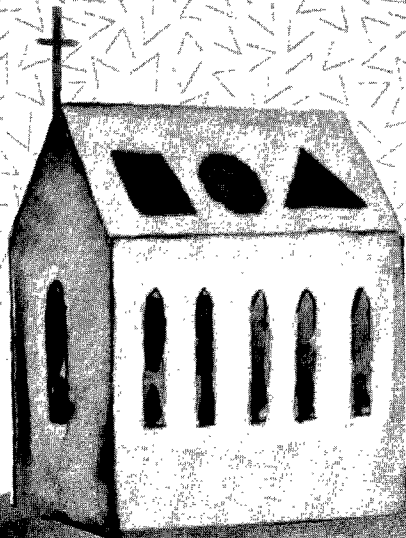
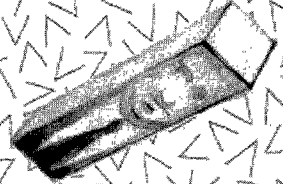


Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

September 1993



**Matching
Gifts &
Ministry**

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Julia Vernon's "Is There Any Word From the Lord?" (May 1993) brought back memories of my first quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). When three supervisors asked me what I thought of the program, I suggested that they need to change the name to clinical education and drop the word "pastoral." Whenever I shared a Bible verse with a patient my supervisor said, "Preach, preach, preach." He was joined by the other students.

Several years ago I spent a weekend with three priests in the diocese of Lake Charles, Louisiana. I asked them if their colleagues were exposed to CPE training. The reply was "Yes. It takes about three years to heal them when they return."

After taking two quarters I vowed never to take another. One of my supervisors objected to the de-emphasis on the Word. He became a close friend of mine and we worked together to establish two of the first hospices in our state. His attempts to change the organization were met with indifference, and he ultimately left the organization.

More than a decade ago I wrote to church leaders that the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary should offer a chaplaincy training program. I still think it's a good idea, and I'd like to cast my vote for it.

I thank Vernon for a thoughtful analysis of a sacred cow in some chaplaincy circles.—Larry Yeagley, Muskegon, Michigan.

■ The author implies that a general discounting, even rejection, of the Bible, exists in CPE programs. I have not found that to be the case in the five units of CPE I have taken involving four different CPE supervisors. Nor have I gotten such a message during the past nine years of association with my colleagues in the Seventh-day Adventist Healthcare

Chaplains Association.

Along with theological education, internship, and self-directed spiritual renewal, CPE forms a vital aspect of pastoral formation. What I have gained through CPE has helped me better share the biblical truth of a loving Saviour, and has better equipped me to fulfill the Saviour's "law" through bearing one another's burdens. I feel very indebted to CPE, both professionally and personally.—Forrest Kinzli, associate director, pastoral care, Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida.

■ While I share the author's concern for a biblically oriented pastorate in chaplaincy and any form of ministry, I do not think the experience she described is typical of CPE. I have had CPE training both in the United States and Germany, and I have found among supervisors and participants not only great respect for, but even deep interest in, my biblical positions. I have also been richly blessed by the Bible studies that were an integral part of the CPE program. Admittedly, the methodology of dealing with the Bible was more person-oriented and experiential, broadening my horizons considerably. But I tend to believe that this is growth, not regression.

The author's contention that chaplaincy is "diakonia" oriented is also questionable. Nurses perform *diakonia* (loving acts). And chaplains serve with *kerygma* (proclamation), both in their listening presence as representatives of the church and of God and in their spoken word. The real issue is not whether *kerygma* is present or not, but *how* it is present; i.e., is it present in a way sensitive enough to be heard by the person in need of wholeness, whether in the hospital or in the church?

Thus I am a strong advocate of CPE and am grateful that there are very fine CPE programs even within

Seventh-day Adventist institutions, offering an opportunity to be a corrective to the possible but not generalizable threats the author perceives.—Andreas Bochmann, Elkridge, Maryland.

■ Julia Vernon's article pictured those who take CPE as a group of people who have had either to stand like Daniel in face of skepticism regarding Scripture or to give up their respect for Scripture and go along with secular philosophy.

I wonder what Don Young would say about that. Don Young was my CPE supervisor during my nine months' internship at Abington Memorial Hospital in Pennsylvania. Under Don's guidance, Scripture played a key role in our training. It provided rich images for us to contemplate in counseling our patients and staff. It was the basis of the sermons we preached every weekend. Don helped us become sensitive to how some scriptures are better to use than others in an ecumenical setting, but Scripture—all of the Scripture—was a welcome part of the work we did. Now, make no mistake; if Scripture was used to avoid knowing ourselves, to avoid vulnerability, to avoid coming close to those we served, this was challenged. But the role of Scripture in my CPE unit was much different from that depicted in the article.

I invite you to learn more about the positive contribution of the CPE process. I think you would see why many denominations require their ministers to take at least one unit (usually three months) of CPE. The personal insight and spiritual growth that come from the process often dispel lack of self-awareness and tragic insensitivity.—Penny Shell, Ed.D., chaplain, Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, Rockville, Maryland; president-elect, SDA Healthcare Chaplains.

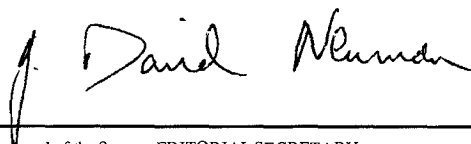
If you're receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in 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.

Working with volunteers, what joy, what pain! Every church seems to struggle with finding too few people for too many jobs. Ron Gladden tackles this perennial issue in "Matching Gifts and Ministry." He suggests a totally new approach from the traditional forms, yet one that is thoroughly biblical.

Death eventually comes to everyone is a reality that is uncontested. Yet strangely enough churches seem to find birthing new members extremely difficult and often expensive. Monte Sahlin discusses in "Friendship Evangelism" a simple and effective way to introduce new people into the body of Christ. In contrast to the high financial cost of public evangelism this method is relatively inexpensive. In addition the "staying" power of new members brought in by this method is much higher than some other forms of evangelism.

Death is one event we are often unprepared for. It comes at the most awkward times. Pastors often find little time to prepare the funeral sermon. You will want to read "The Funeral—Obligation or Opportunity?" to find a warm and relevant procedure for turning this time of sorrow into one of reflection and even joy.

This issue also brings a number of other fascinating material. As always we solicit your ideas and your prayers. While volume of mail prevents us from personally answering every letter we do read every letter. Read in peace.



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Happiness is a choice

J. David Newman

Most people are about as happy as they choose to be. Before you contest this statement too vigorously, consider the alternative. If happiness is not something we choose, but rests on the activities of other people, we then have little control over our peace of mind, for we are at the mercy of other people's actions.

If happiness is a choice we make, why would anyone choose unhappiness and depression over peace and happiness? Many people, including pastors, choose unhappiness for a number of reasons of which they are unaware. "Some choose unhappiness to punish themselves for guilt feelings. Others choose unhappiness to manipulate their mates and friends by enlisting their sympathies."¹

The case for happiness being a choice can be made most strongly when we contrast the way Saul and David related to each other. One day Saul heard the women of Israel singing the respective exploits of himself and David: "As they danced, they sang: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'" (1 Sam. 18:7).^{*} How would Saul respond to this evaluation of his fighting ability?

Saul could have commended himself for picking such a wise general. He could have recognized that while David was a more skillful general he was a wiser ruler. He could have chosen contentment over the fact he was less likely to be killed sitting on the throne rather than engaging in battle. Instead he chose

to keep "a jealous eye on David" (verse 9) wondering if David was after his throne.

His unhappiness grew so great that he tried to eliminate the perceived source of his unhappiness by killing David (verse 10), but David eluded the spear and escaped into hiding. While Saul was fuming away what mental choices did David make? Did he choose to wallow in self-pity, bemoaning his fate? He knew that he was to be the next king of Israel. Would he seek revenge?

Saul pursued David into the desert of En Gedi. When Saul entered a cave to rest, he was unaware that David and his men were hiding in that cave. David's men wanted David to kill Saul, and David did indeed cut off part of his clothing, but immediately his conscience struck him, and he said: "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord" (1 Sam. 24:6).

Sometime later David found another opportunity to kill Saul when he and Abishai crept into the middle of Saul's camp in the dead of night, David said to Abishai: "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD'S anointed and be guiltless?" (1 Sam. 26:9).

David's attitude regarding his experience with Saul can be seen most clearly in the Psalms. David wrote Psalm 57 after his experience in the cave with Saul. He chose happiness rather than self-pity: "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music" (Ps. 57:9). When the Ziphites betrayed David to Saul, David

sang: "I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O LORD, for it is good" (Ps. 54:6).

Saul let the words of the women determine how he would feel. David determined that his choices, and his choices alone, would determine how he would feel. We are not at the mercy of those around us. However, even if we agree that happiness is a choice, that does not make it happen automatically. We too often allow our feelings to be wounded. We need to remember the words of Peter: "But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God" (1 Peter 2:20).

The ultimate answer to life's problems is Jesus. When we look at Jesus "the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2), how can we ever complain about what others might say or do to us? Since we live in a sinful world, it is impossible, in our own strength, to always choose happiness, but we "can do everything through him who gives [us] strength" (Phil. 4:13).

This is why the gospel is such refreshing and invigorating good news. God does not bless me when I am good; He also blesses me when I am bad. God does not accept me based on my performance, but He does accept me based on Christ's performance. "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,

God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins" (Col. 2:13) and "made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2:5).

How marvelous it is that God does

not accept us based on our performance. This frees us from worrying about our self-image and what others think. If God thinks well of us, that is all that counts, and we are free to choose happiness. ■

* All Scripture passages in this article are from the New International Version.

¹ Frank B. Minirth and Paul D. Meier, *Happiness Is a Choice* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 13.

Surrendering all

Nancy Cranwell

Surrender. As pastors, we preach it to our members. We lead them in singing, "All to Jesus, I surrender." We invite people to come to the altar and surrender their lives to God.

Surrender. It's one of my favorite topics to preach on, and yet at times, one of the hardest things for me to do. How about you? Perhaps you often pray, "Lord, take my life." But what do you mean when you pray those words? Do you really mean your *whole* life? Every aspect—your health? family? possessions? Or are you easily tempted to give Him only certain areas of your life while you hold on to the rest?

We want Jesus as Saviour, but that's not the same as wanting Him as *Lord*. A Saviour gives, but a Lord sometimes takes away. Do we really want Him as our Lord? Lord of our lives, to work out His will and not ours? Are we willing to surrender all, to be totally God's at any cost? This involves more than having daily devotions and spending a few moments in prayer each morning. It means more than doing the acts of ministry that we pastors perform day after day. It requires giving up our own plans—even our hopes and dreams—to follow His will for our lives.

Does that much of a commitment make you feel a bit uncomfortable? Perhaps it's because when we think of the word "surrender," we think of failure. If

in war one side surrenders, that side has failed—failed to win, failed to be strong enough. But surrendering to God is something quite different. Surrender to Him brings freedom!

Perhaps one reason it's hard to surrender all is fear that we might lose something we think we need—or want. But when all is said and done, what really matters most? That our lives go the way we've planned, or that God's will is accomplished in us?

In surrendering to God, we're giving ourselves into the hands of Someone who cares for us more than we care for ourselves. He is our *Father*, not some uninterested person. Both His provision of Calvary and His promise of the new earth demonstrate His unfailing love for us. So we need not fear when we surrender to Him. Notice Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11).*

In thinking of someone who surrendered all, Mary, the mother of Jesus, comes to mind. She had her life with Joseph planned. Then one day an angel appeared and announced that her plans were not God's plans. Mary might have said, "But Lord, I've planned my life another way!" "But Lord, what will Joseph say?" "But Lord, what will my parents think?" "But Lord . . ." But no, instead she replied: "Behold, I am a handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:37,

RSV). For Mary to call herself a handmaid was quite an act of surrender. For in her time, a handmaid was the lowest of all servants. A handmaid gave up her will to do the will of another.

Jesus also knew what true surrender was all about. He yielded to the Father's plan to the point of death when He said, "Yet not as I will but as you will" (Matt. 26:39).

Often teenagers tell their parents: "It's my life! Let me run my own life!" Without saying these exact words, do we ever send God the same message? Even we pastors need to remember that choosing God in our ministry means denying self. An unsundered pastor is an

unhappy and resentful pastor.



Today, why not take a look at your life, and through the eyes of the Holy Spirit see if there might be something you are holding on to—some-

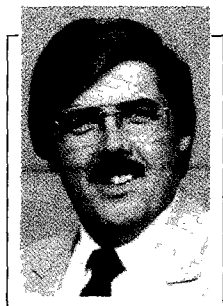
thing God is calling you to surrender? Perhaps it's something you're anxious about, maybe it's another person, or finances, health, or a bad habit unfor-saken. Whatever the case, let today be the day to place it at the feet of Jesus, under His care. Let our prayer be: "Father, today's the day. Empty me of all of me. I surrender all." ■

* Unless noted otherwise, all Scriptures are from the New International Version.

Friendship evangelism

Monte Sahlin

A sure way to witnessing—unrehearsed, nonprogrammed, and personal.



Monte Sahlin is adult ministries coordinator for the Church Ministries Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. He is the author of Friendship Evangelism and Sharing Our Faith With Friends Without Losing Either.

M

embers of the Sunnyvale Seventh-day Adventist Church in suburban San Jose, California, report that one of their most effective outreach activities is the Sunday ball game. It may not seem evangelistic—there is no preaching, no call for decisions, no Bible study or literature distribution—yet many new members of this growing church testify that their decision to join started with friendships developed during ball games.

Pastor Tim Mitchell is one of an expanding network of Adventist preachers who have discovered that the development of friendships between members and nonmembers is a powerful tool for evangelism. In secularized, urban societies, friendship evangelism may be the only avenue to reach large numbers of people who are resistant to religion.

Clay Peck is another Adventist pastor who promotes friendship evangelism. Two years ago in the Davenport, Iowa, church he held meetings that yielded 30 baptisms. "More than half were from small groups," he reports. "The rest were from friendship evangelism—every one." The congregation had worked at a relational strategy for evangelism for three years prior to the meetings and had 80 or more people participating in a dozen small groups each week.

The unchurched are not necessarily unbelievers; they just know little about the Bible and are distrustful of organized religion. Often they are not often against religion; they just feel that it is somebody else's hobby and not for them.

Public opinion surveys in the United States indicate that most unchurched people feel that churches are overly con-

cerned with organizational matters—institutional processes, fund-raising, and programs. They also see the churches as neglecting humanitarian issues like hunger, the homeless, unemployment, and civil rights.¹

This means that most of the unchurched are not likely to participate in any religious activity. They can be reached only at a personal level through a relationship with someone whom they trust and respect.

Friendship evangelism recognizes the fact that most converts to Christ and the church are won through the ministry of friends or relatives. For example, Gottfried Oosterwal says that 57 percent of adults who join the Adventist Church list friends and relatives as the most important influence in their decision, and 67 percent say this was the avenue through which they first became acquainted with the Adventist message.² Recent global surveys indicate that the percentage may now be as high as 80.

Research reveals that most converts think seriously about spirituality and the possibility of church membership during a time of trauma or transition. In most cases, during the six to 12 months before first attending church or public evangelism, they have experienced one or more of the following: a move, divorce, marriage, death or birth in the family, job loss, or a serious stressful event.³

Building trustful relationships

Readiness to hear the gospel comes with awakening feelings of need. And the most effective channel for communicating the gospel is a friend. Friendship evangelism is learning to build trustful relationships with unchurched persons in the context of secular life, and then listening and watching with patience and caring

for situations in which they show an openness for God.

This process can take a long time. It is highly individualized and defies the typical organizational processes of church programs and statistical reporting. Dr. Mark Walker's story illustrates this reality.

Walker was baptized after more than 12 years of friendly contacts. An Adventist pastor helped him in his teen years to enroll in a respiratory therapy program. He began the program at Kettering College, an Adventist institution operated in Dayton, Ohio. He was accepted into an internship at Porter Memorial Hospital, in Denver, Colorado. The quality of care at these Adventist institutions impressed him. One of the many Adventist friends he made was Linda, a nurse, who became his wife. Finally, as a second-year medical student, in spite of the pressure and demands of medical studies, Walker found time to study the Bible with an Adventist pastor.⁴

Brenda Criss has another typical story. When she and her fiancé moved to the state of Washington in the summer of 1984, one place she went job-hunting was Walla Walla General Hospital. "You can't work there," warned her husband-to-be. "They employ only Adventists."

Criss wasn't a churchgoer at the time, yet she did land a job there. She did not know anything about Adventism, or any other religion. She worked at the hospital for four years before her life began to change. When her youngest child was born, Criss decided she wanted to find a church family. She shopped around, visiting a Nazarene church, a Methodist church, and others. The book of Revelation fascinated her and frightened her, and she wanted to find a church that would help her understand it. "Every time I went to an Adventist church," Criss remembers, "they had answers to my questions."

Adventists whom she knew on the job encouraged her spiritual journey. A work associate shared his conversion experience. Others lent her videos and literature. What they shared wasn't smooth and well polished; it was personal and real. They demonstrated a working faith grounded in Scripture. They showed her how they used the Bible as the basis of their faith.

An evangelistic series provided an opportunity for Criss to review all Adventist beliefs and decide for baptism. "I

always wanted to be baptized," she said. "I thought maybe you could only be baptized when you were young." She had already bonded with church members, and felt a part of the fellowship. "It's so nice to go to a church and feel like you know half the people there. At both the church and the hospital, I really feel like I'm home."⁵

Three elements of friendship

Friendship evangelism consists of three elements. Each can be seen as a "layer" of solid foundation in Christ, and each builds upon the other.

First, the Christian demonstrates caring and compassion through a genuine friendship that is unconditional—not allied with any expectation of the nonbeliever. I do not expect my friends to accept Christ or join the church, because they may never do it, no matter how much I would like it. I do not expect my friends to do anything for my ego, my pocket-book, or my career. I accept them as they are.

Second, the Christian seeks to understand the needs of unchurched friends. I do not make a theological judgment or a Christian analysis of their need, but accept their feelings as they understand them. I am aware that their needs will eventually push them toward a readiness for the good news about Christ.

Third, the Christian finds opportunities to share the possibility of faith meeting the felt needs of unchurched friends. Such openings are often brief and fragile, and they are always highly personal moments. In the lives of some, they are rare. Usually they are related to some aspect of life in which their secular values fail to provide genuine substance and inner strength.

Listening skills are the key in friendship evangelism. When believers really listen to others, they are demonstrating that they care about others' opinions, feelings, and values. Disciplined listening embodies unselfish love and compassion at a practical level. It also helps uncover the felt needs of nonbelievers and paves the way for appropriate verbal witness even to those usually resistant to "religion."

Listening skills such as "active questioning," how to check out the feelings of another person, and "story listening" can be taught in a few hours of simple workshops in which church members enjoy fellowship as they "practice" on each

Friendship Evangelism Resources

Friend Day Packet. A complete kit from which a local church can build a Sabbath event to which all members are encouraged to bring unchurched friends, relatives, neighbors, and work associates. Includes sermon outlines, planning checklist, sample letters of invitation, bulletin announcements, advance presentations, and clip art from which to create bulletin, mailer, handout packet, promotional materials, posters, etc. Available for \$3 from NAD Distribution Ctr, 5040 Prescott, Lincoln, NE 68506; 402-486-2519.

Friendship Tracts. Colorful, brief, and need-oriented, these pocket-sized tracts come in two kinds. One is designed to reach the unchurched person who has no interest in religious reading material and the other is designed to draw a person interested in spiritual things into a Bible study. Topics include parenting, marriage, grief, loneliness, etc. Available for \$6.95 per hundred or \$3.95 for a sample packet from Adventist Book Centers or the ABC hotline, 800-253-3000.

Friendship Evangelism Seminar. About 12 hours of "lab learning." Can be presented in one weekend retreat or six weekly Sabbath afternoon or midweek meetings. Instructor's manual with overhead transparency masters is \$29.50. Learner books are \$8.95. Teaching video is \$14.95. Published by Concerned Communication, and can be ordered from the NAD Distribution Center, 5040 Prescott Ave., Lincoln, NE 68506; 402-486-2519.

Making Friends for God. A five-session video seminar featuring Mark Finley. It includes a leader's guide and can be used in a midweek meeting series, small groups, or as a special Sabbath school class. The video seminar package with the leader's guide is \$119. The participant workbooks are \$5.95 each. Available from Hart Research Center, 800-487-4278.

other. These are basic life skills that can improve family communication as well as help in relating to unbelievers in the secular context of work, neighborhood, and community service.

Focusing on real-life cases

Consider a beautiful example of these skills modeled by Christ in John 4. He encounters a Samaritan woman at a well about a mile outside of town. The conversation begins with the problem of thirst, which Christ quickly identifies with a deep, inner thirst for love and affection desired by a woman who has experienced five failed marriages. He uses "living water" as a metaphorical expression. It carries the deep meaning of the gospel to this lonely woman, who accepts Christ as her Messiah and becomes an active witness in her town.

Through discussion and sharing of real-life "case studies," church members can sharpen their ability to identify needs and discern opportunities for sharing gospel answers. Opportunities for appropriate verbal witnessing, even among the most antireligious, come through the skillful use of a simple question. After listening to the needs and feelings of a friend, ask: "Do you have any spiritual resources to help you with this?"

Careful attention to the response—both verbal and body language—will quickly reveal if there is readiness for hearing about Christ. This sets the stage for another basic skill that I call "option introduction": introducing faith in Christ as one alternative that might be considered in meeting personal needs. To make a more conclusive statement at this point would simply cause the unbeliever to back off.

For example, if an unchurched friend has just confided discouragement about his or her career, and answered my readiness question in a way that indicates openness, I might respond by simply saying, "Have you thought about the possibility of establishing a serious faith in Jesus? If you were to do so, that relationship would provide you with a different standard against which to measure success in your career. You would have the feeling that a life of service is more rewarding than winning a promotion in the corporation."

Jesus uses this type of verbal witness in John 4:13, 14. He tells the woman that the solution to her deep, inner thirst is the "water that I shall give." It has the advantage of quenching thirst forever, so that

those who receive it "never thirst." And the specific benefit of becoming in the woman "a spring of water" (NIV), or source of eternal love.

Many church members are learning to apply this model in their everyday contacts with unchurched friends, relatives, neighbors, and work associates. It not only brings in prospective members but transforms attitudes of church members toward everyday living. They see the relationships they cultivate with others as precious in the eyes of their Lord. Secular life becomes a true "vocation" under the direction of the Lord.

One man told me that for 20 years he repeatedly attempted to circulate handbills for evangelistic meetings in the office where he worked, and finally gave up after others became offended. Within three months after attending a Friendship Evangelism Seminar, two of his professional colleagues had visited Sabbath worship and begun to study the Bible with him.

Friend Day concept

Where pastors and lay leaders teach friendship evangelism to members, and set up special Sabbaths for them to bring their friends, church attendance greatly increases. In 1987 we began an experiment with the Friend Day concept through the North American Division Church Ministries Department. To date I have received reports from more than 40 churches, large and small. They all report attendance by nonmembers equal to 25 to 35 percent of the church membership. These become an immediate pool of prospects to be visited by lay Bible ministers.

Eoin Giller has used the Friend Day concept with excellent results in more than one pastorate. Last year at the Desert Valley church in Tucson, Arizona, more than 120 work associates, neighbors and acquaintances of members attended the annual event. Planning had begun with associate pastor Sali Jo Hand and the church board four months in advance. The pastoral staff and elders set the pace by each inviting a friend to write a letter accepting an invitation to be present on Friend Day. These letters were posted on the church bulletin board.

Three weeks prior to the event, Desert Valley members began studying a special series of Sabbath school lessons focusing on friendship: "Being a Friend," "What a Friend Is," "What a Friend Does," and culminating on Friend Day with "God Is a Friend." Sermons also focused atten-

tion on the coming event.

On Friend Day, greeters in the parking lot and at all the doors welcomed members and guests, creating an immediate impression of warmth and acceptance. The young adult Sabbath school staffed an information table, distributing name tags and "maps" of the church building to help newcomers find an appropriate class for their age.

A small "orchestra" had been assembled to help with the music that Sabbath, and early on Giller introduced as his guest the vice mayor of Tucson. The Parable Players, a drama group from the church, performed a sketch depicting how easily rumors spread in daily life, along with a second presentation entitled "The Heart of the Matter."

"The real reason for going to church," Giller told the worshipers in his sermon, "is to learn to know God as a true friend, . . . and to straighten out distorted concepts of God." He provided opportunities for children to interact with him, and the response of many who attended was positive. "Time just flew," one guest remembered. "When you first invited me, I thought sitting in church from 9:30 to noon would be long and boring."

Giller found that opportunities such as Friend Day create a flow of interested individuals for him and his church to minister to. It was a vital element in the growth of his previous church in Buffalo, New York, where attendance soared in two years from 75 to 175. Other pastors have used variations of the concept. The Monterey Peninsula church in California is located in an area with many military installations, so it planned an observance of Armed Forces Day. The Redondo Beach church and several others in southern California have invited the police officers from their community, with their families, for a special "thank you" Sabbath for their role in maintaining peace and safety.

The gospel commission of Matthew 28:16-20 is a command to all believers in Christ. But parallel passages always condition it. When He first sends out the twelve they are told: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel," their own kin and neighbors (Matt. 10:5, 6, NIV). Later, even when many of His disciples have begun to reach those outside their own community, He states that their witnessing should be first to "Jerusalem" and then to "Judea," and only then to

Friendship evangelism: two examples

Friendship '87 is perhaps the largest experiment ever in friendship evangelism. In 1986 William McNeil, then a minister in the Northeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, initiated the project that encouraged church members to invite friends, relatives, work associates, neighbors, and acquaintances to small group meetings, midweek meetings, Sabbath school, or worship.

"Many members are amazed when they discover that the most winnable people are their friends and relatives," says McNeil. "We wanted them to get involved in making friends without feeling that they must give a Bible study." The objective was to prepare people for later invitation to soul-winning activities by "making 10 phone calls . . . making 10 friendly visits . . . giving 10 tracts in the Friendship Series . . ." and encouraging attendance at 10 church-sponsored programs. Nonmember acquaintances who had experienced about 40 such contacts were dubbed "Golden Friends" in order to highlight the fact that these were people who should be especially receptive to hearing the Adventist message and an invitation to join the church. The strategic goal was to mobilize the 28,000 Northeastern members to make and mature 1 million such contacts over an 18-month period.

Congregations were asked to appoint a number of team leaders and these were invited to conference training events. They were supplied with goal charts, training packages, and other consciousness-raising materials. Pastors and church boards were encouraged to schedule special Sabbaths called Friend Days, and other events suitable for church members to invite their nonmember friends to. In Sabbath school classes, members wrote down lists of names they would contact, and then each week they would share their contact experiences.

Results? Statistical reports show that for 1986 through 1988, the Northeastern Conference averaged 1,715 baptisms per year as compared to 1,086 in 1985. Friendship evangelism does not replace public meetings, Revelation seminars, and small groups, but it certainly enhances their impact.

Re-Creation Unlimited (RU), an independent ministry based in the U.S. Northwest, is engaged in friendship evangelism of a different model. Each summer about 300 volunteers staff projects in a dozen or more state parks and federal forests. They serve the government agencies that manage the parks as unpaid "activities coordinators"—posts that were held by full-time government employees prior to budget cutting in the early 1980s. RU volunteers lead hikes, present history

and nature lectures, organize campfire programs, teach classes on subjects as diverse as crafts and stress control, supervise volleyball games, and conduct nondenominational worships on both Saturday and Sunday mornings. And they generally make themselves available to chat, listen, and be friendly to families on vacation. Last summer this brought them into contact with more than 40,000 people; occasionally in programs attended by several hundred people, but usually in small groups and one-on-one conversations.

Because RU volunteers work under government auspices, their witness must be nonverbal or entirely private and at the behest of the other person. RU's policy book says that "it does not use public facilities as forum to urge or captivate an audience for any religious purposes or to announce dogma as though endorsed by that government agency," and "specifically disclaims that the agency it is volunteering for in that location sponsors" the worships conducted by RU. "The affluent middle class is often nonresponsive to Christianity," says Fred Ramsey, an ordained Adventist minister who founded and directs RU. "I searched for a common experience shared by Christians and non-Christians, where Christians could demonstrate what it could be like to associate with others, perhaps in the very way that Jesus Christ would if He were here on earth." Leisure time, especially summer vacations, provides that opportunity, but the Christian volunteer is clearly on the "turf" of the non-Christian and must minister within those secular terms.

An intensive training lab equips RU volunteers with listening and conversational skills that help them to "incarnate the lifestyle of Jesus in today's generation . . . so that their vocation becomes a vehicle to share their personal faith." Much of their ministry is very personal—just extending hospitality and neighborliness in the campgrounds. "But some of the campers get so close to us," says RU volunteer David Goymer, "they shed tears when they have to leave to go home."

But does real sharing of the gospel occur? Paul and Marguerite Flemming tell of a typical contact. A woman in one of their group hikes became quite talkative, and discovered a mutual interest in natural foods. They shared a copy of a book on the preventive health practices of Adventists entitled *Six More Years*, and when the woman returned it, she asked, "What church do you folk attend?" The Flemmings answered briefly. The hiker then volunteered, "When I get back to Seattle, I am looking for your church. I want to attend there."

Vacationers and park employees have joined the church as a result of this ministry of friendship evangelism.

"Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV). This concept of going first to those that the believer already knows and rubs shoulders with in everyday life is central to friendship evangelism. Other terms also have been used recently to denote the concept: "lifestyle witnessing," "relational evangelism," or "networking."

Thus friendship evangelism is the bedrock of all evangelism. It is "where the rubber meets the road" for all church growth strategies. Yet it is often the most

ignored element of the church's outreach.

People in evangelism

Does your local church have a systematic strategy to encourage and support members in "working their networks" through casual, everyday opportunities for witness? In experimenting with this approach you must educate church members in some basic concepts beyond skills in Bible study and verbal witnessing. These include (1) how to relate to secular people in love and compassion, (2) how

to listen to their perceived needs, and (3) how to share faith in a way that it makes sense.

Such training can come through seminars and classes, but the bulk of your members may not attend. A less formal setting to educate church members in friendship evangelism is PIE: People In Evangelism. PIE consists of a monthly meeting. (Sometimes it is helpful to ask each Sabbath school class, committee, choir and other member groups to send one or two representatives.) The meeting begins with going around the circle and asking individuals to describe some opportunity they have had to share their faith in the context of their work, community activities, etc. As stories are related, the pastor interjects questions and observations that provide guidance in improving the effectiveness of each witness. The pastor may also suggest appropriate literature or resource materials. This is a "tutorial" or "coaching" approach to training. In order to make the meetings more attractive, fresh-baked pie is served. Each meeting closes with a significant time of prayer.

Please note: friendship evangelism does not replace Bible studies, home Bible fellowship, or Revelation seminars. Friendship evangelism leads to Bible studies. If, in each local congregation, the majority of members practice friendship evangelism while 10 or 20 percent become active in lay Bible ministry or other witnessing programs, a real evangelism explosion would ensue! In fact, if a church begins to use friendship evangelism but does not have one or more lay evangelism "action groups" functioning, it will not realize the harvest and may even conclude that friendship evangelism is ineffective. ■

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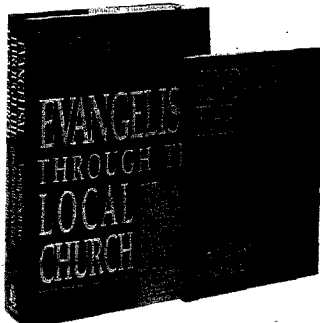
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¹ *The Unchurched American—10 Years Later* (Princeton Religion Research Center, 1989), p. 5.

² *Patterns of SDA Church Growth in North America* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 40. This is corroborated in a more recent research by Kermit Netteburg et al., *The North American Division Marketing Program, Volume 1* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Institute of Church Ministry, Andrews University, 1986), p. 54.

³ Netteburg, pp. 49, 59, 60. See also Michael J. Coyner, "Why People Join: Research Into the Motivations and Events Which Lead Persons to Join Local Churches" (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1980), pp. 51-54.

⁴ Jan Mathews, *Mid-America Outlook*, April 1992, p. 17.

⁵ Stephen Payne, *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, June 3, 1991, p. 11.

Matching gifts and ministry

Ron Gladden

Spirit-gifted people may feel stifled and unfulfilled, like square pegs expected to fit into round holes.



Ron Gladden is the ministerial secretary in Oregon for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A

lways dreaded. Often feared. Pastors tolerate it. Lay leaders wish it would care for itself, but it never does. And now it comes again

—nominating committee time! The annual recruitment saga!

Here's the scenario (not a pretty sight): Pastor Goodpastor has just received his annual stack of resignation notes. The personal ministries leader, Pathfinder leader, several Sabbath school teachers, elders, deaconesses, and assorted other volunteers have called it quits. He's not surprised. It happened last year, and the year before that. Some people offer detailed explanations (almost confessions), perhaps attempting to quiet their nagging consciences while also placating the pastor. Others state simply, "I've done my time."

Pastor Goodpastor knows that the church can't function unless people are found to fill all those empty positions. And so rekindling his resolve and bold determination, he begins psyching up for this year's recruitment campaign.

The big night arrives. Armed with a fistful of church directories and photocopied lists of slots to be filled, Pastor G calls to order the first meeting of the nominating committee. Several wonder silently if four midnight vigils will be required again this year. And who was that exasperated soul who made last year's speech about "pulling hen's teeth"?

Following a brief devotional, pencils are poised and sleeves are rolled up. The drama of slot-filling begins again.

"Do you think Sister V will take 'clerk' again this year?"

"She probably would, but the past few years she's had trouble keeping the records straight. Maybe it's time for a change."

"I agree someone else could do a better job, but I wouldn't make a change now. She might not understand, and the last thing we need is to offend Sister V."

"Yeah, you're right. Put her down for clerk again."

"Hey! How about that lady who just moved here from Reno? She looks like she'd make a decent kindergarten teacher!"

"Give her a call!"

Ring (pause), *ring* (pause) . . .

"Cross your fingers, folks. If we can't get her, I'm afraid we'll never be able to replace Joan."

"Hello! Is this Karen? . . . This is Greg. I'm calling from the nominating committee at church. I'm glad we caught you! We're wondering if we can twist your arm and get you to be the kindergarten leader this year . . ."

"You've been a Christian for only a few months? I guess we didn't realize that, but that's OK. You know what they say about a kindergarten class—sometimes the teacher learns more than the students. . ."

Click.

"Glad that's out of the way! Now, what about personal ministries secretary? That position's usually easy to fill."

"How about asking someone who's not doing anything? Like Shawn. He's 17 now. It's about time to start breaking him in, don't you agree?"

Transform nominating committee nightmares into the fulfillment of your members' dreams for service.

Ring (pause), ring (pause) . . .

"Hello, Shawn! Greg from church. We feel impressed to call and see if you'd like to be personal ministries secretary. . ."

Greg covers the phone and whispers, "He wants to know what it involves."

"Oh, it's nothing! Just some record-keeping and placing an order or two once in a while. You can handle it. . ."

"Oh, thanks, Shawn! We'll put you down!"

Click.

"He said as long as it doesn't take much time and he doesn't have to be up front, he'd take it!"

This year the process goes pretty well. As Pastor G opens the third meeting with prayer, only six positions remain unfilled. The committee's mood reflects their optimism that "tonight we'll be home early."

But somehow, finding people who will allow their names to appear beside those last few jobs is easier said than done. An hour passes, then two. Frustrated committee members shuffle tattered membership lists. Someone suggests dialing the same phone numbers again.

"This sure is fun," Pastor G observes sarcastically. "Maybe we'll get to schedule a fourth meeting after all."

Silence reigns around the table as pencils are chewed, corners of the room are stared into, and necks are scratched. Eventually good sense prevails, and Greg makes the motion to adjourn and meet again.

Sooner or later the nominating committee will fill the last six positions. Unfortunately, when people serve because they feel forced or guilty, they do it for the wrong reasons. They want to ease their conscience. Or get the pastor off their back. Or maybe they just want

to look good to other people.

They also end up serving in the wrong places. If the nominating committee's chief concern is filling slots, they won't care who ends up doing what, as long as someone agrees to try. Spirit-gifted people may feel stifled and unfulfilled, like square pegs expected to fit into round holes. "Joy in serving Jesus" becomes a cliché at best.

A better way

All that frustration can be solved by authentic service. First, it flows naturally out of appreciation for who God is and what He has done. Second, it takes into account the unique talents of the member.

People whose lives God has changed can't help responding with praise and gratitude. They are eager to go the extra mile for God, to show their thanks for His favor. Like the psalmist, they ask, "How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" (Ps. 116:12, NIV). Paul said that if a person wants to say thank You to God, that individual needs to pour out his or her life as a living sacrifice (see Rom. 12:1). Offering one's entire being in worship to the Lord happens in various ways, not the least of which is through authentic service.

New Testament principles discourage running out and signing up for the first job that comes along. People shouldn't just fill a position for a year, then bail out. Nor should they let the nominating committee coerce them into service that seems more like a millstone than a response of love. Members must serve according to their God-endowed spiritual gifts.

Three primary biblical passages teach about spiritual gifts: Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4. "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed" (1 Cor. 12:1, NRSV). Peter instructs, "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10, NRSV). Ellen White adds, "God has different ways of working, and He has different workmen to whom He entrusts varied gifts."*

When members know the fulfillment that inevitably accompanies authentic service, ministry is a joy. Instead of exhausting, it is energizing. Instead of bringing burnout, it leads to blessing. The member says, "I really love this. I

want to do this for the rest of my life!"

In order to help the members achieve truly authentic service, the church needs two major breakthroughs. The first is a philosophical shift. The second is a structural adjustment in the local church.

The philosophical shift

When a church abandons the practice of slot-filling and moves instead toward developing people, it is poised for a major step forward. An organization's greatest asset is its people. Leadership at the local level should view every member as a potentially effective server within the specific parameters of his or her giftedness. Leaders must become obsessed with the ultimate objective of developing and bringing out the best in the people whom God has brought together to form the body of the church.

Adult Sabbath school teachers and youth ministry leaders should be chosen and affirmed the same way we decide who will be organist, by simply asking, "Whose talents are best suited to do this job with excellence?" But this is not merely a call for more attention to putting the right people in the right positions. We must shift away from slot-filling altogether to the development of Spirit-gifted people and the maximizing of their unique and unlimited potential.

The structural adjustment

Let's assume that you have decided to move your church toward a gifts-based ministry. You may conduct a seminar that includes biblical foundations and a written test. Maybe you simply administer the test. Or perhaps you visit parishioners in their homes and ask, "What would you really like to do for the Lord?"

Each of these is certainly a move in the right direction. Yet when all is said and done, more is usually said than done because several problems remain:

1. Many members still view ministry as a one-year-at-a-time commitment.
2. Nominating committees still meet with the mission of choosing people who will accept predetermined positions for the coming 12 months.
3. Sometimes a new family moves in from out of town, eager to serve the Lord. If the nominating committee has just finished its work, talented, energetic people may have to wait for another year before getting plugged into the system.

4. When a few dozen people get excited about authentic service in accordance with their spiritual gifts, each of them may end up functioning as a lone ranger. In the absence of consistent and organized support, accountability, and guidance, the vision eventually vanishes.

Here is a revolutionary plan to solve those problems: Restructure opportunities for service by creating ongoing ministry teams around qualified lay leaders. Each leader would accept the task of organizing and focusing the energies, passions, and gifts of the persons within that particular ministry. Each ministry would be unique not only by virtue of the blend of people who comprise it but also because of its specific, self-chosen mission and direction.

The pastor's job then shifts from trying to prop up the weakest link in the chain of slot-fillers to seeing that each leader is successful. When that happens, the success of the leader naturally translates into the success of each individual server within the ministry team. The usual tasks of a local church are thus accomplished with joy, while dreams of ministry for God come true.

Having introduced the concept of a restructuring plan, I need to answer questions you may have about it. I'm sharing from my own previous leadership experience in the Madison Community SDA Church of the Wisconsin Conference.

Questions answered

How should a church get started in the restructuring plan?

First, you must get the green light from the appropriate lay leaders. They must be willing to make the shift from filling slots to developing people.

How long does that take?

It takes as long as it takes! Maybe a few months, maybe two years, or even longer. Some church leaders are all ears as soon as they realize the potential. But if you're working with people who prefer traditional ministry methods and tend to view the status quo as sacred, it will take a lot of time and education.

How long did you educate your people?

About 18 months. The elders and I met nearly every month in what we called a planning council. The meetings consisted entirely of dreaming, planning, praying, and evaluating. I shared

my vision a little at a time. As the trial balloons went up, the elders responded. Sometimes they were ready to go for it; other times they shot the balloons down. When the latter happened, I knew either that the ideas weren't workable or that the timing wasn't right. In either case I backed off. Once the people began to trust my leadership and understand the concepts, they became eager to get started.

What was your first step?

In keeping with our new philosophy of abandoning pre-chosen positions, we tried something a bit radical. We invented a little game called "erase the slots." I tried to make it fun. I asked, "What jobs or positions are not absolutely essential in order to be a Seventh-day Adventist congregation?" We looked at the list, discussed each slot individually (sometimes with vigor!), then crossed most of them off. When the dust settled, we had retained four essentials: head elder, head deacon, treasurer, and clerk. (Head deaconess would normally be included, but our church uses the term *deacon* to refer to both men and women.)

No health and temperance leader?
No personal ministries leader?

Not on our "essential" list. Most of the usual tasks end up getting done under the umbrella of a ministry that eventually emerges. But remember, we can't impose what we think ought to be. We must strive to release the gifts that God has brought together.

And then?

We started the search for ministry leaders, people around whom we could build ministry teams.

What did you look for? Who would be eligible to lead a ministry team?

We insisted on three qualifications in the following order of importance:

First, character. Before leadership skills, number of years in the church, or personal charisma comes character. Is this man or woman experiencing an authentic daily walk with Jesus Christ? Do the church members look up to and respect him or her as one who loves the Lord wholeheartedly?

Second, passion. Does this person possess a deep, unquenchable desire to accomplish something specific for God?

Give us an example of a specific passion.

We have a man who is highly driven

Once the people began to trust my leadership and understand the concepts, they became eager to get started.

to blanket the entire city of Madison with literature. Another person stays awake at night dreaming of ideas to make the worship service creative and meaningful. One of our elders feels compelled to release a team of people who can touch the lives of those facing relational, emotional, or spiritual challenges.

And the third quality of a leader?

Leadership potential. Is there reason to believe that God has gifted this person in the area of leadership? Does he or she work well with people? Is this person a team player? With training and support, could he or she maximize the gifts of others? Can he or she be taught to organize and focus the resources at hand?

How many leaders did you begin with?

Four. Later we expanded to seven, where we are today.

So you identified your leaders. Explain the mechanics of actually getting the ministries off the ground.

The church board agreed that these people met the qualifications. Each leader was then asked to prepare a written proposal explaining the specific thrust, or direction, of his or her particular ministry. When the proposals were presented to the church board, the leaders were affirmed and commissioned to begin their ministry.

What about recruiting? How did you get members to join ministry teams?

First, we gave each ministry leader a "fishing license." When the leaders are excited about their ministry, they are their own best salespersons. Next, we conducted a seminar to identify the members' spiritual gifts.

Tell us about that.

Committees rarely, if ever, lead people. People lead people.

The spiritual gifts discovery seminar has become an annual event in our church. We take between four and four and a half hours on Sabbath, from 10:00 until noon and then from one in the afternoon until 3:00 or 3:30.

In the morning we include the elements of a worship service such as singing, prayer, special music, and offering. Added is an exciting report from each of the ministry leaders. They tell what their ministry has done so far. They also share their vision for the future and explain how a person can become involved. Then I review our church's strategy for spiritual and numerical growth, followed by a short message.

After lunch we have more music, maybe a "parable in action" that focuses on spiritual gifts or faith-sharing, and a group quiz. Then the people take the written spiritual gifts test.

As soon as four people are finished writing and they score themselves, they form an affirmation group. This is when each person finds out what gifts others perceive them to have. Almost always, the perceptions of friends and acquaintances match the test scores. This part of the seminar is a lot of fun. People like the interaction and they get excited about their gifts.

Sounds great, but what process takes them from just learning about their gifts to actually using them?

A month or so before the seminar, we choose several spiritual gifts consultants. The last activity of the discovery seminar is having each person set an appointment to meet with a consultant. The appointment can be from between 2 and 14 days away.

When they meet, they discuss several things. First, the person's spiritual gifts, based on the results of the test and the affirmation group. Also, the person's specific passion for ministry. Finally, how much time he or she can commit to service.

The consultant then shares a written copy of each ministry's purpose statement and explains the various ministry options. Together they decide where he or she will most likely serve meaningfully. They then make arrangements to contact the appropriate ministry leader to volunteer for duty.

It seems that you use the spiritual gifts seminar as a sort of employment agency.

That's a good description of the seminar. And the spiritual gifts consultant serves as an employment counselor who helps members find their niche of meaningful service for God.

You keep using the word "meaningful."

Intentionally. Our goal goes beyond getting each church member to serve; we want members to serve authentically and meaningfully.

How long do the spiritual gifts consultants serve?

All year. When someone is baptized or joins the church through transfer, or even after visiting three or four times, one of the consultants will invite that person to write the test and then move into ministry. That way, the talented individual or family who arrives just after a nominating committee would ordinarily have finished its work doesn't have to wait for a year before being useful in the local church. The new person is off and running whenever he or she is ready.

What test do you use?

We looked at five or six different ones and custom-wrote our own.

So you choose the leaders and launch the ministries before the spiritual gifts discovery seminar. Wouldn't it make sense to reverse the order?

Either way could work. Be aware, though, that once the discovery seminar is over, you need to have ministry options in place before too much time passes or the test and all the hoopla that surrounds it will be in vain. Remember too that the key to successful ministries is the right leaders, also that character and passion come before the spiritual gift of leadership as far as leadership qualifications are concerned. Those qualities are more likely to make themselves evident through long-term obser-

vation than through a spiritual gifts test.

How many ministries should a church try to organize?

Eventually a church should offer a ministry for every 10 or 12 active members. The genius of this whole philosophy is that each church can be "customized" according to the two factors of church size and potential leaders.

How long do ministry leaders serve? One year? Two years?

As long as they are fulfilled and effective. If a person is an enthusiastic, gifted, and successful leader, the longer he or she serves, the better. It would be counterproductive to set time limits.

Are there times when you might want to start a ministry with a team of people or maybe co-leaders?

In my opinion, no. You can start it, but it won't prosper. When God needed a boat, He raised up Noah. When He wanted to lead the people out of Egypt, He called Moses. Committees rarely, if ever, lead people. People lead people. Someone has to feel the passion for the success of the ministry. Someone has to be willing to pay the price so that the ministry prospers in spite of inevitable obstacles.

What if something needs to be done in a church but no leader emerges for that ministry?

The temptation is pretty strong sometimes to go back to slot-filling, but when we really believe that God "gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8, NIV), we have to assume that what God wants done, He has brought people together to do.

In the Madison Community church, we have faced a leadership problem more than once. Three times we selected someone to fill the slot of youth leader. Three times it flopped. Today we don't have a youth ministry per se. We have other ministries, however, that are thriving and include several youth.

Suppose you have invested a lot of time and effort in training ministry leaders, and their ministries are thriving, but then they move out of town or even resign. What do you do?

You cry a lot! Actually, each ministry leader is urged to find and work closely with an assistant leader. The assistant then steps in and away you go.

If no assistant is available to move into leadership, the pastor and planning council have to determine which option is better: (1) find an interim leader and keep the ministry limping along until a new leader emerges, or (2) disband the ministry and shift the team members into other areas.

So you really don't have a nominating committee?

No, we really don't. We think of the roles of service in the church in three categories: (1) spiritual guidance and vision-casting; (2) record-keeping and maintenance; (3) ministry teams.

The first category is the pastor and elders; second is the deacons, treasurer, and clerk; and third is everyone else, "custom-organized" according to available leaders and spiritual gifts.

What do you do about head elder, head deacon, clerk, and treasurer—the slots you said earlier that every church has to fill?

That can be handled several ways. Here's what we do: If our present head deacon is doing a good job and finds it fulfilling, we want that individual to serve forever. When additional deacons or changes are needed, the head deacon brings those suggestions to the planning council (which currently consists of all elders and ministry leaders). Whenever we need to make a change in head deacon, head elder, clerk, or treasurer, it is done by the planning council.

How do you keep all this on track? Don't you worry about too many loose ends?

We evaluate constantly on three levels. 1. Each ministry leader is expected to develop and utilize an evaluation instrument and report quarterly. 2. We take time to assess individual ministries and to monitor the entire process at the monthly planning council meetings. 3. Our major evaluation event is an all-afternoon session once a year. All of our elders, ministry leaders, and assistants try to escape to a state park or some other comfortable place. I lead them in an evaluation of my preaching, my leadership, the effectiveness of each ministry, and the structure and direction of the church as a whole.

What would you say is the greatest challenge in operating a lay ministry

based on spiritual gifts?

The most important, far and away, is selecting the right leaders. Don't bestow the mantle of leadership too quickly. Pray. Be patient. Do your best to find leaders of character.

The most difficult challenge is equipping them to succeed and helping them keep the vision. Experience has taught me that the average leader loses his or her vision every 30 days. The pastor's ongoing task is to cheerlead, encourage,

and reignite their vision.

Do you recommend this new philosophy to every church?

Enthusiastically! If you are a pastor, find your potential leaders. Build teams of people around them according to spiritual gifts. Then pour gasoline on their fires. Become a leader of leaders and watch what God will do! ■

* Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 483.

Ministries of the Madison Community SDA Church

AIM—Artists in Ministry. This dedicated group of people plans and leads Sabbath worship services that encourage celebration of and reflection on the greatness of God. AIM is a chance for creative persons to design, prepare, and present services that lift hearts toward God through Scripture reading, parables in action, music, and preaching.

Care Unit—This ministry provides support for members and regular attenders who are facing relational, emotional, and/or spiritual challenges. Caring people who find fulfillment in helping others become happier persons and stronger Christians serve in a wide variety of capacities.

GRASP—God Reaching All Single Persons. The goal of this group is to provide home-cooked meals and food preparation training for single persons whose only family in the area is their church family. Persons of any age and marital status are welcome to use their gifts of mercy and hospitality as a means of expressing love and support to these singles.

New Discovery—This ministry consists of creative people who plan and present the adult Sabbath school program. This Saturday morning service aims to facilitate the spiritual learning of definitely devoted disciples in an atmosphere of fun and challenge. Dependable persons with both innovative and traditional ideas are needed for this ministry.

Parables—This team provides opportunities for creative expression in the public services of Madison Community church. Actors/actresses, writers, set designers, and those assisting with props and costumes are all needed to make these "parables in action" an effective means of spiritual stimulation.

Seeds—This ministry plans and organizes the sharing of Adventist literature and the presentation of in-home Bible studies. This is one way church members can share the good news with their relatives, friends, and work associates as well as with persons in general in the Greater Madison area.

Son Shine—A ministry helping families prepare their children for the kingdom of heaven. "Pre-adults" of all ages meet in Saturday morning Sabbath school classes where they experience Bible study, singing, stories, skits, and Bible games. Each child is encouraged to choose Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour and Lord through the teaching and example of those who feel a special love for the young.

The funeral— obligation or opportunity?

Douglas L. Janssen

**A carefully
personalized funeral
sermon can comfort
the bereaved and
win them for God.**



*Douglas L. Janssen
is a Seventh-day
Adventist pastor in
Sutter Creek,
California.*

W

hen your phone rings at 2:00 a.m., you know the news will not be good. And sometimes when a call comes at 4:00 on Friday af-

ternoon, the news isn't good either. That's when I got the dreaded summons to conduct my first funeral. The infant son of a church member had died unexpectedly. Little Ned's funeral would be a large one, since the family was prominent in the church and popular in the community.¹

Just as I was contemplating Ned's memorial service, my phone rang again. Another funeral for me to conduct! The circumstances surrounding the death of 87-year-old Gladys were less traumatic, but the grief of her family was no less severe.

So there I was with both funerals looming before me, and I knew of nothing to say. Out of that desperation the Lord led me to develop a type of funeral sermon that has transformed my view of ministering to the bereaved. I now see funerals as unique opportunities for spiritual service.

The personal approach

I learned my new approach after visiting with the bereaved families. For more than an hour I listened as Gladys's children and grandchildren reminisced about her life. Although I had never met Gladys, I came to know her through the eyes of her loved ones. I shared some thoughts on the love of God and the hope of the

resurrection, then left to visit the family of baby Ned.

The previous Thursday night Ned had gone to bed a little fussy. Maybe cutting a tooth, his mother thought. The next morning he had a high fever and was breathing with difficulty. His body was covered with red and purple splotches. Doctors diagnosed spinal meningitis. Despite their valiant efforts, Ned died Friday afternoon.

The parents, Frank and Dorothy, were suffering shock when I came to visit. Even so, they wanted to talk about their good times with Ned. During the next couple hours, tears mingled with smiles as they told me his nicknames and described his cute antics. For example, Ned still hadn't learned to leave the dog's food for the dog. All of what they shared helped me understand what their child meant to them.

Now it was Monday evening, and both funerals were on Tuesday. Late that night I was still trying to prepare my two sermons. I was thinking about one family having a lifetime of memories behind them, while the other had a lifetime of memories ahead. Suddenly the inspiration came to me (I mean that seriously). I should combine what I learned about the person and family with what I know about the Bible.

The sermon for Gladys came together easily. From what her family told me she seemed to be the personification of Proverbs 31, so it was logical to use that passage. The story of Dorcas in Acts 9:36-41 also represented her devotion to

both family and community. I drew a parallel between God's eager willingness to grant Dorcas life and His willingness to exercise His resurrection power for Gladys some day. I followed that with various texts referring to the resurrection and eternal life.

In addition to those Bible passages, I ministered to the family by sharing events and insights from the life of Gladys. Friends and distant relatives saw her as the children had portrayed her to me. Along with her good qualities, I mentioned a few of her struggles. This brought smiles to the family and made her seem real. I wasn't describing an angel but a real person. The reaction of the family to this type of sermon was overwhelmingly positive.

At Ned's funeral I followed the same pattern. Obviously, I didn't have a lifetime of events to talk about, but I did share with the audience of more than 500 friends and relatives what the little boy meant to his parents. I mentioned his nicknames and the continuing struggle over the dog dish. Again, this personal information brought smiles to the faces of family members.

Throughout the sermon I spoke to Ned's parents by name. I shared the story in Luke 8 of the parents whose daughter died after a delay in healing—before Christ resurrected her. I drew the parallel: "You also, Frank and Dorothy, sought for Jesus last Friday to save your child. As with the parents in the biblical story, healing was delayed. Imagine the anxiety of those parents as they waited and waited. Finally, suddenly, Jesus appeared. Life was restored. Hope found fulfillment.

"Frank and Dorothy, like those parents long ago, you are waiting today. You called upon Jesus, but it was not time for Him to grant your request. So you are waiting—waiting for the day when Jesus will suddenly appear. When He comes He will resurrect little Ned and give him back to you. He invites you to make an appointment today to be ready when He comes in clouds of glory."

Grieving people are hungry for the love of a pastor and the God we represent. The families of both Ned and Gladys told me they found meaning, comfort, and hope in my personal biblical messages. What a unique opportunity for ministry that we have at funerals!

Sometimes fellow pastors question the wisdom of my referring so frequently

to the name and life experiences of the deceased. I can only report that the reaction of grieving families to this personal approach—connected with a parallel Bible story—has been overwhelming in every instance. Months, even years, later, family and church members express appreciation for what they heard in my sermon.

One day while riding the "coach" to the cemetery, the funeral director mentioned that he had listened to three of my sermons and in his opinion they were among the best he had ever heard. He explained that many pastors seldom mention the deceased after the obituary portion of the service is finished. Often they conduct the service without even speaking directly to the family about their grief. He observed that I do not use a separate obituary. Instead, I weave significant events of the person's life into the sermon itself. Each event falls naturally into place, mentioned along with personality traits that the family spoke of in my visits with them.

Some recommendations

I share the above compliment only because it has made me bold to offer the following recommendations to fellow pastors:

1. See the funeral service as an opportunity to serve, not as an unpleasant obligation.

2. In visiting with the family beforehand, take note of what they say about their loved one's character and personality. An hour or two of careful listening can reap rich dividends for the funeral service. Let the family know you may include in the sermon some of what they tell you, if it is appropriate.

3. The person who died has a name—use it frequently, along with any suitable nicknames. Don't be afraid to mention character shortcomings, if the family is willing and you can do so with sensitivity. It's a real person you are talking about, not an angel. Just keep in mind that "he who handles souls must have sensitive fingers."²

4. Talk to the family during the sermon. If you are careful, you need not hurt feelings. Acknowledging the loss, the pain, and the confusion helps the family know that at least somebody understands what they are suffering. Your first obligation is to help the family cope with the reality of their loss and, where appropriate, to sense the equally strong reality of God's saving

and resurrecting power. They need to know that you are talking to them, not to your notes or to some vast assembly in which they don't count.

5. Talk to the general audience as well. Drawing the friends of the bereaved into the service helps them cope with their own loss. It also opens opportunities for personal ministry.

6. If you knew the one that died, draw from your own relationship with that person—but keep the family's recollections and feelings paramount.

7. Give a "talk," not a discourse. People will not be impressed with flowery words nearly as much as with your compassion and realism.

8. Try to understand and reflect the mood of the mourners. The type of grief is different following a lingering and painful illness than when a baby's life is snatched away between daylight and darkness. Both families have grief, but the first family's grief is tempered by expectation and relief.

9. Place the person's life into some type of perspective. Someone who grew up during the Depression may have a philosophy of life that their baby-boom children don't understand. The funeral sermon is an opportunity to bring into focus the various influences that made the life what it was. If the final years were clouded by disease or deterioration of the mind, help the family focus on the happier times in the past. Acknowledge the changes of recent years, but focus on more pleasant areas of character and personality.

10. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into the person's life that you can share to help the family in their grief. Remember that the Spirit is the "Comforter," and He wants to use you in accomplishing His work.

Suicide situation

Arthur was the father of one of my members who had an untreated infection in his leg. Rather than face an amputation, he shot himself. I wondered what I could say at his funeral. Arthur had shown no interest in Christianity. Family and friends couldn't remember any time in the previous 40 years when he wasn't, to some degree, under the influence of alcohol.

After I talked with the family, a couple factors emerged. Arthur was reclusive—except when he bundled a gang of grandkids into the back of his pickup to head for some fun. He drank heaviest

when other people demanded his energies.

Suddenly a door opened in my mind. I remembered hearing or reading that alcoholism is sometimes a mask for an abnormal condition called agoraphobia (the fear of crowds). I discussed the idea with the family during my pre-funeral visits. Instantly they were filled with insight and understanding. One daughter confided that she had been treated for both agoraphobia and alcoholism. She also told me that Arthur's mother had the same combination of illnesses for many years.

During the funeral service, when I shared the possibility that Arthur had suffered from these problems, heads nodded in agreement. At dinner afterward, many friends and relatives came over to thank me for my insight into Arthur's life. As I was leaving, Arthur's son-in-law (husband of my member) approached me for prayer on behalf of his son, also an alcoholic. This man had never before been willing to discuss religion with me. And we've talked several times since. Certainly the funeral was a moment of opportunity for reaching him.

Modern Abraham

Charles died while engaged in his favorite activity, training horses. In talking with the family the evening before the funeral, I felt the love and loyalty they all had for him—except the oldest son. He couldn't bring himself to express affection for his father. What bothered him was that his father never seemed content to settle down in one place. He had many talents and managed to make a living everywhere he went. But just when prosperity appeared imminent, Charles would quit his job and move on with his family. When they related this to me, the oldest son would protest, "This won't help the pastor; let's not get into it." I assured them that I wanted to hear whatever they wished to tell me.

Later that night I began to pull into perspective what the family had told me. One extremely positive quality stood out. Charles may have moved around frequently, but he remained consistent in his relationship with God and the church. Even the oldest son acknowledged, "Dad was as straight as an arrow in his love and service to God." I searched for a Bible

story that might parallel Charles's life.

During the funeral I told the story of Abraham. Always on the move that man was often called by God, sometimes perhaps for no apparent reason. Hebrews 11 tells us that Abraham was always searching for something better, a city whose builder and maker is God. I pointed out the parallel between the experiences of Abraham and Charles and encouraged the family and friends to likewise persist in their own quest for God's perfect city. They could find its fulfillment together with Charles when Jesus comes.

When the service was over and we were getting into cars to head for the cemetery, the oldest son walked over and hugged me. "Thank you for that sermon," he said. "I now understand my dad better than I ever have before."

That type of response happens frequently when I follow the steps recommended above, investing time and energy in personalizing the funeral sermon. ■

¹ Names have been changed.

² Roland Hegstad, editor of *Liberty* magazine, at a ministers' meeting in January 1991.

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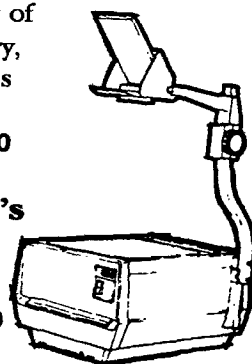
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Understanding Adventism

Russell L. Staples

Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church evangelical?



Russell L. Staples, Ph.D., before retiring, was chairman of the Department of World Mission at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. This article is adapted from an essay in The Variety of American Evangelicalism (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

The Seventh-day Adventist movement cannot be understood apart from its history. This fact may apply more to the Adventist Church than to some others, on two counts. First, it grew out of the Millerite movement, and the events and meaning of that experience have been indelibly engraved on its corporate memory and serve as one of the beacons lighting its course. Second, the function of the inner Adventist conviction that this church was accorded supernatural guidance in the ministry of Ellen White must be seen in historical perspective in order to be understood. Therefore, it seems necessary to lay some historical groundwork before embarking upon the more explicitly theological concerns of this essay.

The Millerite experience

Millennialism almost always has been a characteristic feature of American evangelicalism, and millennial ideology has given shape to numerous ideas and movements, including an understanding of history that accords the American nation a special place in the divine purpose; experiments in perfectionism, such as Oneida, the Shakers, and the Mormons; the Christianization of society; ideals of liberty and health; and the relationships between church and state.

Recent studies have served to locate the Millerite movement in closer proximity to the religious outlook of American evangelicalism than was previously thought to be the case.¹ It now appears

that the Millerites are better understood as comprising a normal cross section of society, rather than a group of fanatics and eccentrics, and their leaders as being those of reason, driven by what was to them inexorable logic, rather than fanatical prophets appealing to the emotions of the unstable and the disinherited.

The process of change accompanying the restructuring of social and political life in the early years of the United States was seemingly without historical precedent, and persons who believed in the divine ordering of history were motivated to study the prophecies to discover the meaning of what was happening. Thus, when William Miller began to preach about the soon coming of Christ, it was not an altogether strange message. He used familiar language and appealed to the accepted authority of Scripture. True, the predominant doctrine at that time was a postmillennial reign of peace, which was to be brought about, in part at least, by human agency, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to argue the case for the inauguration of a perfect society. Manifestations of evil seemed to be on the increase, and the times seemed to be growing less auspicious for the ushering in of the reign of peace. Miller therefore could undergird his case for premillennialism by appealing to the state of society.

Miller's epistemology accorded high priority to reason, and this was in keeping with the spirit of the age. It was on the basis of reason that he had become a deist, and it was as a rationalist that he returned to traditional Christianity. After two years' intensive study of Scrip-

We appeal only to the Bible, and give you our rules of interpretation.

ture, he wrote: "The Bible was now to me a new book. It was indeed a feast of reason."² Even more revealingly: "I felt that to believe in . . . a Savior without evidence would be visionary in the extreme."³ Hatch describes Miller's use of reason in the study of prophecy: "Miller was confident that by his inductive investigation a clear and simple system of truth was evident in the Bible. . . . Miller became a stickler for literal interpretation. . . . Upon applying mathematical science to the scriptural prophecy, thus eliminating theory and speculation, a precise formula emerged that pointed with awesome moment to the year 1843."⁴

Miller painstakingly demonstrated how all people could understand the prophecies for themselves. Just as he sought to avoid speculation, so also he eschewed any form of inner enlightenment or appeal to subjective mysticism. Accused of fanaticism and religious excesses, the Millerites responded: "We have sought to spread the truth, not by fanatical prophecies arising out of our own hearts, but by the light of the Scriptures, history, and by sober argument. We appeal only to the Bible, and give you our rules of interpretation."⁵

Millerism was a mass movement distributed across the Northeast and Midwest of the United States from Maine to Michigan. Its preachers came from many of the churches. Of the 174 preachers with identifiable religious affiliation, 44 percent were Methodist, 27 percent Baptist, 9 percent Congregational, 8 percent Christianite,⁶ and 7 percent Presbyterian, with smaller numbers of Dutch Reformed, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Quakers.⁷ The movement in its early stage was anti-separatist. Millerite prayer circles and study fellowship meetings were promoted, but followers were encouraged to remain in their churches. And a wide variety of theological opin-

ion was tolerated. One critic reported: "Here we find annihilationists who unite with universalists . . . ; Arians, Socinians . . . , and yet united on this one point [Millerism], they are all brethren, hale fellows well met."⁸

The prophetic basis of the movement was Daniel 8:14 and 9:23-27. Simply put, Miller calculated the 2,300 years (on the day-for-a-year principle) until the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) to begin at the decree of 457 B.C. "to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (Dan. 9:25, NIV). By simple arithmetic, this period was calculated to terminate about 1843-1844. This basic formula was bolstered by a network of parallel prophetic calculations. The sanctuary to be cleansed was understood to represent the earth; the cleansing event, the second coming of Christ. This was so, it was reasoned, because only Christ has the power to cleanse the world of sin and bring the millennium. Almost all the events of the last days were understood to occur at this time: separation of the righteous from the wicked, resurrection of the righteous dead, destruction of the earth, creation of the new heavens and new earth, and the commencement of the millennium.

The second stage of the movement commenced in 1844. By then it was realized that the 2,300 years commencing in 457 B.C. would end in A.D. 1844, not 1843. The cleansing of the sanctuary was now coupled with the Day of Atonement—the day of the annual cleansing of the Temple in the ancient Hebrew cultic year (Lev. 16). The Day of Atonement thus was seen to be a prototype of the cleansing of the earth at the second coming of Christ. This day, it was calculated, would fall on October 22 in the year 1844.

Excitement ran high as this message was preached and rose higher as the day drew nearer. As enthusiasm rose, the movement became more volatile and overran many of its more moderate leaders. Some of the churches became alarmed at the excitement generated by Millerites within their communities and responded by disfellowshipping some of their members; some churches expelled ministers who were active in the movement. In place of the earlier antiseparatist stance, there now arose in some quarters of the movement a vigorous cry, in the name of the angel of Revelation 18:1-4, to "come out" of the churches that were

refusing to prepare for the coming of the Lord. Several of the leaders took Millerite condemnation of the churches to its logical conclusion. Denominations were the antichrist, were prophetic Babylon, and all saints must now "come out of Babylon" lest they partake of the destruction to fall on the wicked. "If you are a Christian, *come out of Babylon*. If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, *come out of Babylon*, and come out now"⁹ (italics in original).

There thus arose, among some Millerites, a rather sharp sense of particularism.

Beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Millerite movement was shattered by the delay of the Parousia—the unfulfilled hope subsequently being called the Great Disappointment. Some rejected the movement altogether. Perhaps the majority response of those who still affirmed the movement was to continue expectantly awaiting the Advent, on the grounds that there quite easily could have been an error of a few years in calculations. They experienced a difficulty, however, in that, because of prevailing anti-Millerite sentiment, there seemed to be no church home to which they could comfortably turn. The Advent Christian Church eventually arose out of this stranded group. Other Millerites argued that Christ's second coming actually *had* occurred in a spiritual sense, and some such joined the Shakers.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church arose out of one of the smaller segments of the Millerites; however, it was comprised of a broad spectrum of evangelical Protestants, among whom Methodists and Christianites seem to have exerted a dominant influence. Reaffirmation of the validity of the Millerite message provided positive incentive to remain separate from the churches.

Several developments contributed to the coalescence of this cohort of disheartened Millerites into a committed core group. Perhaps the first development was a reaffirmation of the divine origin of the Millerite movement,¹⁰ accompanied by an elongation of the timetable of the awaited Parousia. The instrumentality of these affirmations was a vision received by Ellen Harmon in late 1844 and subsequently communicated to the group.¹¹ This message gave the members both the incentive and the

sense of time necessary for the formation of an organization.

The second key factor was the reinterpretation of the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Continued study of the Israelite sanctuary services and comparison of the earthly type with the heavenly antitype led to the conviction that instead of leaving heaven to come to earth, Christ had entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to commence a new phase of His priestly ministry.

The third facilitating event was acceptance of prophetic guidance in the ministry of Ellen Harmon (later White). The idea of prophetic guidance was not necessarily strange to the Millerites. They lived close to the Scriptures, derived their models from the early church, believed they had seen the hand of God in recent events in human history, and were open to a progressive unfolding of revelation. Besides, these early Adventists identified themselves with the "remnant" of Revelation 12:17, who "have the testimony of Jesus Christ"; and they understood this phrase to mean the "spirit of prophecy," on the basis of Revelation 19:10.

Two other doctrines that came to be distinctive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had surfaced in the Millerite movement: the seventh-day Sabbath¹² and "soul sleep."¹³ A logical concomitant of the latter is the rejection of an ever-burning hell. Interest in the doctrine appears to have arisen from immediate existential concern regarding the fate of the wicked at the Second Coming, and revolved about the theodicy problem rather than from a rethinking of Platonic dualism.

The process by which the scattered Millerites were drawn together and consensus was achieved centered on a series of conferences conducted in New England and New York for "friends of the Sabbath," which commenced in 1848 and ran for several years. The sense of distinctiveness inherited from the Millerites was reified in the process of establishing corporate and doctrinal identity. It was further reinforced as the members came to identify in their studies with the remnant of Revelation 12:17 and felt called to proclaim the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14. A denomination was officially established in 1861, when the members in Michigan signed an agreement associating them-

selves together "as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ."¹⁴

Themes in Adventist theology

Having briefly traced some aspects of the historical origin and doctrinal orientation of the coalescing Adventist Church, we are now in a position to give consideration to the theological issues relevant to this study. What follows is not an exhaustive survey of the Adventist doctrinal system, nor an apologetic defense. The concern is more to place Adventist thought in perspective and describe some of its functions.

The Adventist corpus of belief, broadly speaking, is a set of biblically endorsed doctrines and is perhaps better thought of as a coordinated system of fundamental beliefs than as a theological system formulated about a central organizing principle.¹⁵ In this it is consistent with its Millerite origins and the anticreedal stance of the Christianite members of the founding group.

In the early days of Adventism, several of its leaders, who formerly had been Christianites, held mildly anti-trinitarian and semi-Arian views, which derived from an earlier Socinian influence. Apart from these early deviant views, Adventists have held orthodox views regarding the Godhead and what are generally considered to be the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. The cluster of doctrines relating to the Fall and sin and salvation constitute a thoroughgoing evangelical Arminianism. Universal atonement is affirmed, while determinism is rejected. A degree of free will is endorsed, but without the subtlety of the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace. The balance maintained between divine sovereignty and human effort is Wesleyan. And it is a balance that endeavors to safeguard the divine initiative in salvation without undercutting human responsibility.

As for Christology, both sides are well-developed in Adventist thought and experience. Theologically, emphasis is placed on the divine Christ, in whom was life underived, and who thus could make atonement for human sin. In practical piety, however, there has been a tendency to emphasize the human Christ, who suffered, was tempted, and overcame in the stream of human time and who is therefore both a perfect example

There lies in this tendency an invitation to legalism—not in formal doctrine, but in Christian experience.

and the compassionate Saviour of the soul in need. In this, too, Adventism is akin more to American Arminianism than to the Wesleyan doctrine. There lies in this tendency an invitation to legalism—not in formal doctrine, for there salvation by grace alone is clearly defined, but in Christian experience.

In addition to broad-based Arminianism, there are those doctrines that, from a general perspective, might be designated as distinctly Adventist. These form a mutually supportive cluster, and it is the complex of ideas/beliefs that emerge from this cluster that mark Adventism off from the wider evangelical movement and inform its *raison d'être*. These doctrines are: conditional immortality, seventh-day Sabbatarianism, a premillennial historicist eschatology that emphasizes the imminence of the Second Coming, acceptance of the gift of prophecy in the ministry of Ellen White, and teachings about the priestly work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. These doctrines coalesce into a distinctive eschatological theme that lies at the heart of Adventism.

Scholars have come to regard the concept of an immortal soul as an imposition of Platonic dualism upon the more monistic Hebrew concept of personhood. The doctrine of conditional immortality is listed here because it was characteristically distinctive in an earlier age and because it has served to support other strands in Adventist thought that affirm the significance of life in the body.

Adventist understandings of the Sabbath as a day of holiness and worship owe much to Puritan Sabbatarianism. The temporal identity of the Sabbath as the seventh day and as the literal memorial of Creation was learned from the Seventh Day Baptists. What was thus learned was submitted to the test of Scripture and refined and enlarged upon. The keeping of the Sabbath entered the

Adventist movement as a practical expression of obedience to God and a personal experience of fellowship with God in holy time. It is both a celebration of Creation and a proleptic experience of the age to come. The Sabbath has an additional significance for Adventists, in that the "remnant" of Revelation 12:17 are portrayed as keeping the commandments of God. For Adventists, therefore, the seventh-day Sabbath is one of the marks of the remnant, a badge signifying fidelity to God.

Ellen Harmon White (1827-1915) occupied a unique position among the founders of the Adventist Church, inasmuch as she was accepted as a special messenger of the Lord.¹⁶ She lived to a venerable age, wrote much, and exerted a powerful influence in the developing church, although she eschewed direct leadership offices. She and her parental family had been active members in the Methodist Church before they became convinced Millerites. Her subsequent experience and lifework were thoroughly grounded in an underlying Arminian evangelicalism,¹⁷ and she did much through her writing and personal influence to stabilize the movement in that tradition.

Adventist doctrine does not derive from the Ellen White writings,¹⁸ although she did much to confirm Adventists in the doctrinal way worked out by the pioneers; but much that is distinctively Adventist derives directly from her writings and influence. Included are: the Adventist life of Bible study and piety; the Christian values that have engendered a distinctive lifestyle; ideas regarding the relationship between physical health and spirituality, which have resulted in a healthful way of living and eventually in a worldwide network of medical institutions; and ideas regarding Christian education, which have led to the establishment of thousands of schools. These institutions, both medical and educational, have served to transmit and foster the belief, value, and lifestyle complex that informs what it means to be Adventist—and these institutions in turn have exerted a reciprocal influence on the church. In addition to all of this, Ellen White constantly encouraged the church to break out of its narrow circuit and establish institutions and outreach programs of many kinds.

As is evident from the above, Adventism is as much a way of life as a

system of belief—a way of life that is informed by an Arminian piety in which the gospel has relevance for every dimension of life. The seriousness with which life in the body is regarded—the health-maintenance and educational enterprises relate to this realm of thought—is supported by the doctrine of conditional immortality. On this view, there can be no dualism between salvation of the soul and life in the body. Relevant also to this way of life is a sense of continuity between life on this earth and the next. Faithful discipleship is regarded not as earning a place in that realm, but as developing a fitness for it.

The most distinctive item in the Adventist doctrinal storehouse is its teaching about the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. The priestly work of Christ is conceived of as involving two distinct ministries commencing at different times. Upon His ascension, Christ took upon Himself the office of priest to mediate the benefits of His atoning sacrifice, to forgive sins, to provide direct access to God, and to guide the church. In 1844, it is believed, a second phase began, one that added to these functions; and there commenced an examination of the records of all those who have been servants of God. By the close of this investigation, or "judgment," the company of the justified of all ages will be made up. Thus has opened up the way for the return of Christ and the gathering of the saints into the presence of God.¹⁹

This doctrine couples an understanding of the priesthood of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary with concepts of the judgment and final justification of believers. On the one hand, this may be regarded as an extension of the traditional teaching regarding the threefold office of Christ (prophet, priest, and king), and, on the other, as one possible exposition of the biblical doctrine of the judgment of believers.²⁰

Teachings about soul and body, Sabbath, sanctuary, eschatology, and divine guidance have meshed with classical Christian thought to form the nexus of belief and hope in which Adventist identity and mission coincide.

Adventism and evangelicalism

Theologically, Adventists and evangelicals have much in common, and also some differences. Both stress the importance of doctrine and are concerned with the truth about God and His

dealings with human beings. In spite of many affinities, however, there are broad theological differences that derive from the central traditions informing each. The major theological differences between evangelicalism and Adventism lie in the distinctiveness that is grounded in the cluster of doctrines outlined earlier in this article. The question about the relationship between Adventism and evangelicalism on this score cannot be given a unilateral answer. Much depends on the attitude of both parties, the degree of latitude and distinctiveness with which each is comfortable, and the constraints that make for a united front. The message here surely is one of hope that differences will always be weighed in the light of much that is held in common and of a mutual commitment to the gospel. ■

¹ Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Gary Land, ed., *Adventism in America: A History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986); Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, eds., *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987); Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970); and David L. Rowe, *Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800-1850* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985).

² Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller: Generally Known as a Lecturer on the Prophecies, and the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), pp. 76, 77; quoted in part in Rowe, p. 13.

³ William Miller, *William Miller's Apology and Defense* (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1845), p. 5.

⁴ Nathan O. Hatch, "Millennialism and Popular Religion in the Early Republic," in *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, ed. Leonard I. Sweet (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1984), p. 119.

⁵ Quoted in Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1944), p. 120.

⁶ A loosely embodied federation of churches who had splintered from the Baptists in New York and New Hampshire in the early nineteenth century over the issue of clerical authority, forming the Christian Connexion in 1836. They tended to be antiformalist, anti-Calvinistic, anticreedal, antitrinitarian, and revivalist. Several Christianites became prominent Millerite leaders, and several became Seventh-day Adventists.

⁷ Everett N. Dick, "William Miller and the Advent Crisis, 1831-1844" (unpublished typescript volume, 1932), p. 268; quoted in Land, p. 34.

⁸ *Baptist Advocate*, Sept. 14, 1843, and July 4, 1843. Quoted in Rowe, p. 119.

⁹ Charles Fitch, "Come Out of Her My People," *The Second Advent of Christ*, July 26, 1843, p. 2. Quoted in Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1944), p. 160.

¹⁰ Ellen White described this conviction and its consequences thus: "We were firm in the belief that the preaching of definite time was of God. It was this that led men to search the Bible diligently, discovering truths they had not before perceived" (Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915], p. 62).

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1954), pp. 13-20; and LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1954), Vol. IV, pp. 981, 982.

¹² For further details, see C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Joseph Bates and Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath Theology," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), pp. 352-363.

¹³ For further details, see Froom, pp. 805-808.

¹⁴ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 8, 1861; quoted in Richard Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1979), p. 96. At the time of the organization of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1863, there were 3,500 members. Today there are about 770,000 members in North America and 6 million worldwide. Inasmuch as the "believers' church, believers' baptism" tradition is adhered to, the number of adherents would be considerably higher than this. There is an Adventist presence in 183 of the 215 nations recognized by the United States.

¹⁵ There are several studies that may be referred to for a survey of Adventist doctrine. Three

books grew out of conversations between evangelicals and Adventists: *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1957); Walter R. Martin, *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960); and *Doctrinal Discussions* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., c. 1962). The first is a quasi-official statement of Adventist beliefs. *So Much in Common* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1973 [documents of interest in the conversations between the World Council of Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church]) grew out of conversations with the WCC, 1965-1971. An overview of many of the distinctive themes in Adventist thought can be gained from the papers read at a Bible conference in 1942: *Our Firm Foundation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953). LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1971) is an apologetic history of the development of doctrine in Adventism. Richard Rice's *The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology From a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews Univ. Press, 1985) is the most systematic overview of Adventist thought to date.

¹⁶ For details of the life and work of Ellen G. White, see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981-1986).

¹⁷ Almost all of Ellen White's writings betray this Arminian orientation; it is overtly evident in *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898) and *Steps to Christ*

(New York: Revell, 1892). The latter, as the title suggests, is thoroughly Arminian and borders on the literature of the holiness movement.

¹⁸ For a fuller exposition of the relationship of the E. G. White writings and Scripture, see Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pages 91-96 and 101-106, and *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, pages 89-104.

¹⁹ This teaching has evoked much attention, both within and outside the church. No attempt can be made here to give an exposition of the doctrine or review the arguments raised against it or in its defense. It is mentioned here because it is basic to the Adventist identity. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, Vol. IX, pages 881, 877, describes the genesis of the teaching. For further details, see Edward Heppenstall, *Our High Priest* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1972) and *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 341-445.

²⁰ For instance, Berkhof writes: "The concept of judgment is used [here] in one specific sense, namely as the judgment of the works done by believers in their earthly life; see Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:8f. . . . In Protestant theology, this viewpoint is almost completely pushed aside by the accent on grace" (Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], p. 489). There appear to be positive adumbrations regarding the judgment of believers and final justification in Wesley's theology. See Harold Linstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Wilmore, Ky.: Francis Asbury Publishing, c. 1980), pp. 205-218.

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Pastors' wives lead a great life . . .

Wilma Kirk-Lee

**. . . if they can
establish their
personal identity
while serving the
Lord.**



Wilma Kirk-Lee, of Little Rock, Arkansas, is chairwoman of the Behavioral Sciences Department of Shorter College and cohost of the weekly telecast Table Talk.

It's hard to believe that more than a quarter century has passed since I became a pastor's wife. It's *really* been a great life, despite a few difficulties along the way.

The role of a pastor's wife has experienced quite a metamorphosis in my time. Today's economic, social, and educational environment challenges her every day. The commitment required is not just to her husband, but to a conference and a congregation whose expectations are so high and sometimes so unrealistic that seeking to cope is difficult—in fact, seemingly impossible. The responsibility for developing one's unique talents is often stretched to the limit when each element of life clamors for its due.

Back when I was a new pastor's wife, I was uncertain about what my role should be. Everyone had suggestions. The conference said to do whatever my husband needed to be successful. Church members said do whatever *we* tell you to do. Family and friends had their input as well. I really wasn't certain who and what I was. Without a clear concept of my gifts, I didn't know what my ministry was. One thing I *did* know—I didn't fit the stereotype of the quiet, plainly dressed, subservient wife.

The situation today can be even more confusing and demanding for a pastor's wife than it was 25 years ago. For one thing, a pastor's salary used to cover the basic cost of living. With prayerful planning I could remain home and be the consummate hostess, housewife, and parent, even though we did not always drive the latest car, have the newest clothes, or take glamorous vacations. And it was a privilege to remain with my children

until the youngest began school. Today, a young woman marrying a pastor realizes that a second income may be a necessity. Two paychecks are necessary to maintain solvency and provide the children with a Christian education.

Besides that, many a pastor's wife has completed an education and feels called to develop the career she trained for. This is actually a matter of Christian stewardship. It would be inappropriate and wasteful not to use the education acquired through the investment of time and money.

Maintaining dual careers in a pastoral family is challenging yet possible. It requires attention to the needs of both spouses. As pastor and wife work out how they will effectively minister, outside parties may not be happy with their decision. The congregation and the conference usually have traditional expectations that they are not of a mind-set to renegotiate for the individual needs and differences of pastoral couples. For example, the conference may expect the wife of a pastor to move at a moment's notice. Some administrators presuppose that she is a silent partner who can be ordered about without benefit of hearing her input. Her needs tend to go unrecognized and unfulfilled. Her personal identity is ignored.

Need for a personal identity

I believe a pastor's wife has a basic spiritual responsibility to establish a personal identity. I find no exemption in Scripture given to the pastor's wife for not developing the gifts God entrusted to her. Rather, the admonishment is " *whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*" (Eccl. 9:10). The apostle Paul states: "We possess this precious treasure [the divine Light of the Gospel]

in [frail, human] vessels of earth, that the grandeur *and* exceeding greatness of the power may be shown to be of God and not from ourselves" (2 Cor. 4:7, Amplified).^{*} Mining this treasure that God entrusted to us involves becoming *all* we can possibly be.

Ellen White states: "You should also have an aim, a purpose, in life. . . . Talents are entrusted to your care, to be doubled. You are responsible for their proper use or their abuse. . . . Improve your talents, even though they are few, and let a sense of your responsibility to God for their right use rest upon you."¹

Evidently, a pastor's wife is fulfilling an obligation to God in knowing who she is and what He wants to accomplish through her life. For her own sake she also needs to establish a personal identity—and her husband will benefit as well. The pastoral marriage is strengthened and enhanced when the pastor lives not with his clone, but with an interesting, dynamic person who has a life and purpose of her own.

Children of a pastoral family are also blessed when their mother has found her personal identity. She models by her example that life is not defined by the parsonage fishbowl. Children also realize that their own lives are not summed up in who their father is or what he does. Their mother helps establish this through her joy in who she is and what she does. Her children develop as individuals even as she is growing as an individual in the Lord.

Problems arise when others mandate what the gifts of the pastor's wife should be. The depth of her relationship with the Lord determines how secure she is in safeguarding her identity. It also determines how she chooses to share her unique gifts, leaving her free to say no when something is not within her area of ministry.

Finding a personal identity

How does a pastor's wife establish her own identity? The simplest way is to develop at least one facet of life unique and special to her. It might be an educational pursuit, perhaps that degree, certification, or advanced training she has always longed for. Perhaps it's vocational—a promotion or a project that she's been longing to tackle. And then there's always a hobby, what people think of when they say, "When I get the time, I'm going to . . ."

When I was a full-time homemaker, I used my hobby, crocheting, as a personal identity developer. I was fortunate to have a mother-in-law who, during a summer evangelistic crusade, taught me to crochet, in the evenings after the meetings. It was calming, even therapeutic, to see something develop right before my eyes. I learned to create afghans and shawls that were unique in their color coordinations and patterns. Friends still tell me how much they appreciate and treasure my personal creation for them.

Beyond pursuing my hobby, I developed my personal identity in advancing my faculties through education. I felt propelled to acquire both an undergraduate and graduate degree in social work. This involved work and sacrifice, yet I found joy in both the journey and the arrival at my destination.

Blessings of a personal identity

In broadening my personal identity through education, I've had opportunities for interaction with individuals that I never dreamed would be possible—for example, the semester I spent working as an intern in the district office of a California state senator. Beyond everything else, I feel I've been a "good and faithful servant" in developing the talents that the Lord gave me.

My sense of contentment derived from reaching personal goals is immeasurable. I realize there are some areas where complete accomplishment is not possible because of being a pastor's wife. Thus it is important that those goals that can be accomplished are attained, to smooth the way when other goals are thwarted.

The comfort of having a personal identity has helped me see the rainbow in the mundane experiences of parsonage life. The constant tension of "being on call" has been relieved in having a relationship with the Lord and an identity that isn't wrapped up in being a clone of my husband.

A unique, intimate relationship with the Lord has been the most wonderful benefit of establishing my own identity. I have seen Him work in so many ways in my life. He has performed so many miracles for me that I often stop and praise Him for His goodness, and simply because I am His child. He has comforted me, strengthened me, chastened me, exhorted me; He *is* my Friend. I have

claimed this text as my personal promise: "Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over *and* above all that we [dare] ask or think—ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams—to Him be glory" (Eph. 3:20, 21, Amplified). I have appropriated this promise in strengthening my relationship with the Lord as well as in establishing my personal identity. I shudder to think what I would have missed otherwise.

A wonderful life!

Some of what I've shared could possibly make the experience of being a pastor's wife appear tedious. This is not my perception of how my life has been for the past quarter of a century. The years have brought incredible growth and privileges. For example, moving around hasn't been easy, but when I consider the advantages gained, I am amazed. I've lived in the northeast, south, west, and southwest sections of the United States. I have traversed the country by land and air, even traveling overseas. When hearing of certain places through the media or in conversation, I remember my experiences and relationships with people there who are now my friends.

Regarding my experience with the congregations my husband has led, an important element of my life has been my own ministry to those churches. Yet I believe a pastor's wife should do whatever she does, not because someone requires it, but because she loves the Lord and loves her husband. In this context, I have received great delight in sharing with the churches my God-given talents.

There were times through the years when I was weak emotionally, physically, and spiritually. But my overall experience has brought me contentment, joy, and even delight. God has given me His love and a personal identity, a husband and children, plus friends and a church family. Yes, mine has truly been a great life. ■

^{*} Texts credited to Amplified are from *The Amplified Bible*. Copyright © 1965 by The Lochman Foundation. Used by permission of Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, MI. 49506.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 2, p. 429.



Busier than Jesus

James A. Cress

A

ll pastors are busy. Some are too busy. I was busier than Jesus.

Now, don't castigate me for blasphemous presumption:

how could I be busier than the Creator of the universe? Well, I am not the only one who has found himself or herself overextended—busier than Jesus. And before you finish reading this article you too may find yourself busier than Jesus.

One thing I have discovered is how easy it is to confuse the urgent with the important. For example, in my pastorate I found that my time was more easily consumed putting out fires than lighting them in the hearts of my people or even in my own heart. Unless intentionally protected, my agenda became so filled with doing good that I failed to do right.

If you couple this reality with a work-ethic model that values activity as a measure of productivity, one thing becomes predestined: "doing" will receive more emphasis than "being." Which, of course, is the crux of the issue. To the extent that my time for personal devotions and spiritual growth gave way to the demands of the urgent, I became busier than Jesus.

Not that Jesus wasn't busy. In fact, when my life is most crowded with crisis and urgent demands, I am just beginning to sense what it must have been to have the people of Palestine constantly crowding Jesus for what they knew He could give them. How easy it would have been for Him to rely on

"doing" good more than "being." "In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thoroughfares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father." *

Pastoral overextension

Pastoral overextension is first noted and its negative impact first felt in the pastor's marriage and home. It comes well before most church members perceive its presence. This is because we can mask our lives easier before those with whom we meet and worship for only a few hours weekly than before those with whom we live daily. If I don't pray this week, few of my members may immediately know. But if I don't pray today, my spouse, children, and even my dog will probably feel it tomorrow!

In my pastorate I found that my time was more easily consumed putting out fires than lighting them in the hearts of my people or even in my own heart.

Furthermore, if I want to effect spiritual change in my members, the place to start is in myself. The old adage still holds true—spirituality of members will not grow beyond that of their leaders. In our congregation we tried an intentional yearlong experiment to increase our corporate spirituality. We did this by looking at the roots of spiritual growth—Bible study, prayer, fellowship, witnessing, and obedience. Each one of us looked at the issues in a personal way. My own prayer and study life improved as I admonished my members to progress in these areas. My motive of modeling for them challenged my own spiritual growth.

For 12 months we continued our study and prayer. We encouraged increased fellowship and witness. We reflected on personal obedience to Jesus. We added five more minutes to whatever time we were spending in our spiritual growth activities. At the end of the year we measured our progress by a congregational survey. Eighty-six percent indicated that they were now more obedient to God's will for their personal lives than they were a year earlier. The methods were simple; the results momentous.

If you find yourself busier than Jesus, I encourage you to investigate experimentally your priorities. Do a self-analysis on the urgent and the important, the doing and the being. Find for yourself that personal spirituality increases as you focus on being about your Saviour's business.

* Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), pp. 362, 363.

Team leadership

Walton Whaley
with J. H. Zachary

Most Adventist pastors around the world lead multichurch districts that vary in size from 5 to 30 congregations. What challenges these leaders have in providing adequate pastoral care! The district leader must develop skills in delegation, training, and administration to maximize lay leadership, particularly that of local church elders.

The training of local elders can be accomplished through a number of means. Most important is the modeling of the pastors themselves. With God's help they must be what the elders should become, manifesting a burden for preaching, nurturing, evangelism, Christian education, and the care of church property.

Specialized instruction needed

Local elders also need specialized instruction in every aspect of ministry skills, including:

1. How to conduct a committee meeting,
2. Sermon preparation and preaching,
3. Personal and public evangelism,
4. How to make visiting more effective,
5. How to strengthen the departments of the church,
6. Care of church property,
7. Deeper understanding of the Adventist message,
8. Nurture of new converts.

Training seminars

The 1991 General Conference Annual Council recommended that local conferences/missions conduct a minimum of one training seminar each year for pastors and local lay elders. Churches should cover the travel expense of their

lay leaders attending this meeting.

Locally, the pastor should plan a monthly or bimonthly meeting with all the local elders of the district. Along with providing training, the pastor can lay plans with the elders for the district as a whole as well as for each congregation. These plans include evangelism, visitation, sermon topics, and district and local congregation goals.

Quarterly district meetings

The quarterly district meeting is very successful in parts of Asia and Africa. Where convenient, the entire district membership meets in one of the churches. This provides opportunities for worship and fellowship, forming a spiritual bond between pastor and members.

At these quarterly meetings the lay leaders of the district can also meet with the pastor to formulate plans for coordinated evangelism, including entering unreached villages in their territory.

These times together should not be dominated by the pastor. Lay elders in large districts are used to being involved in leadership, and the quarterly meetings should recognize their capabilities.

The advantages of lay leadership

While there are serious disadvantages to the pastor who must serve a large number of congregations, there are also some decided advantages in the need to depend on the ministry of local lay elders. Evidence for this is the fact that in some world divisions there is a striking correlation between the growth of the church and number of churches the average pastor serves.

Without a pastor living in town, elders and other lay members must take the initiative in local soul winning. When pastors are able to visit, they often find candidates thoroughly prepared for baptism. Such is the fruit of active lay leadership.

Would you accept this candidate as your pastor?

"Gentlemen: Understanding your pulpit is vacant, I should like to apply for the position. I have many qualifications. I've been a preacher with much success and also have some success as a writer. Some say I'm a good organizer. I've been a leader most places I've been.

"I'm over 50 years of age. I have never preached in one place for more than three years. In some places, I left town after my work because it caused riots and disturbances. I must admit I have been in jail three or four times, but not because of any real wrong doing.

"My health is not too good, though I still get a great deal done. The churches I have preached in have been small, though located in several large cities.

"I've not gotten along well with religious leaders in towns where I have preached. In fact, some have threatened me and even attacked me physically. I am not too good at keeping records. I have been known to forget whom I baptized.

"However, if you can use me, I shall do my best for you."
Signed, "The Apostle Paul."

As seen in Dear Abby. Reprinted with permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.

Classic Sermons on the Cross of Christ
 Warren W. Wiersbe, compiler, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1990, 160 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by Derek Morris, professor of preaching and pastoral theology, Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:19, NIV). In the same letter he also affirmed the Christocentric focus of his preaching: "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (verses 23, 24).

Down through the Christian Era, many sermons have been preached on the cross of Christ. Warren Wiersbe has compiled 12 great sermons on this central theme, and this compilation makes a valuable addition to the pastoral library for three reasons. First, reading these sermons from such giants as Spurgeon, Sangster, MacLaren, G. Campbell Morgan, and others enhances the pastor's spiritual formation. He or she can find no greater theme for personal study and contemplation. My own favorite is Spurgeon's "Death of Christ for His People." Second, pastors can find in these sermons useful models to strengthen their preaching on the cross of Christ. Third, in an age when many preachers seek to empty the cross of its power, this book points to the relevancy of the cross.

Wiersbe introduces each sermon with a brief history of the preacher's ministry, but the introduction lacks analysis and critique of the sermon: Why has this sermon made its mark on the history of preaching? What methodology does the preacher employ? How does one discover the exegetical idea in the text and then fashion the homiletical idea? As a result the volume remains inspirational but falls short as a source of homiletical instruction.

Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness

Eugene H. Peterson, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1992, 208 pages, US\$18.95, Cdn\$24.65, hardcover. Reviewed by Darold F. Bigger, associate professor religion and social work, Walla Walla College, Walla Walla, Washington.

Do you think contentment means having a bureaucratic job? Do you find the most attractive part of pastoring is a possible move up the denominational ladder? Then forget Eugene Peterson's book. But if you are open to a redefinition of pastoring and want to renew your passion for your work, Peterson will challenge and delight you.

The third in a series (*Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*, 1980, and *Working the Angles*, 1987), *Under the Unpredictable Plant* sharpens the spiritual definition of pastoral work.

Determined to resist modern business values and marketing ploys (which consume pastors' time with management instead of spiritual leadership), Peterson rallies a cry for "pastoral vocation" rather than "religious careerism." In the process he fans the flame of pastoral passion, painting a picture of what might be if we give more attention to contemplative prayer than idolized careers.

From his fundamentalist church upbringing in rural Montana to seminary teacher, Peterson could not identify with pastors. But need for a part-time job led him to a church assignment and a pastor he wanted to emulate. Later he pastored a Presbyterian church in Maryland for 29 years.

Long assignments fit Peterson's theoretical model. With the book of Jonah as a backdrop, he uses metaphors, stories, and concepts that depreciate quick moves to escape church storms. For example, he says, "A successful pastor will discover a workable program and repeat it in congregation after congregation to the immense satisfaction of parishioners. The church members can be religious without praying or dealing with God. Prostitute pastor." Instead, he values long-term commitment with all its boredom and constraints for the joy of seeing familiar people hearing God speak to them.

Peterson's preference for long pastorates is unfamiliar to many of us. But the principles are applicable. He acknowledges that all pastors won't be able to stay forever with their first assignment. He has now returned to teaching at Regent College, Vancouver, in British Columbia. But he challenges us

to search our reasons for going elsewhere. "It is necessary from time to time that someone stand up and attempt to get the attention of the pastors lined up at the travel agency in Joppa to purchase a ticket to Tarshish."

Peterson gets at the heart of our Christian dilemma when he describes pastoral work as geographical as well as eschatological. We must make the message of God's plans (eschatology) relevant in present circumstances (geography). "Pastoral work devoid of eschatology declines into a court chaplaincy—sprinkling holy water on consumerist complacency and religious gratification. Geography without eschatology becomes mere religious landscaping."

But, he says, "Eschatology without geography degenerates into religious science fiction." We must state God's message so it makes sense in a certain place and time. Geography and eschatology go together and link our contemplative insights with real life. We are of neither this world nor the next, but of both at the same time.

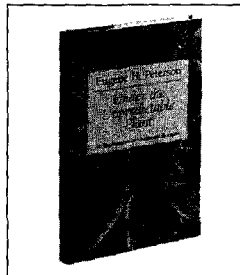
Worth more than a quick glance, this story/sermon/appeal can stimulate us to a new vision of who we are, where we are, and why we are here.

Circles of Influence

Robert C. Anderson, Moody Press, Chicago, 1991, 364 pages, \$14.99, paper. Reviewed by Greg Asimakoupoulos, pastor, Crossroads Covenant Church, Concord, California.

As with his first book, *The Effective Pastor*, Robert Anderson marshals his experience and research to address issues of leadership in the local church. Writing to clergy and lay leaders, the author's concern is "how to bring about change in the church without causing harm to the body and its members." Anderson sees the church as a living organism that demands change.

According to the author, adaptability does not come about easily. The church must identify the mission God has for it and create structures that effectively and efficiently accomplish that mission. Those structures are the "circles of influence." Reading *Circles of Influence* is like sitting in one of Anderson's classes



at the Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, where he is professor of pastoral theology. His writing flows logically and orderly, resembling a lecture without the squeal of blackboard chalk.

Anderson does a masterful job tracing traits of leadership through the Scriptures. Throughout the book he presses for making biblical leadership models relevant for the 90s. Anderson reiterates the underlying servant-heart of an effective leader. He writes: "If there is no other point you get from this book, remember the higher a person is placed on most charts, the greater his degree of servanthood and the greater his degree of responsibility to all those he serves."

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of the book is a section on the pastor's code of ethics located in the appendix.

The Lost Art of Church Fund Raising: Getting the Details Right. Ashley Hale, Precept Press, Inc., Chicago, 1993, 149 pages, hardcover, \$49.95 plus \$4 shipping and handling. Reviewed by Milton Murray, recently retired director, Philanthropic Service for Institutions, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Ashley Hale, one of America's foremost authorities on philanthropy, speaks to church members, leaders, and clergy on the subject of giving. Hale reminds us that, although giving emerges from our spiritual sense, the church has lost ground to secular causes. Why? Because churches depend entirely on those spiritual origins to carry out their giving programs. In the meantime other causes have capitalized on the latent spirit-inspired desire to give, added some up-to-date techniques, and surpassed the church.

Hale says that American churches are "spinning around wanting to go forward but actually going nowhere." The historic role of churches—to give for the benefit of others is no longer the case. He says churches preach generosity but do not model it. "The financial needs of the church take first place," while they preach the opposite. Churches need to be examples of giving. "To achieve this they need radically improved attitudes toward and methods of fund raising."

The author outlines the steps required for success. He tells us that the spiritual base for giving has unlimited possibilities when aided by proven methods and competent volunteers.

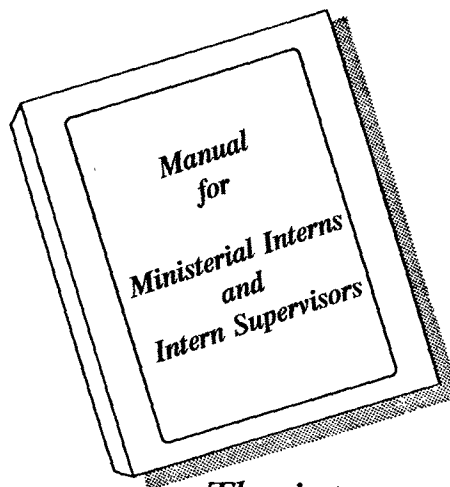
According to Hale, churches need to

stop begging and develop a quality partnership between clergy and member-leaders. They must speak to people's interests and concerns, not to the church's needs. By emphasizing the positive, members come to understand that giving within the church is both spiritual and financial. Hale talks about "happy" money and "sad" money. He reviews the wonderful world of big gifts. The book's 47 chapters include illustrations that capture the attention.

If your church needs to reaffirm its

spiritual role and you recognize the value of a positive attitude toward giving, then this book is for you. Hale writes in a concise, well-organized style for church leaders who want to carry their congregations to new levels of service.

The final chapter lists "The 11 Cardinal Points," the eleventh being to "teach the gospel of good giving." Hale urges us to make giving a part of the good news; the giver really is the principal beneficiary. The last chapter alone is worth the investment.



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Evolution's End: Claiming the Potential of Our Intelligence

Joseph C. Pearce, HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1992, 266 pages, \$20, hard cover. Reviewed by Ronaele Whittington, D.S.W., social worker, Kailua, Hawaii.

Hawaii has the most diverse population in the United States, and this volume begins with Chilton Pearce's lectures in that state. He writes about acceptance of diversity through unity and unity through diversity. His is a comprehensive worldview. Pearce draws on art, religion, and science to explain the state of Western society.

Alienated from traditional Christian practices and beliefs, Pearce finds many religions perpetuating themselves rather than unfolding the immense possibilities for relationships with creation.

Pearce describes the corruption and dysfunction of society in terms of diminished brain function. He cites hospital childbirth, day care, television, premature attempts at formal education, and synthetic growth hormones as society's route to becoming a mass of incapacitated humanity. Weaving in neurological science, Pearce offers a convincing thesis that today's children are ruined for maximizing their full potential. He demonstrates society's stifling of exploration and creativity as well as analytic and critical thought.

Pearce writes, however, from an evolutionist's secular viewpoint. He neglects Christ as essential to the pursuit of human potential. He also speaks of specifications of brain function as if they were all scientifically tested which is not the case.

At the same time, one cannot help being inspired by the thought of enhancing intelligence that leads us closer to God's creation. Otherwise, growth ceases and relationship with God deteriorates as society falls apart.

An increasingly diverse population demands a state of constant alertness in order to cope. Pastors will find in Pearce's treatise ideas on how to survive in today's society and a storehouse of quotable material, documented and cross referenced.

Broken Promises

Henry Virkler, general ed., Gary Collins, Word Inc., Irving, Texas, 1992, 306 pages, \$10.99, paper, \$14.99, hardcover. Reviewed by Andre Bustanoby, Christian counselor and author, Bowie, Maryland.

Don't let the textbook appearance of

Broken Promises fool you (plain cover, copious footnotes, and appendixes). This book provides a highly readable treatment of adultery in Christian marriage. The author's anecdotes, illustrations, and organization make the solid information on this subject move along.

Virkler shows convincingly that there is more to healing affairs than confronting them as a sin problem—though that certainly is in order! He does an excellent job of tracing the deceitfulness of sin that can lure even the most devout Christian into adultery. Because some Christians deliberately repress their feelings as unspiritual, they actually may be more vulnerable than unbelievers who see it coming.

This book holds something for everyone. Those who counsel marriages rocked by infidelity find good counsel-

ing methodology and advice on difficult questions such as whether or not to reveal that adultery has been committed, whether or not unconditional love can win back a straying mate, and when tough love should be exercised. Virkler offers the faithful mate excellent advice about what and what not to do. He gives the church program ideas on affair prevention usable for couples and groups. He offers the unfaithful mate help (and suggested reading) in understanding why he or she could have done such a thing. Was the affair an attempt to supplement something missing in the marriage or was it an expression of anger—a way of punishing his or her mate? What is it about the personality of the adulterer that opened the door to unfaithfulness? This book makes an important addition to the pastoral library. ■

Lay training in Quebec



Canadian pastors Claude Richli (above) and Denis Fortin (right) conduct the Training Institute for Gospel

Ministries at the Val D'Espoir campground in Quebec. Each month 100 French-speaking lay members will receive a diploma certifying their increased proficiency in outreach and nurture.



Swedish field school

Field school participants celebrate the completion of four weeks of intense study with seminar leaders David Currie, Trans-European Division Ministerial Association, and Rex D. Edwards, director of continuing education for the GC Ministerial Association.

Convened in Gothenburg, Sweden, the school offered graduate courses in "Church Growth and Motivation" and "The Church and Secularism."



Words of wisdom

Consider how often you've needed just the right quote for a sermon or article. Perhaps you searched through generic books of quotes, only to learn that it isn't always easy to find something that reflects Christian values. But now *Words of Wisdom* is available, with 224 pages packed with 2,700 indexed quotes to give creativity, distinction, and credibility to all your communications.

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Encouragement cards

One of the most practical ideas I've run across is encouragement cards. These are postal cards perfect for writing a short message of support to a fellow member. They can be used for uplifting someone going through a crisis. They can let someone missing know that someone cares. They can also affirm leadership and say a well-timed thank you. The uses are endless. Perhaps the best part about encouragement cards is the ministry of caring that is fostered.

For example, Brian, in his early 20s, left the drug culture and began attending church. Our members opened their arms and loved him; sometimes they would send him an encouragement card. I remember visiting Brian in his home and seeing all the encouragement cards pinned on his wall. He was so proud of them. They had done their job!

To ensure their use, the encouragement cards should be: available in the pews at church; mentioned each Sab-

bath; collected with the offering; and mailed by the church as a ministry. (If the members take them home, they often forget to mail them.)

Many churches in the northwest United States are using encouragement cards. For a sample, send a stamped, addressed envelope to: Encouragement Cards, Medford SDA Church, 1900 Greenwood, Medford, OR 97504.—Chad McComas, Medford, Oregon.

Vacation idea

The Worldwide Guide to Retreat Center Guest Houses lists Christian-affiliated accommodations for vacations and retreats. Beautiful and serene surroundings offer escape from smog, noise, and traffic. For an average of US\$25 to \$35 per person per night, including three meals daily, one can find accommodations in 10 countries, including 47 U.S. states. Many guest houses simply ask for a freewill donation or gift "as the spirit moves."

Listed are more than 425 centers, along with detailed descriptions, prices, addresses, telephone numbers, and map locations. The Guest Houses range from elegant manor houses in England and seaside apartments in Massachusetts to forest cabins in Colorado.—John Jensen, CTS Publications, P.O. Box 8355, Newport Beach, CA 92660.

Helping the poor

Occasionally someone in our congregation needs assistance, but the "deacon's fund" often doesn't have enough money to meet the need, is dependent on the level of concern of the head deacon, or is not equipped to maintain confidentiality. Sometimes it could be a deacon or even the

head deacon in need. One of our elders suggested that the church board select a benevolent committee, comprised of five individuals who displayed different strengths (hospitality, generosity, fiscal responsibility, caution, wisdom) to give the committee balance. These individuals serve from year to year, unaffected by the nominating committee, and they may not hold any other church office.

Here's how it works: if a request comes for monetary help—or if the pastoral staff becomes aware of a need within the congregation—the information goes to the chairperson of the benevolent committee. This frees the pastor of the immediate responsibility of the decision. However, the pastor may be asked to join the committee in the discussion of the matter, or to share pertinent information.

All moneys go out as a gift from the church, since the church doesn't lend money. We have found, however, that members who have been helped remember the favor, and moneys flow back into the fund. Of course, transactions are in complete confidence, even from the church treasurer who must make a check payable to a utility company, for example, which is delivered by a committee member. If the need resulted from poor management or is significant or prolonged, recipients receive help on condition that they consult a financial adviser, preferably a

trained and designated person in the congregation. They may be asked to read material on Christian financial principles, such as books by Mel Rees or Larry Burkett, and let the adviser help them formulate a budget. This provides accountability, which is appreciated by donors to the fund. Most recipients eagerly cooperate with the program's conditions.—Mark A. Heisey, Tryon, North Carolina.

Ministry relics

Old issues of *Ministry* from the late 1930s onward are available to complete one's *Ministry* files or just to own for historical value. Most are not in complete sets. Materials are free—we ask only that you pay something for postage. (Leftovers will be discarded in six months.) Send dates desired and postage to *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

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