilities. If no job materializes then a special "hardship allowance" available for a limited time to the pastoral family will make the move less traumatic, and the adjustment more smooth.—Gloria Josiah, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

New for youth ministry

Windowframes is a new resource manual for local church youth leaders. Its 234 pages come packed with practical, ready-to-use materials for outreach, social events, and small group strategies. It includes support resources and 100 pages of ready-to-use program scripts. A loose-leaf format enables removal of pages for photocopying. The layout provides easy access to material. Also included are forms for planning budgets and a telephone tree, plus calendars and parental permission forms. Ideas are suitable for young adults as well as teens, in small or

large churches.

This resource, compiled and edited by Ted Wick, comes with a profile of Seventh-day Adventist youth based on the 10-year study by Andrews University. Although designed for Adventists, *Windowframes* is also useful for youth leaders in other faith communities.

Your youth will never have a dull weekend with *Windowframes*, produced by the North American Division but useful overseas as well. US\$16.95, from CM Distribution Center, 5040 Prescott Ave., Lincoln, NE 68056. Add \$2.50 for shipping/handling. You may order by phone (402/486-2519) or fax (402/486-2895).

Getting it done

My church had a problem with items assigned at board meetings not being carried out. Often these began as minor items not immediately affecting the smooth running of the church. Four months down the road, however, an unfulfilled assignment could become an emergency.

We solved the problem by adding an Outstanding Items section to the agenda sheet. Any uncompleted assignment came back month after month until it finally got done or the board rescinded its action.—Toh See Wei, Chinese Seventh-day Adventist Church, Singapore.

Large-print songbooks

Nursing home residents love to sing their old favorites, but many of them cannot read their hymnals. Now the Sonshine Society offers a large-print songbook with letters up to a half inch tall. Its 100 familiar hymns come spiral-bound for durability, supplemented by

a piano edition with notes and a sing-along audiocassette. Obtain materials and price list from: Sonshine Society, P.O. Box 327, Lynnwood, WA 98046. 206/353-4732.—R. Neil Russell, Annapolis, Maryland.

Remembering birthdays

A suggestion made by a seminary professor 50 years ago worked well in my ministry. He recommended sending a personal birthday card to each member. Every day through the years I set aside a few minutes for this just before leaving the office. A volunteer addressed the envelopes ahead, one month at a time. Not only did all my members receive encouragement from this—doing it helped me think positively about them and remember them in my prayers.—Arthur Holmer, pastor emeritus, St. Charles, Illinois.

Caring for aged parents

One of life's precious but often frustrating responsibilities is caring for elderly parents. Ministers are often approached for advice. The monthly newsletter *Parent Care* offers counsel and ideas. US\$19.95, from Parent Care, Box 216, Bethany, OK 73008. Outside the United States, add \$2.

Cordless phone

Neither my husband nor I as co-pastors can possibly make all the regular house calls needed. The phone has been an important tool to keep in touch. Using a cordless model allows me freedom to walk around the house doing simple, quiet chores and other tasks. When the person I'm speaking with needs a word of Scripture or prayer, all work stops and I go back to my desk to

complete the pastoral visit. —Sue Richard, Lima, Ohio.

All about ordination

One of the most significant books recently published by an Adventist author is *Myth and Truth: Church, Priesthood and Ordination*. Author V. Norskov Olsen, retired president of Loma Linda University, takes a hard and fresh look at ecclesiology from a biblical perspective. He is careful to maintain sensitivity to the development of the Christian church and its practices. Specific topics include the priesthood of believers, a biblical-historical inquiry into the practice of ordination, and the biblical foundation of the church. US\$12.95, from LLU Press, LLU, Riverside, CA 92515. Include \$1.50 for handling. California residents add 6.5 percent tax.

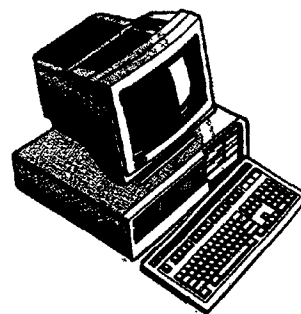
Mother's Day suggestion

On the Sabbath before Mother's Day, allow some time during the worship hour for spontaneous testimonies so members and visitors can testify of what their mothers mean in their life. The same works well for Father's Day.—Richard Rechichar, Sioux City, Iowa.

Computer Software

An excellent discount is available to pastors for the Oacis Software package advertised on the last page of this *Ministry* issue. You may secure a demo system diskette for only \$10.00 from the Ministerial Supply Center. The \$10.00 can be credited toward your purchase of the program in the future. Call (301) 680-6508 or fax (301) 680-6502. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

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