



# MINISTRY

*International Journal for Pastors* November 2005

# THE GIFT OF TEACHING

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THE MINISTRY OF RAOUL DEDEREN

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# MINISTRY

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# OUR READERS RESPOND...

## Other cliffs to consider

I really like your magazine. The article "Three Steps to Setting Healthy Relationship Boundaries. Or: How Far From the Cliff?" (September 2006) was excellent. It occurs to me that the ten "Thou shalt nots" ignore the possibility of same sex approaches and abuse issues. In today's world, same sex approaches are just as much a danger as opposite sex approaches. The possibility of being perceived as being a predator because an elderly individual made some moderate donations after being alone with you is also real. I will not go into the realm of child abuse and elder abuse. I made copies of the article for my CPE students. I have also advised them to subscribe.

—Rev. T. Patrick Bradley, M.A., LAT, BCC, director, Pastoral Care, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, Cheyenne, Wyoming, United States

## New creation

I write to express appreciation for Ivan T. Blazen's article "Through the Lenses of the New Creation" (July 2006). The theme of reconciliation, both between God and humans and between humans and other humans, is of critical importance in Christian experience. This article is all the more relevant when it is noted how easy it is for many Christians to claim reconciliation with God and still fail to, in Blazen's words, "live in forgiveness and reconciliation with others."

I agree with Blazen in his argument that to claim reconciliation with God and fail to live in forgiveness and reconciliation with others is to "shortchange the full meaning of reconciliation and frustrate its purpose to place us in the new creation and change our lives from self-centeredness

to other-centeredness." We, indeed, need to "understand and accept the paradox that what by God's grace alone is *already* finished is *not yet* finished until it is finished in our lives and relationships, social vision, and community building."

I look forward to reading more of such articles that focus on practical Christian living in future issues of *Ministry*.

—Pastor Tom Ogal, executive secretary, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kenya Lake Field, Kendu Bay, Kenya.

## Sabbath law: still a command

Pastor Heimberg's reply to Daniel I. Block and James Cress (Letters, July 2006), though carefully and cleverly written, to me has a major weakness. This is so basic that many would not see it at the first reading. I certainly didn't.

I myself have been emotionally bruised by Adventism's "good (?) old days" of forceful pastoral influence, even in my short time as a minister. Felix Heimberg has obviously thought his position through carefully over much time. However, I cannot believe in a Christ who would conform fully to Mosaic Law then suddenly change after His resurrection (Heb. 13:8).

Regarding the new church, I believe the Holy Spirit would represent Jesus' will to the max in every way. Regarding the New Testament silence on the Sabbath, I have always understood that Sabbath keeping was a foregone conclusion (at least during the first century anyway). Nowhere do we find any of the apostles or leaders in conflict with the Jews over Sabbath breaking.

In my experience, having the indwelling of Jesus through the Spirit (Jer. 31 and Heb. 8) only makes me want

to be all the more different from the world in my Sabbath habits for the One I love (Exod. 20:8–11; Matt. 5:17–20).

I discovered many of the Adventist distinctive teachings on a cattle property through reading a modern version of the New Testament and the way God was with me on that lonely station (also known as a ranch in other parts of the world). To me, the Sabbath truth made all the sense in the world, certainly more than what the world could teach. Here is a Creator God who, in His infinite wisdom, has provided us a way to express our true love for Him. The direction of Heimberg's letter throughout, including his mild concessions toward the end concerning Sabbath keeping, to me sadly lacks this attitude. Suggesting we may keep Sabbath by permission rather than by command, I believe, is the "giveaway" here to the enemy's subtle wiles. Have the Ten Commandments really lost their authority for us in our day?

I would heartily agree with 98 percent of Heimberg's letter, but the remaining two percent, I believe, is extremely dangerous in that it so cleverly comes between us and our Creator God's will for us to be counted (and blessed) by Him now (Heb. 4).

—Pastor Bill Blundell, Bowen Seventh-day Adventist Church, Bowen, Queensland, Australia.

## Hospital ministry

The well-written article by Kathy McMillan, "Hospital Visitation 101" (September 2006), gave some excellent suggestions from the viewpoint of a medical care staff member. Having served in ministry for forty-five years, I offer two additional suggestions.

*continued on page 29*

## CORRECTIONS:

- July 2006 - book review, page 29: The reviewer incorrectly listed the name of the Archbishop of Canterbury as William Rowan. His name is Rowan Williams.
- The blurb in the September 2006 issue, p. 17, does not belong to that article. It belongs to the article which starts on p. 24 of the same issue. We apologize for the error—the Editor.

## Free Subscription

If you're receiving *Ministry* bimonthly and haven't paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 *Ministry* has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. We believe, however, that 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 our aspirations and faith in a way that will provide inspiration and help to you as clergy. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulder, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you can't use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all clergy of other denominations. To receive your complimentary subscription, please write to us at our Editorial Office, visit us at [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org), or email us at [ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org).

# Our teachers

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER



One of the prominent gifts listed in the Bible can be identified as the gift of teaching. In the Word of God, the word *teach* appears about twice as often as the word *preach*,<sup>1</sup> and although numbers alone do not tell the complete story, they do give us a hint as to the importance of teaching. Since Scripture also presents teaching and preaching as closely related (Eph. 4:11), we can reasonably assume that the two words describe the same, or at least similar, ministry or function. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul lists teachers as third in his hierarchy of those appointed by God.

This month's issue of *Ministry* features an interview with a teacher. Most of the world today does not seem to appreciate the full significance of the word *teacher*, and as a result we have developed other words to describe the same function. We may call them professors, senior lecturers, instructors, and similar more important-sounding words, but essentially these words indicate teaching functions. Though there are many teachers in the world, their profession and calling are often overshadowed by other professions.

## Appreciation to teachers

Good teachers change our lives; I know because I was blessed with many good teachers during my school days. Who are some of these good teachers? I have debated whether I should mention names or not; for if I mention some, I will no doubt leave out others. But such possible omissions should not prevent me from honoring some of those who have made a positive impact on my life and the lives of others. I will limit this to only those in my college and graduate studies. And so, I give tribute to some of them.

I thank my first speech professor at Hunter College, New York, who insisted

that all speeches should be given without any notes. His nearly impossible demand has been a blessing in sermon delivery. At Andrews University (college and seminary), many professors have been a blessing to me. For instance, my first professor of preaching, Steven P. Vitrano, introduced me to the sacred task of preaching and later helped me realize the importance of focus in a dissertation. The Greek text of the book of Romans gave new direction to my spiritual life, and for that I am thankful to Sakae Kubo. And who says that studying Old Testament archaeology is boring—not if you did it as I did, in classes taught by Siegfried H. Horn. Church history professor C. Mervyn Maxwell brought history into the present by his storytelling skills, and Gottfried Oosterwal gave new meaning to the Great Commission in his mission classes. Leif Kr. Tobiassen made me realize that a research project should not be measured by its length, but rather by the thoroughness of the research. Kenneth A. Strand was not only a world-class researcher but unselfishly went beyond his job description in helping students.

The list goes on: Walter F. Specht, Fritz Guy, Wilber Alexander, Hans K. LaRondelle, Leona Running, Gerhard F. Hasel—and the list is still not complete, but these are some of the teachers who have positively influenced me.

This issue of *Ministry* features an interview with a minister, teacher, and theologian, Raoul Dederen, who has made long-lasting contributions with his theological scholarship. I believe

your faith will be strengthened as you read his interview. And I urge you to give special attention to the section where he discusses his approach to Bible study.

## The importance of teachers

How important are teachers? According to prevailing standards in the secular world, they are not all that important. All too often the world honors individuals such as chief executive officers of corporations—that is, with pay as a barometer of importance. This year, one particular corporate head was paid an amount equal to about what 1,500 seminary professors receive in pay each year.<sup>2</sup> In the eyes of the world, teachers are not very valuable.

Long after we have forgotten the names of overpaid business executives, we will still remember the teachers who have made a positive impact on our lives. But we will not only remember them, their lives, and that which they taught us; this inspiration will continue to be with us.

## My appeal to you

I have expressed my appreciation to some of my teachers, and now I am asking you to do the same. Contact one of your teachers and express your appreciation. If you do that, both you and your teacher will be blessed. But please don't wait. Do it now.

And while you are expressing appreciation to a teacher, why not take another moment and express your appreciation to one more teacher—Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher. ■

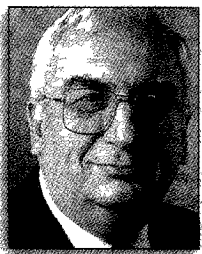
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1 Or a form of the word.

2 Excessive pay to executives seems to have become a routine rather than an exception. This year several excessive pay examples have been reported in the press.

# Reflections of a theologian: Raoul Dederen on theology, the church, and life

Nikolaus Satelmajer



Nikolaus Satelmajer  
is editor of *Ministry*  
magazine.

*Raoul Dederen is a professor emeritus of systematic theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States. Before joining the seminary in 1964, he served as a pastor in his native Belgium (1947–1954) and then taught in the seminary at Salève Adventist University, Collonges-sous-Salève, France. While teaching in France, he took up doctoral studies at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, where he completed the degree of Dr. es Sc. Morales. In 1964 Andrews University invited him to be a guest professor at the seminary. His theological depth, inspirational teaching methods, structured courses, and caring relationship with students immediately made him one of the most well-liked teachers. What was to be a brief guest lectureship turned into a lifelong commitment to the seminary. From his classes have gone thousands of graduates to every part of the world, carrying the same commitment to the Lord, His Scripture, and His mission. His most recent contribution to Adventist scholarship is the editorship of the monumental Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, volume 12 of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary series. At my request, Dr. Dederen took time to share the highlights of his ministry and mission. He and his wife, Louise, live in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.*

**Nikolaus Satelmajer:** You came to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in 1964. That was quite some time ago.

**Raoul Dederen:** When Louise and I came to the seminary 42 years ago, there were 13 or 14 professors. Today there are over 40.

**NS:** I remember your telling us then that you saw three theological issues of major importance to the church: Revelation-Inspiration, Christology, and Ecclesiology. Forty years later, has there been a change?

**RD:** Those issues and their by-products continue to dominate theology. They are part of the foundation of all the rest. Every single doctrine is affected by how one approaches these foundational areas of theology.

**NS:** Looking over the last four decades, are you encouraged or concerned about the movement or lack of movement in these three areas?

**RD:** You mean among Seventh-day Adventists? Yes, there has been a lot of movement, numbers of meetings and publications. Most of them positive and encouraging, at least from my perspective. There still is a tendency at times to use presuppositions that are extrabiblical.

**NS:** Such as?

**RD:** Encounter theology presuppositions for instance. In this case, one approaches Scripture with the a priori view that there is no truth content when God and the prophet meet. God is not supposed to reveal truths to a prophet, but Himself. Once the encounter is over, the prophet interprets the encounter in terms relevant to the situation. Thus God did not reveal truths to Moses, but Himself. Moses then translated the encounter in laws and precepts relevant to a people of slaves. You can easily imagine what this does to the authority of the Scriptures. There is also postmodernism, which holds that if there is such a thing as revealed truths, they cannot be absolute. Such truths are so colored by one's personality, by the baggage we bring along, that nobody can speak with certainty or authority. Hence nothing is binding; your view is just as good as mine, especially as long as they both lead us to Christ. The question remains, of course, "Which Christ? What is He? What did He come for?" As you can see, we are far from the apostles' certainty. We cannot be sure of the reliability of what the Scriptures say. Nor should we insist, we are told, on our understanding of their teachings as truths.



Raoul Dederen

Photo: Daniel Bedell

**NS:** So, where does it all take us?

**RD:** It often slowly leads to the denial of the veracity of various scriptural statements. Take Rudolf Bultmann,

virgin birth, the Transfiguration, most of the Lord's miracles and teachings. These have to be "demythologized," which does not mean eliminated but reintegrated in terms and categories

As I said earlier, such a view will lead one to wonder how much of what we find in the Scriptures is authentic and reliable.

**NS:** Who are some of the other well-known theologians that you had the privilege of knowing in those days?

**RD:** Emil Brunner came to the university a few times when I studied in Geneva (1955 to 1963). Karl Barth, too, a few times. They varied sharply regarding the issue of Creation, which Brunner regarded as a valuable, though limited, source for one's knowledge of God.

**NS:** How about Oscar Cullmann?

**RD:** Ah, yes. Oscar Cullmann was a Lutheran biblical scholar and a personal friend. I have letters from him. I have been regarded by some as Cullmannian more than once, and I am almost proud of it. His *Christ and Time* left a marked

ONCE YOU HAVE GRASPED A BIBLICAL TRUTH THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS, THAT MOVES YOU, EVEN CHANGES YOUR LIFE AND VIEW OF THINGS, NOTHING AND NOBODY CAN KEEP YOU FROM SHARING IT. AND IN THE PROCESS, IT GROWS IN YOU.

probably the single most influential theologian of the second half of the 20th century. As he sees it, not only did the New Testament authors write about God and reality in terms that reflected the popularly held views of the first century—which are untenable today—but their writings are not even to be regarded as objective and reliable accounts of what happened in their lives. What they wrote, explains Bultmann, is in reality an account of the impact these occurrences had upon them. Just an impact. I mean events like the incarnation of Christ, the

relevant to the modern and scientific world in which we live.

Thus, for instance, the apostles' statements about Christ's resurrection and ascension were not intended to tell us that Jesus did in fact come to life again, but that *they* had been resurrected, lifted from their self-centered lives. These were not objective occurrences, says Bultmann, but dynamic impacts that followed Christ's death on the cross—which he recognizes—and changed their lives, opening them to the future, as he liked to explain.

impression on me. He emphasized the importance of the biblical view of history, and particularly of sacred history of which Christ was the midpoint. This midpoint, as he saw it, was the clue to the understanding of world history, which he regarded as linear, running from Creation to the end time. This more objective understanding of Scripture was in radical contrast with Bultmann's existential interpretation.

The last time we met was in Tantar, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, in 1972. Louise and I were part of a

three-month-long gathering of some 30 theologians. Cullmann and his sister were our immediate neighbors. His appreciation of Adventism grew during that time, and he kindly told me he wished I were his son.

**NS:** Which of these theological giants influenced you?

**RD:** It is hard to tell. Cullmann, probably. And still, while these and others forced me to reflect on the nature and authority of the Scriptures, I had early on decided to let the Scriptures talk for themselves. Their word was final. When Brunner, for instance, tells us that what basically happened between God and a prophet or an apostle was an encounter, I had to put the view to the test of Scripture. According to its writers, was there or was there not, beyond the impact of an encounter, any communication, any sharing of information, between God and the prophet? Their answer seemed quite clear to me. A resounding Yes. On what basis should encounter theologians be taken more seriously than those who underwent the phenomenon?

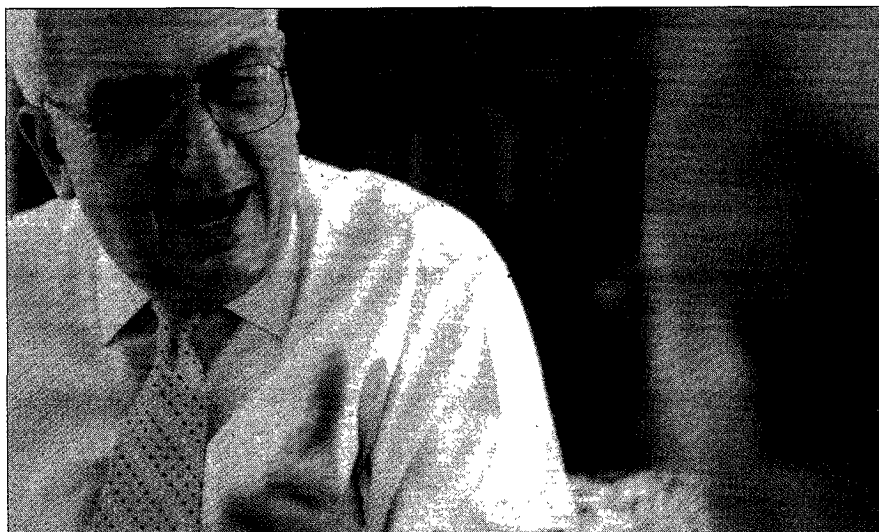
**NS:** The first time I met you was in a class at the seminary at Andrews University. You taught your classes with passion. And now, you still discuss theology with enthusiasm. What brings about such passion for theology?

**RD:** I don't know. I think it is some sort of a burning devotion to something or someone you have discovered. Christ found me back in the 1940s, and I started discovering one fascinating biblical truth after another. Once you have grasped a biblical truth that answers your questions, that moves you, even changes your life and view of things, nothing and nobody can keep you from sharing it. And in the process, it grows in you. That's what happened in my case.

And this passion, as you call it, is not in contradiction with reason. On the contrary! For you need to understand what found you, and you need a rational way to share it or Him in an intelligible

way, naturally, spontaneously. I have come to believe that this may well be where my seven years of classical training, especially in Latin and Greek, one hour a day each, five and a half days a week, between the ages of 12 and 19, shaped my way of expressing things. Much of that happened before I came to Christ.

**NS:** That makes sense. Two things I remember about your teaching are passion and structure. You knew where you were heading. By the way, did you know Seventh-day Adventists during the war?



*Nikolaus Satelmajer interviews Raoul Dederen*

**RD:** In 1939 when World War II began, I was 14. I was 20 when the war ended. Louise and I have vivid memories of those years. There was so much destruction, pain, and blood. I was often disturbed by the fact that my Catholic faith hardly answered my questions, especially about good and evil as well as about my future and that of Europe. I refused to go along with Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy, very popular at the time. I refused to accept the view that man faces an absurd world with feelings of anguish and disgust. Then I came in contact with Seventh-day Adventists. Their grasp of the great controversy between Christ and Satan and their interpretation of biblical prophecies gave me some meaningful answers. It all started with a snow party in the

winter of 1942. My sister and I, while sledding down the snowy hills not far from home, ran into two or three young Adventists whom we had met a few years earlier. We invited them to join us. As we walked up the slopes, they shared their faith with us, starting with the doctrine of the millennium.

**NS:** Of all things, the millennium?

**RD:** Yes, the millennium. It was a most relevant topic in those days. Adolf Hitler, who reigned over most of Europe, had promised a thousand-year German Reich. This led us to the end-time

prophecies in Daniel and Revelation. We met several Sunday afternoons. I was intrigued and wanted to look deeper in these prophecies that dealt with events so close to my studies in antiquity. My new friends quite wisely put me in the hands of an Adventist layman some 15 years older than myself. From there we considered other biblical teachings. I never received a single Bible study from an Adventist minister. There were not many available at the time. Months later I started attending Sabbath afternoon meetings, most of which I found boring except for the fact that my layman friend was in charge and that I found myself again with my young friends of the snowy hills. After that, I got increasingly close to one of them, Louise, who became my wife in 1947.

Changing the  
People Who Change  
the World...

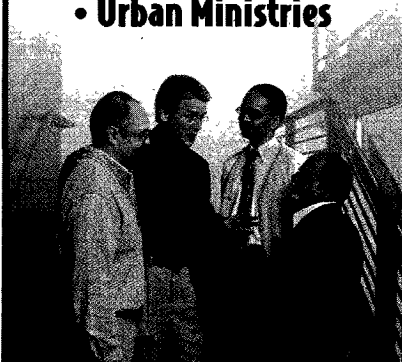
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Photo: Daniel Bedell

**NS:** A few years ago, you went through a very challenging period in your health. How did you come through that?

**RD:** In early 2002, some three weeks before I was to embark on a series of meetings in Greece and the Far East, I felt pain in my stomach. Dr. L. B. Hamel, our family doctor, ordered an endoscopy and discovered cancer. Surgery followed right away, and Dr. D. Rasbach took out all my stomach, the spleen, and part of the pancreas. Death stared me in the face. There was very little chance of survival. During that entire ordeal, I refused to even ask the question "Why? Why me?" I knew there was no answer to that kind of question. I'd been telling that to people all my life as a minister. "Just trust God and rely on Him." That's what I had been telling those who faced such unanswerable questions. This time I lived that experience existentially. Louise did not want to ask the question either. She told me, "Raoul, there must be a reason, there is a reason why you are going through this." She suffered immensely, no question more than I, but she never gave up faith and just waited. I said to God, "If this is the end of my life, I'm grateful, very grateful for the years I lived and shared Christ and the Scriptures." I was tube fed and needed help 24 hours a day. The doctors wanted to move me to an assisted living place. I tried to convince my wife that she would not be able to make it. She adamantly refused, telling the doctors that if I were not to survive I might as well

die among my books. The Lord extended His hand, and we are still here today, both of us, along with the doctors.

**NS:** In the midst of it all, you reached out in faith, and we rejoice that you passed that difficult part in your life.

**RD:** I often muttered passages from the Scriptures. And a few hymns too. Two in particular, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and "A Wonderful Savior Is Jesus My Lord."

**NS:** Very simple but profound words. Can you tell something about your pastoral days?

**RD:** I stepped out of Roman Catholicism and was baptized in the last days of December 1944, in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge. The Germans were retreating just a few miles away from our home, and the big guns were roaring around us. In the fall of 1945 I started my ministerial training at our seminary in Collonges-sous-Salève, France. I had no problem with my studies. I lacked neither intellectual discipline nor persistence. My previous training had taken care of that. My problem was elsewhere and much more serious. I was quite embarrassed by my lack of knowledge of the Bible as a whole. Besides, my fellow students could sing hymns without help from a hymnbook. I could not. It was a rather humiliating experience. Dr. A. Vaucher, the main Bible teacher, must have become aware of the situation, for one



day he took me aside and said, "Brother Dederen, you are bright, the best of the class, but something is wrong. You don't know the Bible. Is that it? Come to my place. I'll teach you how to study the Bible on your own." That was obviously what I lacked. From then on, every week for several months we spent a couple of hours at his place, and I learned several ways of studying the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments. I owe an enormous debt to Dr. Vaucher.

**NS:** What were some of the methods he taught you?

**RD:** They were in fact quite simple. Studying a specific book of the Bible. Studying a chapter at a time. Studying specific words, researching their meanings in the Bible. I remember very vividly Dr. Vaucher asking me to report to him on the use of the word *hand* in reference to God, and what did it mean to me. It was an incredible experience, an incredible eye opener. There was also the study of biblical persons, and a study of prayers in the Bible. An exhaustive concordance—in English!—became one of my most useful tools, an indispensable tool.

There was one more thing on which Dr. Vaucher insisted: "Never use one method more than two months. If you ignore this principle, you will develop a couple of hobby-horses. We have enough of such preachers."

When we entered the ministry in Brussels in 1947, Louise and I made a covenant. I would devote all my mornings to the study of the Bible, five days a week. It was all divided by hours. I started at seven o'clock in the morning. In the first hour I just read the Bible; just read it. When I finished, I started over. The second hour, I read about the Bible. I bought two Bible dictionaries, one one-volume and the second a five-volume set. That second one was in English. I read them from A to Z over a seven-year period. The third hour was devoted to the study of the Bible itself on the basis of the methods taught by Dr. Vaucher. The fourth hour I worked on my Bible studies and my sermons, and the fifth hour was devoted to my mail. In the afternoons

and evenings I was more than busy giving Bible studies to those interested in them. After just a few years the word went around that I was Bible-centered, preaching from the Bible.

After two years of internship in Brussels, I was asked to fill a gap in Liege, our second largest French-speaking church in Belgium. Just for some six months, till they found a man of experience.

But we stayed five wonderful years. I preached from the Scriptures and held two public evangelistic meetings a year, one six weeks long, and the other three, five nights a week. They didn't bring in large crowds, but 50 to 60 people, which was quite a number at the time. The local church grew by leaps and bounds. Those were incredible years. Louise and I enjoyed our pastor-evangelist ministry.

Then in 1954 came the call to return to our seminary in France and teach. I was 29. At first we turned it down, but on the insistence of "the brethren," especially Dr. Vaucher, we decided to give it a two-year try, convinced they would see their mistake. We stayed ten years at Collonges-sous-Salève, till 1964, during which I also worked on a doctorate at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. We enjoyed the teaching ministry as much as the pastoral one.

**NS:** And then you came to the seminary.

**RD:** Yes, and here again it was supposed to be for a year or two. We wanted to go back to Europe, but quite early Dr. Richard Hammill and Dean W. G. C. Murdoch insisted that we stay. Brother, did we pray about it! So we stayed, and we have been here for the last 42 years. And once again a most blessed experience.

**NS:** It has been a blessing. Your former students literally circle the world.

**RD:** It's a blessing both ways. Whenever I meet my former students, they do express their appreciation for focusing on what it has been my privilege to teach and develop, more particularly Revelation-Inspiration, Christology, and the doctrine of the church. What an opportunity and what an experience! I still have difficulties grasping how amazingly God opens doors and is eager to grant you specific gifts each time He calls on you for a particular task. For it has all been His doing. When I am asked to summarize my experience, I usually am unable to improve on Paul's statement that I am "a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God" (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1). ■



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# The ministry of teaching in the congregation

Kathy Beagles



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Most parents, grandparents, and other caregivers want to train the children in their care to be healthy and involved in the society around them. They want to see them grow up to be well-informed, well-balanced, and good citizens wherever they live. Doubly essential for Christians, this training has a bearing on their citizenship both now and in God's eternal kingdom.

Imagine how God feels about His children. Much more than human parents do, He wants us each to grow spiritually, physically, and mentally; to be well-informed, well-balanced, and good citizens not only here but in His eternal kingdom—present and future.

He started this training process with His disciples while on earth, and He outlined how the training of His children was to work from then on. We call His outline the *Great Commission*. If we want to understand how we can give care to, minister to, and train God's children as they become adopted into His family and continue to grow to full stature, a study of the Great Commission would be a good place to begin.

## The commission

The verbs we associate with Christ's commission to His disciples are *go*, *make disciples*, *preach*, *baptize*, and *teach*. Matthew 28:18–20 (NIV) speaks of *making disciples* and *teaching*, which indicates that we are to instruct and mentor.

Mark 16:15–18 gives a version of the Great Commission that uses the word *preach* with the implication of being a public crier of the truth.

Although they might be hard-pressed to explain it, most parents and teachers know the difference between the activities of teaching and telling. *Teaching* implies that some type of plan or method repeatable by the learner exists, that the needs of the learner are taken into consideration—that some type of two-way communication continues, especially with the involvement of mentoring. *Telling* is more of a one-way street. So is *preaching*.

It seems as though we prefer Mark's record of the commission over Matthew's and actually put much more intentional effort into "publicly crying the truth" (telling) than we do in instructing and discipling (teaching).

We have done very well at codifying, training, implementing, and supporting the functions of going, preaching, and baptizing. We have also set up an inspired and continually growing teaching system by way of our international and unparalleled Christian system of formal education. But here our fulfilling of the commission breaks down.

## The problem

Stated simply, we have divided the commission into two parts: go, preach, baptize (i.e., the church); and go, teach (i.e., church school). Although both are laudable attempts at fulfilling the commission, we now experience a widening disconnect between the two functions as our international church membership (God's growing family) rapidly outgrows any hope of their having access, physically or financially, to our Adventist school system.

Teaching, in the Great Commission, refers to training, equipping, and empowering people to be well-informed, maturing disciples of Christ. The function of teaching must come after baptizing, as well as before, not left exclusively within the function of church schools (in our current understanding of what those are). Some of this teaching does come to the local church members through preaching. But to a church organization that has so much light on the subject of education, we cannot see preaching alone as the complete fulfillment of the commission to teach and disciple.

## The missing link

We have a good program in place for *going*. Unparalleled, the Seventh-day Adventist mission outreach includes both young and old. This

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system of how we go continues to be fine-tuned and managed more and more efficiently.

We also have a good program in place for preaching and baptizing. We have seminaries around the world, and ministerial training at many different levels. We have departments that oversee the ministry of preaching and baptizing as well as a worldwide satellite program. We are beginning to enter the Internet for delivering the preaching component that we faithfully follow by baptism wherever possible.

But what system do we have for teaching the believers in the local church to "observe all things"—such as training children and youth in a personal engagement with God and their church, training all members in how to share their faith, training families about how to function as witnesses to a splintered world, teaching members the Christian principles of personal money and possession management, and even facilitating the intentional practices that foster the fully reconciled and transformed Christian life?

The integration of an explicitly educational component into the local church must begin with the pastor. "The powers of every minister of the gospel should be employed to educate the believing churches to receive Christ by faith as their personal Saviour, to take Him in to their lives and make Him their Pattern to learn of Jesus, believe in Jesus, and exalt Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

## Five steps

One veteran minister outlined a program with educational emphasis for himself that would intentionally incor-

porate the children and youth, would involve the more seasoned disciples, and would reach out to former members and new interests as well. Five of the steps<sup>2</sup> follow:

*Step one:* Recognize and build on the spiritual potential of youngsters. Children dream of "growing up," so designate a special Sabbath when youth enter into spiritual accountability in the church body in a special ceremony. Make it a meaningful and unforgettable day.

*Step two:* With calendar in hand, plan for the next year's curriculum of sermons in a progressively meaningful sequence, perhaps one that covers the beliefs of the church. Create eye-catching sermon titles. Send the list of sermons to all current and former members, to people who have requested Bible studies via radio or television, and to appropriate media, if a relationship has already been formed, as a public service announcement.

*Step three:* Pray for the Spirit's help in creating a parable for each of the weekly sermon subjects. Stories appeal to all ages and are not easily forgotten. Children will begin to understand the plan of salvation, to connect the dots. Jesus taught in parables.

*Step four:* Attract and hold the attention of the children during the sermon. Reserve the front rows for families so that children will feel that they are being addressed by the pastor, that the pastor is *their* teacher. Perhaps start each sermon with a three-minute or less "Creation Moment" that captures the attention and imagination of young and old alike.

*Step five:* Make worship a joyful and beautiful experience with everything building toward the theme of the ser-

mon. Teach all those involved to keep it running smoothly, in a reverent manner, as if it were being broadcast. Elect official readers, both old and young, to lead in Scripture and responsive readings throughout the year. Instruct them to read with understanding, enunciating clearly and with the appropriate volume. And make sure the sermon ends by leaving the worshipers at the throne of the almighty God in the presence of Jesus.

It may be a new idea for some pastors to consider creating an intentional teaching (training) and discipling component for their church. But the process can begin by setting goals for the members—knowing in what ways they need to grow spiritually and being intentional about providing the kinds of opportunities and resources through the church that will make it possible for them to reach those goals. A pastor can do much toward creating an environment for maturing disciples by nurturing a small group of leaders and equipping those leaders to, in turn, run small groups and train other leaders. Jesus, with His disciples, set the precedent. In these small groups, more interaction and education can take place than is possible on Sabbath alone. These groups can, besides gathering for prayer and Bible study, also equip and empower the members to deal more productively with daily life, family relations, money management, and witnessing by using some of the rich resources created by the various ministry departments of the church. But few of these well-developed programs work if the pastor is not behind them.

## Conclusion

No matter what methods are developed, only with a plan for intentional religious education in the church will we be able to provide the needed training that will keep us a viable, growing, and united entity until Christ comes to take home His transformed children into the kingdom of God. ■

1 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 3, (Washington DC: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1980), 187.

2 Steps provided by Oliver Jacques.

# Nothing leadership

Roger Helland



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Leadership today has become such a hot topic that legions of books, seminars, courses, and graduate degrees offered in both secular and Christian leadership are available. I typed in "Leadership" on Amazon.com and found that the word appears in 154,199 book titles, everything from *Monday Morning Leadership* to *Primal Leadership* to *The Benedictine Rule of Leadership* to *The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus*.

Let's suggest another type of leadership and make it an even 154,200: *Nothing Leadership*. What is *nothing* leadership? It's the kind of leadership compressed into one word in one verse concerning one Person in Philippians 2:7, and it could be called *self-emptying* leadership, or *downward mobility* leadership. That Greek word for "made himself nothing" in Philippians 2:7 (*kenosis*) simply means, "to empty." It remains a mystery, and the meaning can hardly be comprehended.

Of what did Christ empty *Himself*? He emptied Himself of Himself. Notice that Paul says Jesus made Himself nothing—an intentional and willful choice. To become a nothing leader means I will seek no selfish ambition, I will practice humility toward others, and I will cultivate the same attitude as that of Jesus—to intentionally empty myself of myself and become a humble servant obedient unto death.

To understand this challenge better, let's take a look at the fuller context of Philippians 2:3–8:

## The postmodern condition

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature  
God,  
did not consider equality  
with God something to  
be grasped,  
but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a  
servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance  
as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to  
death—  
even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2:6–8)<sup>1</sup>

During the last fifty years, numerous cultures have been transitioning into what many scholars call postmodernity—namely, the cultural quest to move beyond modernity. At its heart, the modern view focuses on *reason*; the postmodern view focuses on *relationship*. *Authenticity* has become a common word for postmoderns. Len Hjalmanson writes, "Postmoderns reject authority in position in favor of authority in relationship. They do not buy into hierarchies, and they tend to assign authority only when it is earned. They don't respect leaders who are 'over' but not 'among.' This aligns with the New Testament teaching on the priesthood of believers and Jesus' teaching that 'the greatest among you must be the servant of all.'" <sup>2</sup>

With postmodern context ripe for "nothing" leaders, I interviewed Leslie, our twenty-seven-year-old pastor of student ministries, who is a sharp, intelligent, and deeply spiritual postmodern leader. I asked her what she felt were some of the key qualities that she would admire and want to be as a leader in the postmodern context. She replied, "Postmodern leadership means that I shift from walking in front of you to walking beside you, shoulder to shoulder. When I try to be 'the leader,' the students don't follow me. My leadership has to be about relationship leading to respect leading to trust. We must share life together, connecting, and helping students belong, believe, and become, in that order. I must not be afraid to allow people to wrestle with faith issues and explore deep theological

# THE ULTIMATE CHARACTERISTIC OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP CENTERS AROUND LOVE LEADERSHIP. I CAN SERVE PEOPLE BUT NOT LOVE THEM; HOWEVER, I CANNOT LOVE PEOPLE AND NOT SERVE THEM.

questions like, 'could I ever stop being a Christian?' Narrative is important. Sharing life together is important. Spiritual leadership is more informal."

I also interviewed another postmodern young adult—Steven, a twenty-one-year-old university student who really understands the modern-postmodern conversations. When I asked him what he felt were the characteristics of a good leader whom he would follow or would be attracted to, this was his reply: "Honesty—the postmodern assumption is that we are going to be lied to and be deceived. Authenticity and integrity. Someone who is iconoclastic, meaning, someone like Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show* who is anti-institutional, who does what he believes is right and will do what is right rather than do what he is expected to do and...willing to challenge the status quo. Someone who is fearless. Will speak on the same level as me and not talk down to me, treating me as an equal, as a friend, relating to me."

## Servant leadership

In 1977, Robert Greenleaf published a foundational secular leadership book entitled *Servant Leadership*<sup>3</sup> with a very telling subtitle: "A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness." From it I gained that nothing leaders will become *servant* leaders; however, *servant* leaders do not necessarily become *nothing* leaders. Nothing leaders are humble leaders who empty themselves in their leadership. They do not assert their own ambition or interests but become servants in their attitudes and actions toward others. Servant leaders will empower and serve others but can still do this in a functional way, as a style or strategy not genuinely based on a self-emptying foundation.

The Gospel of Mark highlights the idea of nothing leadership expressing itself in service. Notice what Jesus regards as important: " 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be...slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' " (Mark 10:42–45).

Whoever wants to become great must be a servant. The Greek word used comes from the words *deacon* and *minister*. The term has associations with waiters at tables and of servants to a king. " 'And whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.' " The word "slave," also translated as "servant," is the same word used in Philippians 2:7, for slaves are servants. It is one thing to practice *servant* leadership and another thing to be a *servant* leader. Being will flow into doing.

Jesus, by the way, implies it's OK to be great. How I *become* great becomes the issue.

## Love leadership

What quality do I need that will ultimately characterize me as a servant leader? Henri Nouwen expresses it for me. "Here we touch the most important quality of Christian leadership in the future. It is not leadership of power and control, but a leadership of powerlessness and humility in which the suffering servant of God, Jesus Christ, is made manifest. . . . I am speaking of a leadership in which power is constantly abandoned in favor of love. It is a true spiritual leadership."<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate characteristic of *servant* leadership centers around love leadership. I can serve people but not love them; however, I cannot love people and not serve them. The whole point of the incarnation was love demonstrated by God who so loved the world that He gave His son. God is love. I remember when I was in Bible college, I read Francis A. Schaeffer's *The Mark of the Christian*.<sup>5</sup> I was expecting some insightful or deep theological exposition on the mark or secret of what it really means to be a Christian. I was surprised to discover that the mark of the Christian is love.

I believe that *good* servant leadership founded on *nothing* leadership will be marked by love because leadership is relationship, not just functional. Love makes good relationships; in fact, Scriptures clearly say that spirituality is *relational*. I believe that we are spiritual to the degree that we love. Notice the following texts: "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22–25).

Spiritual leadership (marked by the Spirit) will be leadership that loves. Just last night, my wife Gail and I were out in our backyard working in her flower beds. I was installing some wood borders for a new flower bed, a task that required sawing, nailing, and dumping in new soil. Normally, I don't like yard work. While I was working, she queried, "Why are you doing this? I usually have



to talk you into yard work.”

I replied, “Well, I am doing this for you. Instead of only doing what I want, I need to do what *you* want. That is part of love.”

Whether I’m involved with my wife, children, or church, I must *choose* to love as a leader.

## Leadership integrity

Kevin Mannoia, in his book *The Integrity Factor*,<sup>6</sup> writes that leadership performance flows out of the unseen foundation of *being*. Using Moses and Jesus as models of spiritual leadership, Mannoia presents his thesis that the process of building integrity between who one *is* and what one *does* directs in the growth as a spiritual leader. He calls this “leadership formation” centered on “the integrity factor”—a balance between identity and performance.

For Mannoia, the unseen foundation of leadership can be compared to the invisible 80 percent of an iceberg under water, which gives stability to the visible 20 percent part. If I intentionally concentrate on my unseen foundation of *character*, that will have a dramatic influence on my *conduct* as a leader, for then I will always behave out of my identity. For Mannoia, the central unseen foundation and identity for Christian leadership is self-emptying humility and servanthood described in Philippians 2:5–11.

Allow me to be honest. There are times when I feel like I am playing the pastoral game: put on a happy face, be nice to everyone, exude passion for God, cast vision for spiritual formation and discipleship, show up at key events so people will notice I am there “doing my job being a leader.” But I’m concealing the fact that sometimes my thought life, my family life, and my spiritual life are like the cavern full of snakes that Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) fell into in the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Then I read books like *The Integrity Factor*, *In the Name of Jesus*, or *A Tale of Three Kings*<sup>7</sup> and quickly realized that my struggles duplicate the ones that Paul faced (Rom. 7:15–19).

I feel secure, however, that during times when my identity and my

performance are in alignment, I enjoy the feelings that freedom and fulfillment bring. But there are also times when I have to preach or teach or give spiritual counsel in my office or lead a meeting with a group of leaders only to wish that I could stay home and forget the charades, knowing that my life and doctrine do not match (cf. 1 Tim. 4:16). I suppose I receive some solace in knowing Paul had similar issues when he dictated, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Rom. 7:15–19).

Lately, I have been reflecting on what it means to be a *nothing* leader who needs to discover how to experience Philippians 2 in practical and intentional ways in which I surrender my ambition and agenda. I am contemplating what it means to be a slave and servant to my family, my friends, and my flock. This does not mean *doing* servant leadership stuff but *being* a servant leader. Jesus Christ was the greatest Leader ever, and God rewarded Him for being a self-emptied Servant who surrendered to God all the way to the cross. Notice the word *therefore* in these next verses:

Therefore, God exalted him to  
the highest place  
and gave him the name that  
is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every  
knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and  
under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the  
Father (Phil. 2:9–11).

Quite a reward, *therefore*, for someone who *made Himself nothing* (Phil. 2:7). Just reflect for a moment on the whole notion of Jesus leaving His eternal place in glory: becoming a zygote in the womb of a young woman in Israel, growing into a tiny baby inside her womb for nine silent and solitary

months, and then being born, nursing on her breasts as an infant while soiling whatever kind of diapers they would have used then, growing up as a boy and teenager (imagine Jesus Christ as a sixteen-year-old!). Then He finally became a fully adult Man who was crucified on a rugged Roman cross. How much faith would be required to navigate that kind of path of self-emptying, service, and surrender?

Arturo Toscanini was a famous Italian symphony conductor specializing in the works of Beethoven. One night in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Toscanini conducted the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra in a program that included the Ninth Symphony, one of the most difficult pieces to direct. The music was so majestic and so moving that when the piece was completed, the audience stood for round after round of applause. Toscanini took his bows again and again; then he turned to the orchestra and they bowed. The audience continued to clap and cheer. The orchestra members themselves were smiling and clapping. Finally, Toscanini turned his back to the audience and spoke only to the orchestra, “Ladies, gentlemen—I am nothing. You are nothing. Beethoven is everything.”<sup>8</sup>

That’s the essence of *nothing* leadership. ■

- 1 All Scripture texts in this article are taken from the New International Version.
- 2 Len Hjalmanson, “Postmodern Possibilities,” *NextReformation*, <http://nextreformation.com/wp-admin/articles/postmod1g.htm>; accessed 21 July 2006.
- 3 Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).
- 4 Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 63.
- 5 Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970).
- 6 Kevin W. Mannoia, *The Integrity Factor: A Journey in Leadership Formation* (Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Communications, 1996).
- 7 Ibid.; Nouwen; and Gene Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980, 1992).
- 8 Cited by Tommy Tenney, *Prayers of a God Chaser: Passionate Prayers of Pursuit* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 135.

# Reflecting on issues of ethics in church discipline

Richard P. Lehmann



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**T**he church in Corinth has a reputation for several significant problems. One of its members lives with the wife of his father while the community remains unconcerned (1 Cor. 5:1, 2). Moreover, it appears that prostitution (sacred or literal) is not contrary to the faith of some (6:15–18). Disputes within the community are obvious (6:7). During Communion services the rich eat and get drunk in front of the hungry poor (11:21). Tensions are enormous: Each member identifies with a different leader, providing opportunities for division (chapters 1–3). Their claim to the charismatic gifts provides them with a platform favoring attitudes of superiority and contempt (16:11). Finally, their doctrinal deviations go so far as to put in question the resurrection of Christ (ch. 15) and the validity of marriage (ch. 7). These issues nurture their conflicts with the establishment and even cause them to view with suspicion the authority of Paul (2 Cor. 11:12–15).

But most amazing, Paul considers this “the church of God which is at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1).<sup>\*</sup> Corinth has the honor of being the only church designated by this glorious formula. Moreover, he calls the members of this church “saints by calling” (1:2, NAS).

How can it be that, with multiple reasons to dismiss this church and its members, Paul approaches them with such esteem? Finding the answer could enlighten our outlook and provide practical advice for dealing with issues of church discipline.

## Conform your life to what you are

Underline the first exhortation, a mysterious formula found in 1 Corinthians 5:7. “Cleanse out the old leaven . . . as you really are unleavened.” What a paradox! How can one take away what is lacking in the first place? Paul postulates that the Corinthians lack leaven, and requests that they eliminate it altogether. Rather than call upon one stricken with a sickness that came from misdeeds, Paul makes an appeal: correct the behavior and bring it in conformity with your Christian identity. The intent of Paul’s intervention clearly emphasizes, not exclusion of the saints, rather, their correction.

## Let us be constructive

The theme associated with acting in ways that are beneficial or constructive pervades this epistle. It appears that Paul has taken on the vocation of Jeremiah and sees the accomplishment of God’s promises to the prophet taking place in front of his eyes (Jer. 1:10; 31:28). God plants and builds by means of His servants (1 Cor. 3). To enter into the plan of God, we must build. “‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up” (10:23). The constructive action identifies the feature of the true prophet. “He who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” (14:3). He alone edifies the church (14:4). Everything must be done for edification (14:5). Gifts awarded by God were intended for that purpose (14:2). Edification becomes the standard of all actions worth taking (14:26). See also Romans 14:19 and 15:2.

Used in construction, cement contains love, for “‘knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up” (8:1). The central theme of construction therefore opens the door to a pastoral approach focused on building up the victim of sin, not on destroying.

## Let us be supportive

In dealing with the problem of the gifts and the conflicts that they may bring in the church, Paul refers to the agape love (ch. 13). When he brings a verbal form to the three abiding theological virtues, faith, hope, and love (13:13), Paul affirms, in 1 Corinthians 13:7, that love believes all (faith), hopes all (hope), and endures all (agape love). In this verse, Paul interjects “enduring” *hupomone* (translated “perseveres” in the NIV) as a synonym of *agape*. One who loves genuinely supports the other actively and remains ever enduring and

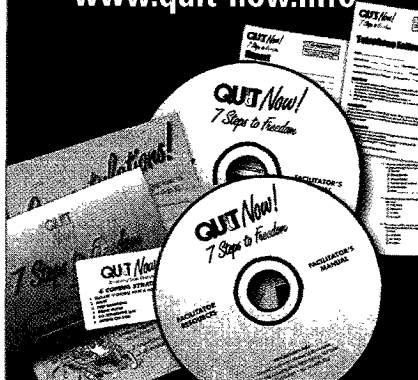
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unfailing. It means to give to someone all the support you can. Loving results in the capacity to care for the other even when that person becomes morally compromised. It instigates a corrective approach that takes into consideration the qualities of the guilty party and provides an opportunity to build up the individual.

### Let us be understanding

A Native American saying asserts that we may know others only if we have walked in their moccasins. While we often request the sinner to be understanding of the disciplinary action taken by the church, the action must be preceded by knowing that person and the reasons that caused the failure.

### Let us be true

Paul dedicates the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians to the disputes resulting from the pretensions of the Corinthians of greater knowledge. Each of the groups targeted by Paul claimed notoriety by linking their exclusive affiliation with Paul, Cephas, or Apollos (1:12). Each wanted to occupy the highest ground in arguing their opinions.

For Paul, through the light of the cross and the love it radiates, we discover how valuable we are in the eyes of God, and we have no reason to boast. The proud cannot comprehend this expression because no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived these things. They are so foreign to the human nature.

Thus, we cannot be helpful in the healing process of others if we do not have a clearly established perception of our own limitations and finiteness. To be true, one must approach the guilty, not from a position of strength, but from the very bottom of one's own weaknesses.

### Let us be coherent

In the midst of these chapters on ministration, a doctrinal chapter (15) appears, dealing with the resurrection. Brought up like an erratic block, it has no apparent connection with the rest of the epistle. However, Paul may have been led to develop this

LOVING RESULTS  
IN THE CAPACITY  
TO CARE FOR THE  
OTHER EVEN WHEN  
THAT PERSON  
BECOMES MORALLY  
COMPROMISED.

Christology specifically as a response to the problems of the church in Corinth. The sins of Corinth are not unrelated to their departure from their faith in the resurrection.

Christ's resurrection equates with an inescapable reality that seals our own resurrection. Since we all, as believers, expect to be resurrected, everything worth doing must submit to this parameter. Not only a dogmatic reality, the resurrection became the foundation of all ethical considerations. This dimension should both predicate the actions of the believer and provide effectiveness to the work of ministering. All pastoral care must interface with the potential of the resurrection of the ministered and maintain a bond that may be maintained for eternity. Our lives must be seen from the point of view of a special call and gift to live eternally with Jesus and with our brethren and sisters in Christ.

### Conclusion

The context shows clearly that Paul does not advocate against interventionism. But since his great encounter on the way to Damascus, Paul remains fascinated with the person of Jesus. Through his entire life, he repeatedly remembers his own evil deeds and treasures the precious grace he received. He never feels himself above the others, never judges them with a feeling of superiority, but recognizes his stance as a sinner who has been redeemed. Because this perspective illuminates Paul's pastoral approach, it assuredly will enlighten the way we approach church discipline. ■

\*Unless otherwise indicated, all texts are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

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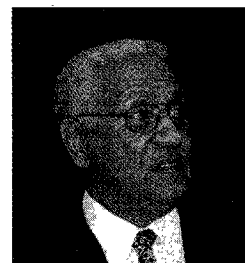
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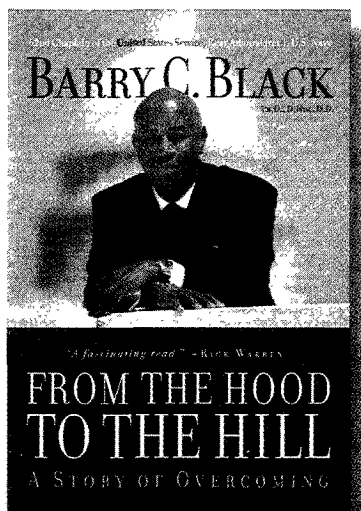
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# Your leadership toolbox

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**K**en Blanchard, co-author of *The One Minute Manager*, came home one day from elementary school thrilled; he had just been elected president of his seventh-grade class. His father, a retired admiral, said, "Son, it's great that you are the president of the seventh grade. But now that you have the leadership position, don't ever use it." His dad continued, "Great leaders are followed because people respect them and like them, not because they have power."<sup>1</sup>

Is leadership about wielding power and authority, or is it more about building relationships and through them accomplishing a mission? Some people use positional authority; that is, they use the authority of their position to make people do things their way. Both biblical and modern leadership literature, however, strongly support interpersonal relational aspects of leading people.<sup>2</sup> More relational and interpersonal leadership can increase respect and cooperation, making possible the ultimate realization of a mission.

How do you move away from positional leadership to a more relational, interpersonal style? Effective leaders need different tools or styles to apply to different situations.

We're suggesting four tools that leaders can use in facing difficult challenges. These tools have been shown to help leaders effectively mobilize people to move forward.<sup>3</sup> The four tools are sharing a clear vision, coaching, working together, and affirming.

## Becoming a servant

Relational leadership finds its base and power source in servanthood. Before we pick up leadership tools, we must first become servants. At first glance, servanthood and leadership may seem to be opposites. However, Jesus Christ demonstrated true servant leadership by His actions as He served others. His words to His emerging leadership core were, "The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:26, NIV). Jesus demonstrated servanthood in His incarnation, "but made himself nothing, taking the very nature [form] of a servant" (Phil. 2:7, NIV). And those who would be followers of Jesus Christ heed His word to "do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3, NIV).

Jesus' constant practice of servant leadership led Him to pick up the basin and towel and serve His disciples. Modern studies confirm this approach. Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, records his surprising findings about great companies and their top leaders. Collins found that leaders at the highest level, which he coined Level 5 Leaders, combine a deep sense of humility with unyielding determination.<sup>4</sup> The attitude of humility continues as one of the hallmarks of great servant leaders.

Though few church leaders dispute the value of servant leadership, few practice it. Why? Apparently it is easier to talk about than to practice.

Sometimes people see leadership as just having and wielding authority, not as serving and carrying out a mission. Once they move into a position of power, they forget about service. But Jesus *descended* into greatness. He stepped down from His position in heaven, humbled Himself, and became the servant of all humanity.

Authentic servant leadership comes from our hearts. If we use servanthood as a slick manipulation tool, those served can eventually see through us and resent it. By spending time in quiet reflection, we can gain insight into our motivations, intentions, and the effects of our service. We can pray over these matters of the heart and ask the Spirit for the gift of servanthood so we can authentically live the paradox of servant leadership.

If you want to see servanthood spread across your congregation, you must model servanthood as a leader. Leadership must demonstrate the value of service. People need to hear, and even more to see, service as a core value. The more authority leaders have, the more they need to demonstrate service. People are pleasantly surprised with a



demonstration of servant leadership. And in the Western world's postmodern times, genuine service can counteract the general mood of distrust.

To help your leadership team become more service oriented, consider encouraging them to take a spiritual gifts inventory such as the one available at The Center for Creative Ministry.<sup>5</sup> They

us. Sharing a vision tells the congregation that we're not staying here, but rather we are moving forward with purpose and intent.

Remember the classical biblical statement, "Where there is no vision the people perish" (Prov. 29:18, KJV)? Conversely, we could say, "Where there is vision, people thrive." A first step in

however, that three of his managers sat at his table. They looked at him and at one another with a puzzled look and said, "The vision may be clear in your head, but we don't have a clue what you're talking about!" Managers in other organizations, as well as church leaders, confirm that this response is typical.

Is your vision statement clear? Does your church understand it? Is the vision so simple and memorable that everyone can spell it out? Does the vision evoke energy and passion in you and others? Maybe it's time to dream again!

*The second leadership tool: becoming a coach.* The importance of coaching is well-accepted outside the church community. For example, the sports world grasps the importance of coaching. From baseball to soccer, sports players are coached. Even children in pee-wee baseball receive coaching to develop their talent.

Although personal coaching is a new concept to twenty-first century churches, the New Testament church includes many examples of effective coaching. Consider Barnabas, the son of encouragement. Barnabas who came alongside the infant Christian Paul. He personally coached him to become extremely useful to God and God's purposes.

What is personal coaching? First, as a coach, you come alongside a person to help by asking a few questions and listening carefully. Second, as a coach, you come alongside another person and inquire about their next steps of action.<sup>7</sup>

As a coach, you develop a relationship of trust that helps the person being coached feel free to discuss personal and ministry issues. You always remember that the agenda of the other person is of primary importance. Coaching isn't about the coach; it's about developing the person you are coaching. You listen and sparsely give input. For many pastors, this can be difficult, for pastors often listen and give suggestions and solutions. This creates dependency. However, the creation of accountability includes coaches drawing input from other people through the questions they ask.

While coaching someone else, you should ask them what they want to

## LEADERSHIP MUST DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF SERVICE. PEOPLE NEED TO HEAR, AND EVEN MORE TO SEE, SERVICE AS A CORE VALUE. THE MORE AUTHORITY LEADERS HAVE, THE MORE THEY NEED TO DEMONSTRATE SERVICE.

can then seek feedback from each other and from trusted friends who know them well. They can try using these gifts and see what results occur. Are people edified and blessed?

As time goes by, you can encourage people on your team to see the needs right before their eyes. They will soon start seeing for themselves places where they can serve. With the demonstration of the value of servanthood, more people want to become involved. The pastor cannot do it all, but with the heart of a servant he can model servanthood and encourage a culture of servanthood, thereby inspiring others to do the same. This can be a relief to pastors who may be trying to do it all themselves!

### Four tools for servant leaders

Once we have the heart of a servant, we can reach for the tools we need to apply to different leadership situations.

*The first leadership tool: sharing a clear vision.* Why is vision so deeply moving to people? Truth be told, we're all dreamers. And a clear vision releases the dreamer in

becoming a vision-driven congregation includes drafting a simple and concise vision statement. God shared a vision with Moses: "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exod. 3:10, NIV). Consider the simple vision God gave to Gideon: "'Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand'" (Judges 6:14, NIV). Notice that these vision statements are short, concise, and action-oriented.

The vision-driven church repeatedly communicates its vision. John Kotter, a leading authority on leadership, suggests that most visions are drastically undercommunicated.<sup>6</sup> Remember, you're not the only one communicating vision. We are bombarded daily with attractive television, radio, and Internet visions. Wise leaders choose a simple vision statement and constantly keep it before their people.

Recently, while Dr. Schaller was consulting on leadership development for a major airline, a director boldly said, "Of course our team's vision is clear and everyone understands it!" It so happened,

accomplish in their ministry. Then you can ask them what they think are the one or two next steps they can take toward their goal.

Every coach can also benefit from having a personal coach. Receiving coaching is extremely beneficial. Some of the benefits include setting aside time to reflect on and discuss ministry issues, gain perspective, and form practical action steps. This helps the coach to, in turn, more effectively coach others.

*The third leadership tool: working together with people.* When people work together, they co-labor together as a team. Working together allows you to gain the insights and perspectives of others, but only if they feel it's safe to share them. Such dialogue will increase if you welcome, affirm, and guard the input of others.

For people to feel they can speak freely, a situation must be created that fosters true listening, respect, and suspension of judgmental behavior.<sup>8</sup>

When you invite people who are working together to give their input, their level of commitment generally increases. The more they work together, the more they have a stake in the mission or issue, and the likelihood of them following through increases. People's resistance to new ideas often decreases as they contribute to the process because they are a part of it.

The advantage of working together includes tapping the collective brainpower of the group. You listen to multiple viewpoints and perspectives instead of just your own. Solomon said, "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22, NASB).

To successfully work together, a pastor might need to release more control and seek the viewpoints of others. The leader may need to become more vulnerable and humbly say, "I don't have all the answers, and I need, and our group needs, everyone's input."

For a group to work together, it must respect each member's viewpoints and encourage everyone to share. Someone must facilitate meetings so the group can hear both the dominant and the less dominant members.

With good leadership, people are more motivated to buy into joint decisions, the quality of decisions significantly rises, and people leave meetings with a greater desire to contribute. Might working together make your leadership team more effective?

*The fourth leadership tool: affirmation.* Affirmation calls out the best in other people by highlighting the positive. Affirmation can be defined as catching people making a contribution and giving them positive feedback.

Yes, to some degree it's a risk on a leader's part to step out and express appreciation. People can misunderstand or reject affirmation, especially if they are not used to receiving it. But the risk is certainly worth it when you consider what appreciation can do in people's lives. Affirming feedback signals people that they're on the right track. Affirmation and its twin, encouragement, are the two arms that lift up people. "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25, NIV). Clearly, the need for gathering to encourage each other will only increase as the Advent draws near.

When you see something you admire in someone else, express appreciation! You can write your appreciation on a card and mail it. You might gather a small group together and ask them to spend a couple of minutes telling one member of the group what they appreciate about him or her. Then do the same for another member. Or, why not have people stand before the congregation so you can affirm the person or group, and then have the congregation say in unison, "We commend your service." Why not give a small gift to express your appreciation? Leaders can greatly leverage their influence by learning to express positive and uplifting affirmation.

While working in college as a hospital orderly, I witnessed an encouraging leader and the effect he had on people. A nurse was struggling, trying to perform a procedure on a patient. Finally the patient's doctor entered the room—full of nurses and staff. The tension was high. What I saw next as I stood by the

door left a mark on my life. The doctor quickly performed the procedure and then turned and personally expressed appreciation to every person packed into the room. Before leaving, he even thanked me—an orderly—at the door. Then the doctor disappeared down the hall and was gone. I saw the mood of the whole room change; people were uplifted by the simple expression of appreciation. It was a defining moment for me, for I saw firsthand the impact that words of encouragement have on people.

## Applying skills to specific situations

You need each of these four leadership tools at different times. It doesn't work well to pick one or two favorites and ignore the others. With all four tools in your toolbox, you can apply the appropriate one for each situation. Through experience and awareness, you develop the judgment to determine what tools you should use in each situation.

In the twenty-first century an urgent cry for spiritual leadership exists. You can answer that cry by using these four leadership tools. Remember, great leaders are followed, not because of the position they hold, but because people respect them. By building relationships and trust, you can help your group move forward and realize its ultimate mission. ■

1 Ken Blanchard, *The Masters of Success* (Sevierville, TN: Insight Publishing Company, 2005), 11.

2 Janet O. Hagberg, *Real Power: Stages of Personal Power in Organizations* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1994), 156–66.

3 Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 53–69.

4 Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 22, 23.

5 Bruce Bugbee, Don Cousins, and Bill Hybels, *Connections: The Right People, in the Right Places, for the Right Reasons* (Portland, OR: Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, 1996), 53–65. [www.creativeministry.org](http://www.creativeministry.org).

6 John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 9.

7 Robert E. Logan and Sherilyn Carlton, *Coaching 101: Discover the Power of Coaching* (St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2003), 26.

8 William Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 242.

# Paul's counsel to a discouraged pastor

Cedric Vine



*Cedric Vine, M.A., is pastor of the Derby District of churches in the North England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Nottingham, England.*

**T**imothy wanted out. He felt helpless. His church was imploding as individuals set themselves up as experts in the law, challenging his authority and ministry. Paul did not respond by relocating Timothy. Instead he urged him to stay: "I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus" (1 Tim. 1:3, NRSV). It seems as if Paul had talked to Timothy about this issue before.

A discouraged pastor needing some encouragement? Can any ministers relate? What did Paul write to Timothy? What can we take away from his words for ourselves?

## A DISCOURAGED PASTOR NEEDING SOME ENCOURAGEMENT? CAN ANY MINISTERS RELATE?

### Timothy's problem

Paul responded to Timothy's dilemma by instructing the young man to implement the household code for the church: "I urge you . . . to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote

speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith. But the aim of such instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:3–5, NRSV).

The aim of Paul's code was the production of "love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith." Paul starts by confessing his own lack of faith in the past and the Lord's gracious response in the outpouring of faith and love (1 Tim. 1:12–17). This signals to Timothy that any deficiency he may experience is not unique and can be overcome through the workings of his Lord.

What was Timothy's problem? This we find hinted at in 1 Timothy 1:18–19: "I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, having faith and a good conscience" (NRSV).

Paul compliments Timothy on his faith and good conscience, the implication being that, perhaps, he lacks a pure heart. Paul continues by affirming that others, such as Hymenaeus and Alexander, have had problems with their faith and consciences (1 Tim. 1:19; 4:1–3). They rejected their consciences and, as a result, abandoned their faith. Timothy does not have this problem. His desire to leave Ephesus was not a result of turning aside from faith. He simply wanted out of Ephesus—a move away, not from his Lord or the ministry, but from his church.

Paul does not perform public, open-heart surgery on Timothy but instead leaves the problem largely unstated, allowing Timothy the

opportunity to question in private the state of his own heart.

Does this mean there are no clues pertaining to the state of Timothy's heart and his desire to run from his lot in Ephesus? For Paul, the key to being a successful soldier includes maintaining the desire to please the enlisting officer rather than getting entangled in everyday affairs

(2 Tim. 2:3, 4). In 1 Timothy 6:6–12 Paul describes the lure of wealth and the destructive effects of the love of money on an individual's sense of contentment. Paul concludes with an appeal, in the singular, to Timothy,

blocks of instructions that Timothy is to implement (2:1–3:13; 5:1–6:2). In 2:1–8 Paul instructs the men to pray, with their hands raised, about everything under the sun. In a situation in which the men are involved in

household of God (1 Tim. 3:5, 12, 14, 15). Further instructions include the treatment of widows and elders, and the regulation of the slave-master relationship (5:1–6:2).

These rules are clearly tailored to

## WHEN I TEACH AND PREACH, DO I DO IT WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT COMES FROM KNOWING THAT I HAVE BEEN GIVEN GIFTS FROM GOD, GIFTS AFFIRMED BY HUMAN AGENCIES?

to shun all this (v. 11) and instead to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. In 2 Timothy 2:22, 23 he instructs Timothy away from youthful passions and senseless controversies and instead encourages him to pursue those qualities of a “pure heart”—righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

### The authority issue

Paul, though, isn't through with Timothy. Every household operates according to a code that defines the role and status of each individual family member, whether he or she is the wife, husband, child, parent, servant, or master.<sup>1</sup> The head of the household sets these rules. Paul set out the household code for the church in Ephesus in his first letter to Timothy. In so doing, he asserts his headship over the church (1 Tim. 1:5, 18). Paul is the head of the household, and Timothy is its steward. If Timothy is to receive his crown, he needs to compete according to Paul's code.

What rules does Paul lay down for the Ephesian church? We find two

needless disputes, such a practice, if implemented faithfully, offers a route of spiritual praxis out of the conflict. It is harder to throttle your brother if your hands are continually raised to the Lord! The women of the church are instructed regarding right dress and forbidden to speak in teaching situations (1 Tim. 2:9–15). Such an injunction should be interpreted within the context of Timothy's situation. He did not face a coherent body of thought but rather meaningless chatter that did not require a sustained and developed theological reply (1 Tim. 1:4, 6, 7; 4:1–3, 7; 5:13; 6:3–5). Paul's response to those women in the church who idly gad about, gossiping and interfering in the affairs of others (5:13), was to forbid them to teach or to have authority.<sup>2</sup> He even went one step further and commanded them to silence.

In 3:1–13 Paul laid down the criteria for bishops and deacons. Proficient implementation of rules within their own households is taken as an indication of their willingness to aid Timothy in the implementation of Paul's house rules within the local

the local situation. We should note the effect on Timothy's ministry of receiving such rules. They offered Timothy the opportunity to reset the church's agenda with himself reestablished under the authority of Paul. To resist Timothy in his implementation of the rules is to reject Paul. In a crisis situation, rules are a pastor's best friend!

Paul's call for Timothy to compete according to the rules raises two issues. First, that of headship. In a situation in which Timothy wanted out of Ephesus, Paul's claim to headship might have come as a welcome relief. For Timothy, final responsibility for Ephesus and its problems belonged to another. But what if things had been going well in Ephesus? Paul's assertion of his headship was not limited to crisis situations as illustrated by his letter to the Ephesians.

### Other issues

When things are going well in my own ministry, do I perceive the assertion of headship by, for example, conference leaders as unnecessary interference or as a duty they are called to fulfill?

The second issue is that of the rules. In an age of self-reliance and the deconstruction of sources of authority, have I started to rewrite the rules in my own favor? It is not within our nature to follow the rules of another. Paul himself has to charge Timothy twice in the presence of God, Jesus Christ, and the elect angels to keep the rules, and to keep them with impartiality (1 Tim. 5:21; 6:13, 14).

Paul also warned Timothy that the hardworking farmer gets the first share of the crops (2 Tim. 2:6). This warning raises two questions: What was stopping him from working? What was the work he should have been doing?

Paul's call for renewed effort presupposes that Timothy had eased up in his output. Let us give Timothy the benefit of the doubt and assume that the problem wasn't simply one of laziness. His dedication to Paul as a companion over the years would argue against this. A possible clue to Timothy's problem lies in Paul's reminders to Timothy of the gift he had previously received. The gift

was given at the same time prophecies were made: "I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight" (1 Tim. 1:18, NRSV). At this point in the epistle the nature of these prophecies remains hidden. The source of the prophecies is also unstated. Paul elaborates further by linking the giving of the prophecies with the reception of a gift from God: "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders" (1 Tim. 4:14, NRSV).<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the gift, it was in danger of being neglected. In 2 Timothy 1:6-9, Paul goes one step further from his previous comments by identifying his own hands as the means by which Timothy received his gift.

We should note the close association between the reception of the gift and its transmission through the human agencies of Paul and the elders. The

flesh and blood church is the apparatus through which the gifts are conferred, and any desire to bypass such agencies will result in claims to spiritual authority being made solely on the basis of the individual's own perception of his or her relationship to God. God works through the individual but does not bypass the collective. The difficulty this balance posed for the early church is attested by the strict regulations found in the *Didache*, an early Christian document, to determine the difference between true and false apostle-prophets.<sup>4</sup> Timothy clearly lacked any sense that he had a special gift and, as a result, suffered a crisis of confidence. He was "ashamed of the gospel" and as such neglected his work. Paul's response was to bypass any feelings Timothy may have had and to affirm that he had a gift on the basis that he, Paul the giver, knew that Timothy had received it. Paul thereby reaffirmed the confidence the wider church had in Timothy despite the local difficulties he was experiencing. Why had Timothy neglected his gift?

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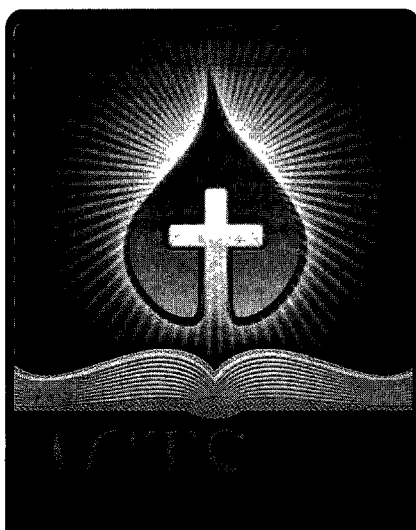
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## Without reading the Bible . . .

I am depriving myself of LIFE. Real life is defined as an intimate relationship with God—which is of greater value than physical survival. God's Word is the source of spiritual life.

I am stunting my GROWTH. Peter challenges us to desire God's Word in the same way that a baby craves milk (1 Pet. 2:2). Why? So that we can grow!

I am undermining my FAITH. Paul explains that faith comes from hearing the message of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Faith is strengthened as I continue to read His Word. Because He is unchanging, what I observe in the Scriptures helps me to trust Him in the present, even in confusing circumstances and painful experiences.

I am steering away from personal PURITY. Jesus responded to each satanic temptation with the same phrase, "It is written." If Jesus could not combat temptation apart from a personal knowledge and understanding of God's Word, how can I escape temptation without a daily engagement with the Scriptures?

I am cutting myself off from GUIDANCE. God *breathed* the Scriptures to change me and guide me—teaching, rebuking, correcting, and instructing me (2 Tim. 3:16).

I am abandoning the primary source of all effective MINISTRY. Paul also links effective ministry to our handling of the Scriptures. By submitting to the life-changing guidance of the Scriptures, I am equipped to impact the lives of others.

In the busy world where we live, finding the time to read and study the Bible can be a challenge. Even after twenty years of pastoral ministry, I have found that the most intense spiritual battles erupt around my efforts to fellowship with God through the Scriptures. The devil will do all he can to distract you and me from simple devotion to Jesus Christ.

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The answer may lie in Paul's need to remind Timothy earlier that he is a soldier in danger of being distracted by everyday affairs.

What was the work Timothy was called to do? In answering this question, the two stages of prophetic ministry suggested by G. K. Beale prove useful. The first stage involves prophets delivering their message, "in a rational and sermonistic way, exhorting the audience about their sin and reminding them about their past history."<sup>5</sup> Prophets take up different forms of warning when the audience hardens to such an approach. They start to utilize "symbolic action and parable" to capture their audience's attention.<sup>6</sup> The move is from preaching the Word to symbolizing the Word. Yahweh reached this tipping point with Israel when He asked Isaiah to symbolize the result of Israel's trust in Egypt and Ethiopia by walking naked and barefoot for three years (Isa. 20:1–6). He reached this point with Judah when He requested Jeremiah to trash a new suit in public as a symbol of how He would ruin their pride (Jer. 13:1–11). Ezekiel was called to symbolize Judah's future punishment by lying on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, followed by forty days on his right side (Ezek. 4:1–8).

At what stage is Timothy in this process? He has yet to reach the first stage as reflected in Paul's repeated calls for Timothy to teach and preach the Word. Paul calls Timothy to pay close attention to his teaching, to be an "apt teacher . . . correcting opponents with gentleness" (2 Tim. 2:24, 25, NRSV), to continue in what he has learned from Paul, and to preach, whatever the consequences (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:24, 25, NRSV; 3:10–14; 4:1–3). Timothy is to present himself to God as one approved by Him, "a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, NRSV). Paul calls him back to basics, to a ministry of preaching and teaching.

## Conclusion

Stepping into Timothy's shoes, I question how I am doing at the most basic work of ministry—that of preaching and teaching. Have I allowed

myself to be distracted by other worthy activities? When I teach and preach, do I do it with the confidence that comes from knowing that I have been given gifts from God, gifts affirmed by human agencies? In answering this question, I need to consider the basis of my awareness of these gifts. If this is an individualized perception, resting solely on personal thoughts and feelings, I run the risk of, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words, becoming "first an accuser of [my] brethren, then an accuser of God, and finally the despairing accuser of [myself]."<sup>7</sup>

No doubt, Timothy, no matter his calling, had some issues to deal with. We all, as ministers, no matter our calling, no doubt have some as well. Let's take from Paul what we can and apply it to ourselves where needed, and from it learn and grow in our ministry, remembering to always do everything in the "love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith." ■

- 1 P. H. Towner, "Households and Household Codes" in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne et al. (Leicester, England: IVP, 1993), 417–9.
- 2 The judgment whether the Greek construction for "I permit," in 1 Timothy 2:12, represents a gnomic present, indicating a universal truth, or an iterative or aoristic present, indicating a more local application, is made, according to James Brooks and Carlton Winbery (*Syntax of New Testament Greek* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979], 87), on whether the prohibition was widespread or not. On the basis that Paul does not include such a prohibition in his house rules to the Ephesians and Colossians, we can conclude this prohibition to be of a local nature. It does not represent a gnomic truth.
- 3 The council of elders represents the early Christian equivalent to the Jewish council of leading priests and scribes. Cf. 3 Macc. 1:8; Jth. 11:14; Luke 22:66; Acts 5:21; 22:5.
- 4 Didache 11:3–13:7; Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 27–33. For an introduction to the phenomenon of the wandering charismatic preacher, see Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977), 8–16.
- 5 G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 237.
- 6 Beale, *Revelation*, 237.
- 7 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (London: SCM Press, 1954), 16.

# The great cost of refusing to change

V. Neil Wyrick



V. Neil Wyrick, B.A., B.D., is a Presbyterian pastor in Miami, Florida, United States.

**S**ome years ago I developed the habit of working seven days a week. Besides developing that bad work habit, I also developed a cough that would not go away. With my new church growing, I was being trampled by church activities. My weariness increased, but not necessarily my efficiency.

My doctor advised, "If you don't slow down, your cough will only get worse, along with a few

**I F YOU PRACTICE SELF-ABROGATION AND DAILY REBUKE YOURSELF FOR NOT DOING ENOUGH, YOU CAN EXPECT THAT FROM OTHERS. TOO MUCH EGO CAN BE OFFENSIVE, BUT TOO MUCH HUMILITY CAN BE SELF-DEFEATING.**

other new ailments." So I began to take an entire day off to pursue my hobbies and my sanity. And you know what? I lost my cough while new members continued to find their way to my church. I wasn't all that indispensable. It was a lesson I have never forgotten, and during a recent stint as an interim pastor, I was both healthier and more efficient because of it.

I have learned a few other things as a result of that episode:

*Take time to think.* Get off the dizzying merry-go-round for a little while and count the horses. Close your office door (if you have one) and ask your secretary (if you have one) to explain to any callers, "The pastor is in prayer and meditation." Maybe even take an *unthink* walk around the neighborhood come evening time and examine one of God's great freebies—a sunset or stars in their heavenly patterns.

*Are you a morning or night person?* Some people turn into a tiger at night; I personally turn into a pumpkin. In the morning I sing, but at night I prefer to snooze. When possible, schedule meetings and counseling sessions accordingly.

*When you write notes to yourself, make them longer, not shorter.* We've all jotted down an idea that was so cryptic that later we could not figure out what it meant. Also, what works for me is putting my notes in a computer rather than on a little piece of paper—a computer is harder to lose. In other words, control stress where it can be controlled rather than making it easier to get out of control.

*Decide who should run the church office.* However, here's the rub: Many ministers, male or female, young or old, do not like to be a boss. They don't come by it naturally, and it was not a course taught in seminary. If you fall into that category, it's not too late to learn: take a course, or read books, or talk to successful business people. You are, after all, running a *business*, and

sometimes a big business, even though you may prefer not to think of it as such.

*Determine a phone-answering policy.* The telephone is often the church's main means of communication, so whoever—secretary, paid or unpaid helpers—answers the phone should understand *church etiquette*. Anyone calling a church will have certain expectations, and

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reasonably so. I have called many church offices, and occasionally the response I received made it very obvious that the person answering felt he or she was doing me a favor to take my call. Obviously, not a proper attitude.

This should not be considered a small detail because a minister's compassion can be undermined by a staff's lack of the same.

*Learn to delegate.* As we all very well know, or should know, we can't do everything. Part of successful teamwork includes learning who can do what and then letting them.

I still remember one minister friend who would grab a broom and re-sweep the front steps of the church only a short time after the custodian had finished. Nothing anyone ever did was as good as he could do it, or so he thought. He did not die young, but he did live in much greater physical, mental, and emotional discomfort than was necessary.

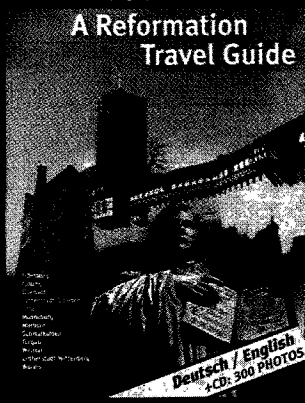
*Believe in yourself.* Worth its weight in emotional vitamin C, a little healthy self-confidence allows you to feel good

about a job well done. If you practice self-abrogation and daily rebuke yourself for not doing enough, you can expect that from others. Too much ego can be offensive, but too much humility can be self-defeating.

*Be thankful for your degrees but be not overly impressed by them.* Proverbs talks about pride going before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Well, some ministers with more credentials than their egos can handle, and without enough moments of humility, can be like the man who, having jumped out of a five-story building, kept saying, "So far so good." In both cases a loud splat is about to overwhelm the scene.

Let's put it this way: To deny any need for change is to sabotage improvement. Therefore, each of us needs to practice occasionally what I like to call the Columbus syndrome. Have the courage to sail forth into the unknown, to discover a new continent of thought or procedure, and by so doing discover something new and wonderful and challenging for your future. ■

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# The role of the Ten Commandments in public life

*Editor's note: Recently considerable interest has been expressed in the role of the Ten Commandments in public life. In light of the ongoing discussion the Executive Committee of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists voted this statement on April 12, 2006.*

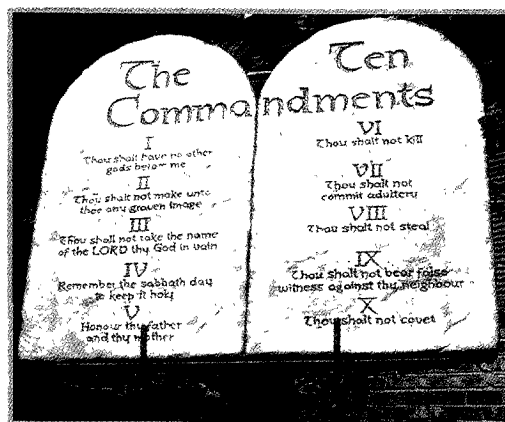
**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church applauds interest in the role of the Ten Commandments in public life. The Decalogue, as given on Mount Sinai, is a reflection of God's character. It contains universal principles of morality and describes our relationship to God and our fellow human beings.

For Seventh-day Adventists, obedience to the Ten Commandments represents the foundational expression of love and gratitude to God for His gift of salvation. We obey the Law, not as a means of salvation, but as a response to God's grace demonstrated most convincingly through Christ's death in our behalf.

The Ten Commandments provide a moral compass in an age of relativism. Through God's law, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and brings us to a sense of utter helplessness. The law of God is the instrument by which the Spirit calls us to repentance. It also has a teaching function, revealing eternal principles of righteousness that contribute to the development of our character in the likeness of our Savior. Consequently, we comprehend more clearly how to serve others and our God.

Seventh-day Adventists see the embodiment of God's law in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. They respect, honor, and submit to it as God's will for all people. By dealing with our thoughts, desires, and motivations the Ten Commandments address more than external behavior. They challenge us to moral, spiritual and ethical purity.

Seventh-day Adventists believe the law of God features prominently in the controversy



between Christ and Satan. In Satan's final attack against God just prior to the Second Coming of Christ, the believer's obedience to God's law provides the best evidence of their commitment to Christ.

Governments establish laws to preserve and protect the well being of their citizens. While civil law defines what is legal, God's law defines what is moral. The first four commandments relate to our relationship with God. Any attempt to legislate these commands requires the state to interpret and apply God's will, an act that is beyond its sphere of competence and jurisdiction. The final six commandments pertain to our relationship with each other. Laws in keeping with these principles of human conduct are common in civil societies. It is the duty of Christians to obey these laws, insofar as they are in keeping with God's law, and to actively support efforts to improve them.

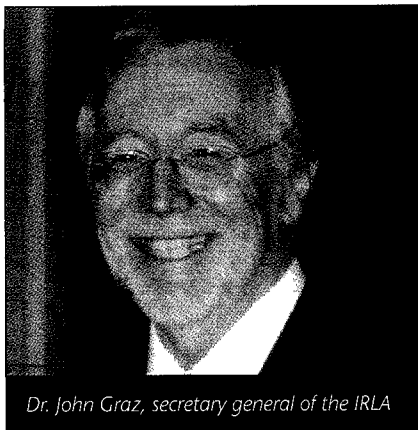
Seventh-day Adventists hold the Decalogue in highest esteem and appeal to men and women in all societies to live in harmony with its principles as a foundation for lives of loving service to humanity. At the same time, they recognize the need for tolerance, Christian humility, and respect for the rights of others in making application of these principles. Consequently, Seventh-day Adventists uphold the fundamental principles of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. ■



# Dateline

## Religion and nationalism: Board of experts examines conflicts and concerns

Aix-en-Provence, France—Experts from the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) met September 11 through 13 to tackle the ongoing threat to religious freedom posed by nationalism.



Dr. John Graz, secretary general of the IRLA

"More and more, nationalism poses a challenge to the free exercise of religion and liberty of conscience," comments **Dr. John Graz**, secretary general of the IRLA. "When religious identity is confused with national identity, which frequently happens in countries with a majority religion, those of other beliefs are marginalized and even persecuted. Even in secular countries, nationalism can badly affect those who wish to practice their faith in accordance with their convictions. We are meeting to try to develop processes that will help all those involved understand the limits of nationalism and the vital importance of freedom of religion or belief."

The conference meeting in the Paul Cezanne University of Aix-en-Provence, France, brought together top-level experts from academia and civil society.

"We were delighted to host this extremely important meeting here at the Faculty of law," says **Blandine Chelini-Pont**, professor and conference organizer. "Our hope is that the eventual outcome document will be of great use

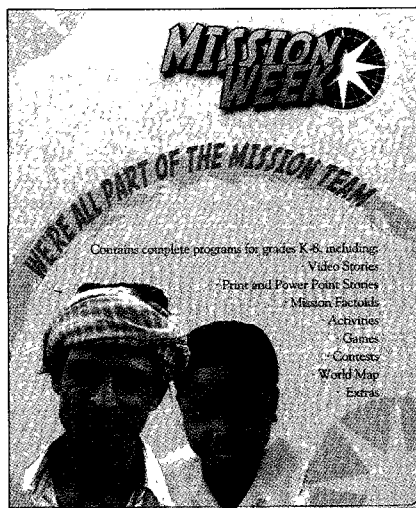
for government leaders, United Nations officials, and civil society stakeholders."

The IRLA Board of Experts meets annually and has developed well-received guidelines on proselytism, security, religious freedom, and the issue of religious symbols in the public sphere. [IRLA News]

## New DVD curriculum teaches children about mission

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—For many Adventists, the voice of master storyteller Eric B. Hare evokes fond memories. With dramatic accounts of missionaries and miracles, Hare's stories have captivated generations of Adventists.

The audio version of one of his most familiar stories—"Silver and the Snake"—is on the lineup of Mission Week, a new DVD curriculum of missions-focused classroom devotionals for grades K–8.



Mission Week aims to recapture the enthusiasm that once surrounded missions with a variety of missions-related stories, PowerPoint presentations, video clips from around the world, games, and other activities.

"Lately, there has been a resurgence of interest in missions among baby boomers who remember with nostalgia

the excitement over mission stories and offering goals they experienced as kids," says **Nancy Kyte**, marketing director for Adventist Mission. "They want kids today to capture that same feeling," she adds.

Kyte anticipates teachers will incorporate the weeklong curriculum into morning worship, much like a Week of Prayer or Week of Spiritual Emphasis.

While Kyte admits this focus on Adventist schools will not reach all kids, she believes "it's a good starting place." As for Adventist students attending public school or home school, Kyte says they, along with anyone else wanting to use the curriculum, can visit the Adventist Mission Web site (<http://www.adventistmission.org/>) and request a copy of Mission Week.

"We'd like to see the program be as international as possible, but to start out, we are piloting the program in North America," says Kyte. As the project grows, Kyte says she and other planners will develop it further, with the goal of releasing a new version—featuring different countries and coordinating materials—every year. This time around, she is inviting students and teachers to submit original skits to be included in future DVDs.

Kyte says the Mission Week DVD is designed so that students can handle much of the "teaching" themselves. They'll be able to lead out in crafts and games and to run PowerPoint presentations.

Students are also encouraged to submit original essays and posters to a Mission Week contest. Not only will the winners be featured in an upcoming issue of *Adventist Review*, but Adventist Mission will donate funds in the name of their school to an Adventist project of their choosing. [Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN]

## Church planting training in Europe

Belgrade, Serbia—The Trans-European Division (TED) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organized a three-





*Pastors participate in church planting seminar.*

module Church Planting Matrix Training Seminar for the European fields interested in starting church planting movements. The training was designed especially for leaders, decision makers, and key persons of the respective fields. Belgrade Theological Seminary hosted the three training occasions (April, August, and September).

Sixty-two key leaders and decision makers from Iceland, the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), the Adriatic Union, and the South-East European Union made commitments for planting churches in these areas.

Among the facilitators for the seminars were **Atte Helminen**, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Finland, **Rudy Dingjan**, church growth director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Netherlands, and **Janos Kovacs-Biro**, director of church planting and evangelism for TED. They introduced to participants the key elements of church planting theology from an Adventist perspective: starting a church planting movement, coaching, founding small groups, and using natural church planting strategies.

The packed schedule included many practical ideas and group work assignments. Participants worked in concert, performing exercises in order to be equipped to help church planting teams—completing a team contract by the end of the training. We are looking forward to seeing new church plants and a church planting movement growing in these fields. [János Kovacs-Biro—TED] ■

## RESOURCES

### Morning Praise

*2007 women's devotional book, edited by Ardis Stenbakken*

The 2007 devotional book, written for women by women, is a project of the Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It seeks to provide spiritual growth, as well as furnish scholarship funds for women.

In 1992, *Among Friends*, the first annual women's devotional book, was published. Since then, 13 more have been published.

The 2007 book is written by women in different walks of life, both young

and old, professionals and housewives, church leaders and church members. The book also provides a spiritual uplift as it shares encouraging topics from positive, personal experiences of God's presence in the lives of women.

The shared experiences of spiritual journeys, as well as testimonies of a God who has preserved the writers in loneliness and grief—filling their lives with joy and meaning—let the readers know in simple yet significant ways that they are valued beyond price.

The theme *morning praise* is about waking up with something beautiful to say about God. For each day of our lives God has something beautiful to share with us.

The 2007 devotional book is available at Adventist Book Centers, or visit [www.adventistbookcenter.com](http://www.adventistbookcenter.com). ■

### Letters continued

Take at least one accredited clinical pastoral education (CPE) course, especially if it is offered at a medical center that you regularly visit. You will learn much about proper procedures, about effective communication, and even about yourself. Significantly, many seminaries now make a CPE unit a graduation requirement.

Become a volunteer chaplain at a local hospital. You will become well instructed in HIPAA regulations and, while ministering to staff and patients of many different faith traditions, increase your own interpersonal skills. When you have earned the trust of medical personnel, you can be sure of a warm welcome and full cooperation. Equipped with proper hospital identification, you can visit other health facilities much more easily.

—Rev. Msgr. James David Hahn, *Christ the King Catholic Church, Cambridge, Minnesota, United States.*

### Pastoral resources

I am an employed district pastor, armed with only a Bible, the book *Steps to*

*Christ*, and a few other literature books. The articles on "The Pastor's Guide to Resource Materials on the New Testament" (May 2006) by John McVay and Philip Long and "The Pastor's Guide to Resource Material on the Old Testament" (July 2006) by Greg A. King and Rollin Shoemaker were excellent and timely. Every pastor should discover these invaluable user-friendly resources.

Unfortunately, there is a great chasm between pastors from developed countries and those from developing countries. Although preaching the Word of God has gone online with electronic resources and Web sites, we who are from developing countries are 50 years behind.

Please know and understand that it may take many years from the writing of these articles to the time when pastors from developing countries will be computer literate and start using Web sites.

—Pastor Isaac Nyaribo, *Nyamira Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Nyamira, Kenya.* ■

# Over there

JAMES A. CRESS



One laity leader, having recently returned from a short-term mission venture, wrote to express dismay about circumstances over there that were very different from his expectations. He also noted that church headquarters should immediately fix the injustices that he had observed.

I replied both to thank him for his eagerness to serve and to note that some good things had resulted despite some challenges. On the other hand, I grieved that advance information left guests unprepared to face the realities they encountered in areas where funds are in very short supply to accommodate those who arrive from other cultures or economic realities. I also explained that leaders at headquarters cannot resolve issues in which independent ministries, not the church structure, control the entire process.

## Observations

For example, my correspondent mentioned great numbers of students with multichurch responsibilities who receive little or no pay. While this is a tragedy, both their dedication and the reality that dozens of other would-be ministers are prepared to step into their place means these young pastors are willing to work for little pay. With no other jobs available in their economy, they have matriculated through their training with hope that eventually they will become fully employed.

Of course this is not equitable, but this reality says that if these young pastors were to quit working for an irregular bit of income, likely they would have no income from any employment. This system cannot be described as either appropriate or workable for the long-term, but describes a reality for many entry-level ministers in various parts of the world. If they quit, others

will quickly jump at the opportunity to replace them.

The writer also complained that only US\$1000 was allocated for the project, and that amount certainly failed to cover the needs. He demanded to know why the church permitted such poor planning. Of course, these challenges must be addressed by the independent groups who organize such ventures rather than expecting the denomination to monitor the policies and procedures of entities that it does not control nor govern their utilization of funds. While much good is accomplished by such projects, numerous problems arise from situations in which the hosts are expected to cover deficits that they are incapable of funding.

My correspondent also expressed concern about local expectations that guests pay various expenses such as food, tourist entry fees, incidental expenses, etc. This seemed strange to him, for in his culture, hosts provide for their guests. However, the local people have no resources with which to host those who appear to have such abundance.

I feel certain that these hosts are not unwilling to pay for their guests, but simply do not have the funds. On a day-to-day basis, their hosts would never eat in a restaurant, visit a tourist site, or purchase souvenirs. They simply would have no money for such functions, so when foreigners arrive and desire locals to accompany them as translators or guides, the guests must

provide for all costs for both the group as well as their hosts. I wish each tour group could understand this reality in advance so they are not disappointed once they arrive over there.

Each group should receive advance instructions regarding expectations as well and plan on financing every anticipated need plus unforeseen circumstances. Limited local funds must not be taxed, but rather covered by the guests. This includes stipends for student pastors, extra expenses for local leaders, transportation for those attending evangelistic programs, auditorium rental, supplies, books and Bibles, and most important, adequate church homes for new believers to assemble once the guests depart. (I recently led a group of guests who completed their short venture with a long-term commitment to build/purchase a house of worship.)

## Benefit of short mission trips

Perhaps the greatest strength of short mission trips lies in the large numbers of members who travel and gain a firsthand insight into the Lord's work and come home with a new vision for mission. Perhaps the greatest weakness is the concept that a short-term commitment of a few weeks is all that is necessary for the church over there.

In reality, these programs should be viewed in terms of years and include thorough preparation and orientation as well as ongoing efforts to purchase or build suitable places of worship and establish every new believer in the faith.

We need far fewer projects, in my opinion, and then we should couple these with far longer implementation and follow-through to make full reality of our endeavors to build disciples for Christ and His kingdom. ■

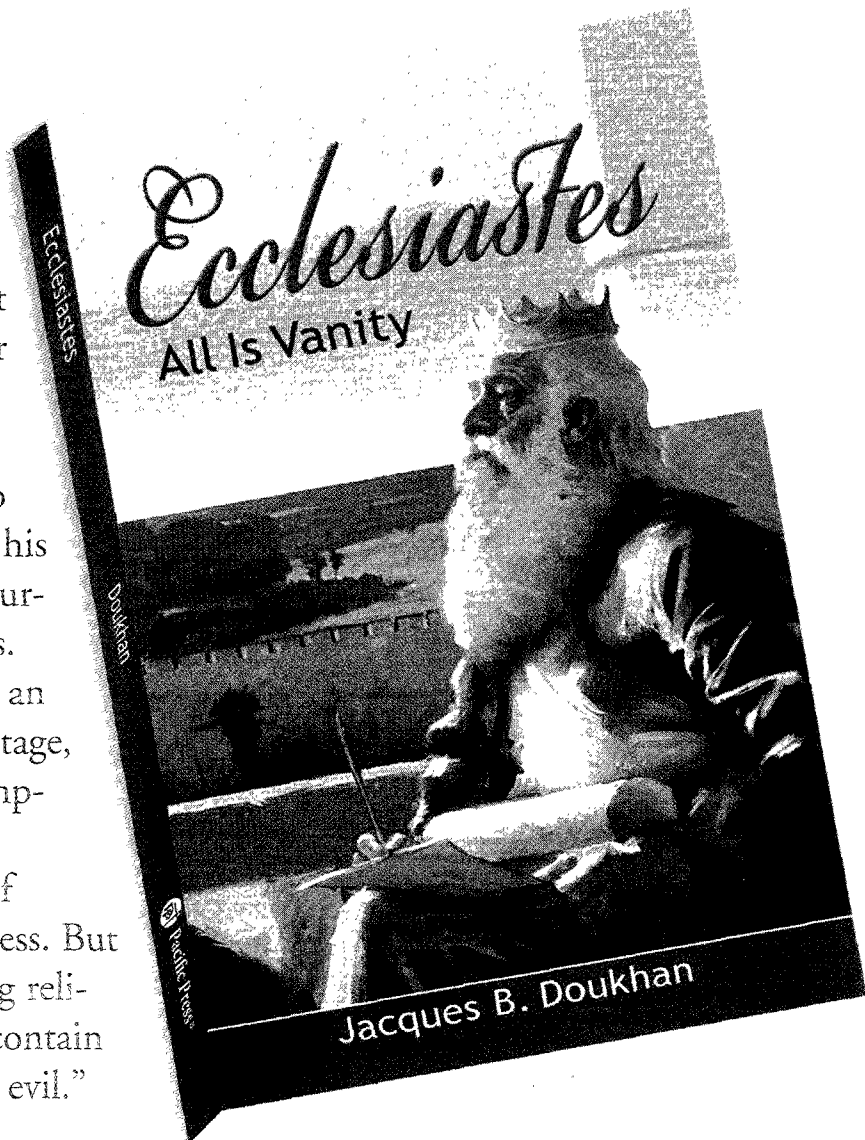
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**Randy Roberts** was born in South America of missionary parents. Until college age, the majority of his life was spent in Latin American countries. Dr. Roberts has extensive experience as a church pastor, hospital chaplain, marriage and family therapist, and lecturer in religious studies. Randy has fulfilled speaking invitations to many and varied audiences, both nationally and internationally. He has written articles for various publications and has authored the book *The End is Near (Again)*. Currently Dr. Roberts serves as senior pastor of the Loma Linda University Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, California. Dr. Roberts and his wife, Anita, have a son, Austin, and a daughter, Miranda.



**Dr. Gordon Moyes** recently retired after 50 years of preaching, the last 27 at Wesley Mission in Sydney, Australia. During this ministry, his church grew to be the largest in Australia with 4,200 paid staff ministering in 500 buildings. Moyes became the first minister in the world to raise and spend over one billion dollars in one church. He also served as a national television and radio minister for over forty years. Since retirement, Moyes has been elected as a State Senator and is an advisor to the Australian Prime Minister who describes him as "the epitome of Christian leadership." Moyes, who has authored fifty-six books, has also received highest national honors including Companion of the Order of Australia (2002) and the New South Wales Father of the Year (1986).



**Robert Smith, Jr.** serves as Professor of Christian Preaching at Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama. Previously he served as Carl E. Bates Associate Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received the 1996 Findley B. Edge Award for Teaching Excellence. An ordained Baptist minister, Smith served as pastor of the New Mission Missionary Baptist Church for twenty years before returning to complete his Ph.D. He has also authored a study of ministry in the African American church, *Preparing for Christian Ministry*, and co-edited *A Mighty Long Journey*. His research interests include the place of passion in preaching, the literary history of African American preaching, Christological preaching, and theologies of preaching. He received Beeson's "Teacher of the Year Award" in 2005. Dr. Smith and his wife, Wanda, are the parents of four adult children.

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