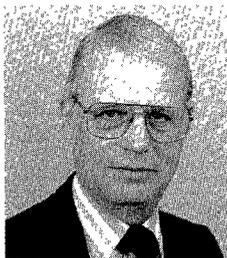


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

September 1988



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## More on abortion

I recently read your article titled "Less Than Human?" (March 1988), and I am pleased to see that some Adventists are beginning to take a clear stand on today's issues. It contains not only sound intellectual arguments but practical advice—e.g., the story by Willimon. Also, I think your article is a good counterpiece to the January 1988 article "Abortion: The Adventist Dilemma."—Danny Kumamoto, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

■ I just read the article "Less Than Human?" by Richard Fredericks. It is the finest article I have read on the subject. —Willard D. Register, M.D., Mountain View, California.

■ I consider your article on abortion in the March *Ministry* to be a classic and believe it will be recognized as a historic statement in the Adventist Church. It is the best thought out and researched article on this topic that I have read within the church. It is extremely persuasive and has definitely affected my viewpoint. —John G. Kerbs, Principal, Loma Linda Academy, Loma Linda, California.

■ Richard Fredericks' article on abortion brought to my mind one who was considered "less than human" by society's norms. Her name was Kezia. She was born in a Third World country to a young ministerial couple. Because of complications in labor and inadequate medical facilities, she suffered brain damage and other severe internal physical problems. In their attempt to get the best medical attention for their little girl, the parents took a leave of absence from the ministry and came to the United States.

All the doctors agreed that if she lived to any advanced age (3 years or older), she would need constant atten-

tion and the quality of her life would be poor. Doctors and friends who were sympathetic to the couple stated their opinion that it would have been a blessing if she had died right after delivery and that the sooner she died, the better off would be the couple. When I met the couple and held the seemingly spineless little girl—her back muscles would not develop—I agreed.

One tragic February morning, when she was 15 months old, Kezia died. Her father, now my close friend in the ministry, asked me to speak at the funeral. Needless to say, I had never conducted a more difficult service. Yet never have I received a greater insight on the love of God and the value He places on human life.

Though Kezia was not physically or mentally normal, her father had loved her. He had valued her as a trust from God. Now the enemy of all souls had taken life and joy from him. No one could tell him that Kezia's life had no value, that she was any less than human, that she was not worth sacrificing and suffering gladly for!

Because of Kezia her father is a better man, a better minister, and a better father to his son (born one month later). Because of Kezia's life I am a better father, a better man, a better minister for God. No longer do I hold the opinion that it would have been better if Kezia had never lived. Through such a vessel as Kezia, God revealed to me His love for all human life. —John Kurlinski, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Louisville, Colorado.

■ I write as one who welcomes the two recent articles on abortion (January and March 1988). While I commend Richard Fredericks for his impassioned and sincere presentation of the antiabortion case, may I point out that he does little, if anything, to refute Michael Pearson's observation that "the Scriptures and the

writings of Ellen White . . . are silent, or at least less than unequivocal about abortion." Neither does Fredericks address the point that "passages commonly used to support the antiabortion stance (e.g., Jer. 1:4, 5; Ps. 139:13-16; Eccl. 11:5)," which he quotes, "do not directly address the issue." The first two texts refer to men (Jeremiah and David) who were specifically called by God to perform momentous tasks, while the latter is a comment on man's inability to understand the ways of God. Some exegetical gymnastics are required in order to view them as divine decrees on abortion.

I understand that Fredericks' article does not set out to contend with Pearson's; it is merely a considered comment in an ongoing debate. However, I would suggest that his right-wing stand on the issue gives an imbalanced view, since it fails to deal with the other side of the coin. —John Ferguson, Dublin and Ballinacrow Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Ballinteer, Dublin, Ireland.

■ I appreciated Dr. Winslow's perspective on abortion ("Abortion and Christian Principles," May 1988). I have been wrestling with this issue in my own mind for quite some time, and this article helped me put the matter in perspective. —M. L. Whiting, Associate Superintendent of Education, Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Pleasant Hill, California.

■ Thank you for publishing the excellent article by Gerald Winslow. In an atmosphere of sometimes nearly hysterical emotion, when polemics confuse instead of clarifying the issues, this well-reasoned, balanced, and inclusive brief study articulates better than most statements on abortion the fundamental problems and dilemmas, especially for a Christian.

(Continued on page 26)

If you're receiving *MINISTRY* bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928, *MINISTRY* has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Requests should be on church letterhead.

**Is it possible to believe** strongly without becoming prejudiced? Unfortunately researchers find high levels of prejudice and elitism among Christians. Should not belief in a God who is "no respecter of persons" lead one to be like minded? "The Christian and Prejudice" by Roger Dudley can help you avoid the intolerance trap.

**How is your spiritual sense** of direction? Could you benefit from having a spiritual director? How about the people in your congregation? Are there some who would appreciate your directing them, or helping them learn to direct others? Kristen Ingram's article on p. 8 can help you understand and foster spiritual direction.

**Do the texts** typically used by those who oppose ordination of women really apply to the issue? What other changes would we have to make in our church structure and operations if we literally interpreted and applied all that these texts say? John Brunt challenges us with these questions and with the problem of applying biblical principles to day-to-day living in "The Ordination of Women: A Hermeneutical Question."

**Planning to build** a new church? Don't even look at a piece of property until you've read "Choosing a Site for Your New Church" by Norman Meager, a man with wide experience in church building programs.

**Our articles on abortion** have generated a lot of interest. Our mailbag has overflowed onto three pages of letters in this issue. If our articles left you ambivalent, check out the responses they generated. Reading them helped clarify my thinking.

**Some pastors' wives** have wondered, since we eliminated the Shepherdess heading, whether we have forgotten them. Far from it, almost every issue contains an article specifically for the spouse. But we don't label it, because we want the pastor to read it too. The insights Gail Robinson shares in "Talking to Myself" may help you understand and improve the parsonage communication process.

**As always**, we hope that several of this month's articles will especially bless and enrich your ministry!



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VOLUME 61 NUMBER 9

# The Christian and prejudice

Roger L. Dudley

**Why are religious people particularly susceptible to prejudice, and in what ways can it be combated?**



Roger L. Dudley is professor of Christian ministry and directs the Institute of Church Ministry at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

**P**rejudice. It's an ugly word—an attitude that we can easily discern and usually recoil from in other people but find very difficult to admit to in ourselves. Clifford T. Morgan explains the dynamics: "A prejudice is really a strong tendency to *overcategorize* people. It lumps many individuals together on the basis of some common, and largely irrelevant, characteristic. . . . Every member of the group is then regarded as having the same characteristic."<sup>1</sup>

We tend to feel prejudice toward members of groups that differ from the one in which we feel comfortable: other races, the other gender, other religions, other socioeconomic groups, etc.

If prejudice does not manifest itself in outright discrimination, it is often revealed in exclusiveness or lack of social compassion. Prejudiced people do not favor providing help to "outgroups," especially when such help is likely to incur personal sacrifice. If they don't actively dislike these out groups, they are at least suspicious of them and unsympathetic with their plight. They are likely to consider the misfortunes those in the out groups suffer as self-inflicted.

## **Prejudice and religion**

Because prejudice is ugly, we generally do not want to admit to perpetrating it. And indeed Christians should be the most prejudice-free people of any group. Our God is defined as love (1 John 4:8), and the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves lies at the foundation of our religion (see Matt. 22:37-39).

In the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), Jesus extended the concept of neighbor to include groups outside of our own. The early church had to learn that the gospel must bridge the divisions like Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female (Gal. 3:28). They were to discover that God is not partial to any group of people (Acts 10:34, 35) and that favoritism in dealing with social classes is a sin (James 2:1-9).

So much for the ideal. What is the reality? Here we find a paradox. More than 25 years ago Gordon Allport pointed out that social and psychological scientists have observed that, "on the average, churchgoers are more intolerant than nonchurchgoers."<sup>2</sup> A dozen years later Andrew Greeley noted: "The research findings on the connection between religion and prejudice are overwhelming."<sup>3</sup>

About the same time J. D. Davidson was reporting on a study of Baptist and Methodist congregations in Indiana. He found that lay members who scored high on a measure of vertical beliefs (i.e., beliefs about God) tended to score low on a measure of "social consequences" (participation in various forms of religiously motivated social activism), while those who scored high on a measure of horizontal beliefs (i.e., beliefs about the importance of people) scored high on social consequences.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Daniel Batson and Larry Ventis have concluded: "At least for White, middle-class Christians in the United States, *religion is not associated with increased love and acceptance but with increased intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry.*"<sup>5</sup>

How can this be? At first glance the situation seems incongruous and incred-

ible. One Christian scholar sets forth the contrasts we would expect to find: "Christian faith proclaims the oneness of mankind; prejudice separates men. Christian faith seeks to make life fuller and richer; prejudice narrows and constricts men's lives, both those who are the objects of prejudice and those who are prejudiced. Christian faith proclaims the sovereignty of God over all men's lives; prejudice sets some men up to be sovereign over others. Christian faith casts out fear; and prejudice breeds on fear."<sup>6</sup>

### Why the relationship?

Students of religion and behavior have identified a number of factors that may incline many religious people toward prejudice. I will briefly discuss seven of them.

*The Doctrine of Revelation.* If God has given us truth, we must be right. If we are right, others must be wrong. Possession of "truth" presents a real minefield for those of us who embrace a revealed religion. It will take a fine sense of balance to traverse this field without stepping on the explosives. "A paradox exists where, on the one hand, religion teaches love, respect, and equality; but, on the other, it teaches particularism—only a selected religion has the truth and can offer salvation."<sup>7</sup> This belief, combined with certain other psychological needs, opens the door wide to prejudice.

*Chosen people.* Closely related to the doctrine of revelation is the doctrine of election: God has chosen my group (church, race, gender) in some special way. "Whatever theological justification the doctrine may have, the view that one's group is chosen (and other groups are not) leads forthwith away from brotherhood and into bigotry. It does so because it feeds one's pride and hunger for status—two important psychological roots of prejudice."<sup>8</sup>

Greeley says that "religious groups . . . constitute within the larger society several in-group associations which in turn generate distrust, fear, and hostility toward members of the out group, a hostility which is particularly powerful because the felt differences are the result of very early socialization. Growing up religious . . . means growing up not only as a member of one religious group but also as someone distinct from and distinctly in opposition to members of other religious groups."<sup>9</sup>

Batson and Ventis have explained

that religion can "justify callous rejection of anyone not like oneself. For there appears to be a tragic, unintended corollary to knowing that one is among God's elect. If some are the 'elect,' 'sheep,' 'chosen people,' 'family of God,' then others are the 'damned,' 'goats,' 'outcasts,' 'infidels.' Far from encouraging universal brotherly love, such labels are likely to encourage rejection and intolerance."<sup>10</sup>

*Focus on salvation.* A concern for beyond-this-life personal salvation may lead to lack of concern for the temporal plight of people. Milton Rokeach conducted a survey in which he asked people to rank 18 values as to importance. Those who ranked salvation high on their scale of values were more anxious to maintain the status quo and were generally more indifferent to the needs of minorities and the poor. They were significantly lower on social compassion and more opposed to civil rights than those for whom salvation was of minor importance.<sup>11</sup>

It is possible to so focus on the next world for our rewards that we become oblivious to this one. Regard for our own salvation may lead to a selfish disregard for anyone else. Then if we do notice the poor and oppressed, our message to them may sound like this: "Grin and bear it. You'll have it made up to you when Jesus comes." It was the tendency of religious people to tolerate injustice, because of the promise of future rewards, that caused Karl Marx to label religion "the opium of the people."

*Work ethic.* Paradoxically, Christians may become prejudiced for a reason opposite to otherworldliness. The so-called Protestant ethic encourages believers to work hard and not waste money on frivolous pleasures. As a result, these Christians tend to accumulate possessions and move upward on the socioeconomic ladder. They may come to regard their prosperity as a sign of God's favor and look down on the less fortunate as being in divine disfavor. These Christians compare themselves with others and decide they are doing quite well indeed in a system in which the rewards are based upon merit.

Allport described the phenomenon this way: "For many people, religion is a dull habit, or a tribal investment to be used for occasional ceremony, for family convenience, or for personal comfort. It is something to use, but not to live. And it may be used in a variety of ways: to

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**"There appears to be a tragic, unintended corollary to knowing that one is among God's elect."**

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improve one's status, to bolster one's self-confidence, to enhance one's income, to win friends, power, or influence. It may be used as a defense against reality and, most importantly, to provide a super-sanction for one's own formula for living. Such a sentiment assures me that God sees things my way."<sup>12</sup>

*Religious conservatism.* By its very nature the church is an agent of conservatism. Christians worship a God who changes not, and they speak of eternal verities. Living in a world marked by rapid change in technology, learning, social arrangements, and values, they find the church the one institution they can count on to conserve the best from the past—a pillar of stability by which to preserve order and security in their lives. Douglas Walrath reminds us that the church gives tradition prominence in nearly every aspect of its life.<sup>13</sup> Churchgoers may perceive members of out-groups as threatening the stability and permanence of their way of life.

*Need satisfaction.* It is a psychological axiom that behavior results from the attempt to satisfy needs. Prejudice most often serves a need for superiority or status,<sup>14</sup> either mental, moral, religious, or social. But religion may also satisfy this need. We may consider ourselves above those who have neither the "truth" nor the "in" with God that we have. We may not have the wealth, power, or prestige that others in our society possess, but in our religion we have something infinitely better than they do, so we can look down on them with a certain smugness. And we may particularly feel the need to distance ourselves from those just below us on the theological/social ladder.

"The reason why churchgoers on the

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## Nonmembers and highly active members are least prejudiced, and the marginally active most prejudiced.

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average are more prejudiced than non-churchgoers is not because religion instills prejudice. It is rather that a large number of people, by virtue of their psychological makeup, require for their economy of living both prejudice and religion.<sup>15</sup> So if they are self-doubting and insecure, prejudice enhances their self-esteem, and religion provides security. If they are guilt-ridden, prejudice provides a scapegoat, and religion provides relief. If they fear failure, prejudice explains by postulating that there are menacing out-groups, and religion holds out a reward.<sup>16</sup>

*Closed cognitive style.* The last link between religion and prejudice that we will discuss involves how some people process information. Prejudiced people often have rigid habits of mind. They lack complexity in their information processing and thus prefer simple, unambiguous, black-or-white answers. Both religion and bigotry often serve the needs of those who require clear-cut distinctions between good and evil.<sup>17</sup>

James Dittes has summarized the research findings on the personality characteristics that go with prejudice: (1) need for unchanging structure; (2) need for religious absolutism ("To say 'I don't know' would cast them adrift from their cognitive anchor"); (3) closed-mindedness—not open to new ideas; and (4) high regard for hierarchy and order.<sup>18</sup> Rigid people often seek out a religion that speaks with certainty, for such a religion offers security from the ambiguity they cannot tolerate. New ideas and different groups threaten their stability—for if things are uncertain, then perhaps nothing can be counted on.

### Ways of being religious

While there are perfectly reasonable explanations for the relationship be-

tween prejudice and religion, religious people, of course, are not all prejudiced. Many students of the subject believe that the way individuals integrate religion into their lives underlies the difference. Richard Gorsuch and Daniel Aleshire, for example, have found that nonmembers and highly active members are least prejudiced, and the marginally active most prejudiced.<sup>19</sup>

Various scholars have applied different labels to the polar extremes of religiosity. The best known and most thoroughly researched are the "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" dimensions Allport described. The former is "a self-serving, utilitarian, self-protective form of religious outlook, which provides the believer with comfort and salvation at the expense of out groups." The latter "marks the life that has interiorized the total creed of his faith without reservation, including the commandment to love one's neighbor. A person of this sort is more intent on serving his religion than on making it serve him."<sup>20</sup>

Dittes has identified two brands of religion in the parable of the wandering son of Luke 15. The open, giving stance of the father characterizes prodigal religion, and the older brother's approach—serve, obey, and earn your reward—epitomizes contractual religion. Dittes notes that prejudice is associated with contractual religion, not with prodigal religion, because "prejudice, after all, has a close family resemblance to contractual religion. . . . In a moment of contractual religion, we are taking the unfathomable mysteries of God and His relations with us and collapsing them into a deed (e.g., churchgoing) or an object (e.g., rosary) or a rule (e.g., 'Don't drink') which is fathomable and manageable, but which is now too constricted to be treated as God. . . . In a moment of prejudice, we are collapsing the rich, unfathomable mysteries of other persons into stereotypes or pictures or labels that can be managed, to our benefit, but which bear little resemblance to the real persons. The prejudiced mind and the contractual mind—like the elder brother—constrict their experience and their world to narrow and familiar boundaries that they can patrol and control."<sup>21</sup>

So we solve the problem of religion and prejudice, not by abandoning religion but by replacing contractual, extrinsic religion with that which is prodigal and intrinsic. Or perhaps better yet,

by maturing in our religious experience.

In 1950 Allport published his first major statement distinguishing between immature and mature religion. He proposed six criteria that identify the mature religious faith.<sup>22</sup> Roland J. Fleck summarizes and comments on these criteria as follows:

1. *Well-differentiated.* The mature Christian knows that religion is complex, and continually examines his faith.

2. *Dynamic.* Mature faith may spring from simple needs, but in time it becomes a major motivating force.

3. *Consistent.* A mature religious life will produce a consistent morality.

4. *Comprehensive.* Mature faith raises all the crucial questions of life, seeking functional answers to these questions. Tolerance will be a natural characteristic of this comprehensiveness.

5. *Integral.* The mature Christian's religion is not departmentalized or isolated from other aspects of the world.

6. *Problem-solving.* The mature Christian is always seeking to discover truth—knowing, however, that commitment does not require complete certainty.<sup>23</sup>

As we advance into such maturity, we do not lose our religious faith or even our belief in revelation and election. "But dogma is tempered with humility; in keeping with biblical injunction, [we withhold] judgment until the day of the harvest. A religious sentiment of this sort floods the whole life with motivation and meaning. It is no longer limited to single segments of self-interest. And only in such a widened religious sentiment does the teaching of brotherhood take firm root."<sup>24</sup>

Such mature religion produces the ability to "act wholeheartedly even without absolute certainty. It can be sure without being cocksure."<sup>25</sup>

### Overcoming prejudice

Once we understand prejudice, we may feel a sense of outrage—a prejudice against prejudiced people. But we must be very careful. "When we attack the prejudice, in ourselves or in others, and try to scold or threaten it away, we seldom succeed. It is because our scolding and our threatening only enhance the need for the prejudice. . . . If we are going to undo the prejudice, we must undo the need for the prejudice, not enhance the need."<sup>26</sup>

Dittes suggests several ways that the Christian community can undermine the needs prejudice satisfies:

1. Where prejudice provides feelings of importance and worth by deeming others unworthy, the Christian community can provide these feelings more profoundly and more securely by offering the same enabling embrace the prodigal father offered both his sons.

2. Where prejudice provides the defensive power of the stockade and the aggressive power of dominating others' lives, the Christian community can offer the power that comes from opening ourselves to the infinite riches of God's creation and to our many marvelous fellow creatures.

3. Where prejudice makes people feel like winners by letting them come out on top, the Christian community can demonstrate that the categories of winners and losers are transient aspects of our culture. God's apex of success is service and a cross.

4. Where prejudice promotes the feeling of belonging to an "in" group in the face of isolation and loneliness, and builds a sense of group solidarity by creating artificial separations between this group and the "outs," the Christian community can find ways, in small groups and large, to create a sense of true belonging.

5. Where prejudice helps people cope with a terrifying world by enclosing them in small fortresses, the Christian community can show them that they need not save themselves. That has already been done.<sup>27</sup>

While, as Christians, we must see prejudice as a sin, we must also follow Jesus' example and love the sinner. When we love and accept prejudiced people, we undermine the insecurity that feeds their prejudice; we make it un-

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**When we love and accept prejudiced people, we undermine the insecurity that feeds their prejudice; we make it unnecessary.**

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essary. Not only that, we model the behavior appropriate for dealing with those who are different from us. Prejudice is an attempt to guarantee our self-worth by certain protective structures. Christian faith says to the prejudiced person: "Your personal worth does not need such fragile guarantees. It is already guaranteed by One whose guarantee is unchallengeable and unchanging."<sup>28</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> Clifford T. Morgan, *A Brief Introduction to Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), pp. 383, 384.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *Personality and Social Encounter* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew M. Greeley, *The Denominational Society* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1972), p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> J. D. Davidson, "Religious Belief as an Independent Variable," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 11 (1972): 65-75.

<sup>5</sup> C. Daniel Batson and W. Larry Ventis, *The Religious Experience: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 257.

<sup>6</sup> James E. Dittes, *Bias and the Pious* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1973), p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Marlene M. Mackie, "The Applicability of Social Distance for Religious Research: An Exploration," *Review of Religions Research* 28 (1986): 158.

<sup>8</sup> Allport, p. 258.

<sup>9</sup> Greeley, p. 216.

<sup>10</sup> Batson and Ventis, p. 254.

<sup>11</sup> Milton Rokeach, "The H. Paul Douglass Lectures for 1969," *Review of Religious Research* 11 (Fall 1969): 3-39.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon W. Allport, "Behavioral Science, Religion, and Mental Health," *Journal of Religion and Health* 2 (April 1963): 193.

<sup>13</sup> Douglas A. Walrath, "Social Change and Local Churches: 1951-1975," in *Understanding Church Growth and Decline: 1950-1978*, Dean Hoge and David Roozen, eds. (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), pp. 248-269.

<sup>14</sup> Morgan, p. 386.

<sup>15</sup> Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 5 (Fall 1966): 451.

<sup>16</sup> Dittes, pp. 60, 61.

<sup>17</sup> See Dittes, p. 28; Greeley, pp. 211, 213.

<sup>18</sup> Dittes, pp. 30-32.

<sup>19</sup> Richard L. Gorsuch and Daniel Aleshire, "Christian Faith and Ethnic Prejudice: A Review and Interpretation of Research," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 13 (1974): 281-307.

<sup>20</sup> Allport, *Personality and Social Encounter*, p. 257.

<sup>21</sup> Dittes, pp. 75-77.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> Ronald J. Fleck, "Dimensions of Personal Religion: A Dichotomy or Trichotomy?" in *Research in Mental Health and Religious Behavior*, William J. Donaldson, Jr., ed. (Atlanta: The Psychological Studies Institute, Inc., 1976), p. 192.

<sup>24</sup> Allport, *Personality and Social Encounter*, p. 265.

<sup>25</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *The Individual and His Religion*, p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> Dittes, p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

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# Spiritual directors: companions on the way

**Kristen Johnson  
Ingram**

**Could you or your  
members benefit  
from a spiritual  
direction program?**



*Kristen Johnson Ingram, a free-lance writer and spiritual director, writes from Springfield, Oregon.*

**R**aymond Merriwether,\* a 40-year-old CPA, spends an hour with his pastor every other Tuesday. He and Pastor Carver discuss his prayer life and his Bible and other religious reading, and take time to review the journal in which Raymond has recorded his joys and struggles with prayer and Scripture meditation, any dreams that might have a spiritual implication, and his feelings—good and bad—about his Christian walk.

Pastor Carver is one of many ministers and laypersons who are doing individual spiritual direction with parishioners who want to be spiritually accountable to another mature Christian. These people are adding new dimensions to the charge in Hebrews 10:24, 25: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."†

Listening carefully to Raymond, Carver occasionally interjects a word of encouragement or agreement, adding experiences of his own, sometimes confessing failures and struggles. He might even stop Raymond once in a while to ask a question or to gently warn, "Be cautious in that area."

Pastor Carver does all he can to encourage and affirm Raymond's adventure with Christ, and he makes suggestions about reading or prayers. Their meetings are always begun and ended with silent and spoken prayer. Both feel that their times spent together in sacred silence are

perhaps the most valuable part of their relationship.

In another congregation, Lois Stephens acts as spiritual director to several people whose needs are much like Raymond's. A strong Bible-reading Christian with an intense and meaningful prayer life, Lois sometimes calls herself "a tour guide—one who has been over this territory and is happy to help others on the way." On the other hand, she often sees herself as an older sister or experienced friend joining her directees in exploring unfamiliar territory together.

Just what is this spiritual direction? Who are the spiritual directors? And is this relationship scriptural?

## **The biblical basis**

Jesus is the greatest example of a spiritual director. After He was through preaching, He discussed the parables with close friends, pointed out the meaning of the day's experiences, and taught them to pray. They asked questions and were encouraged, exhorted, and sometimes even rebuked by the One who cared most about them.

Nicodemus went to Jesus by night to understand the kingdom. The woman at the well received Jesus' personal counsel. Mary of Bethany sat at His feet to listen to words of life. One of His disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." All these are examples of individual spiritual direction.

Those who enter into spiritual direction long for a deeper Christian life, for the kind of discipling that requires accountability to at least one more human being. The idea isn't new but is experi-

encing a great revival especially among Protestants for whom, in recent years, the search for spiritual solutions has been somewhat supplanted by psychological therapy. Since the publication of Kenneth Leech's *Soul Friend*, the idea of one-on-one or very-small-group spiritual direction has gained popularity.

### Who can do it?

"But I'm not Jesus," says a pastor in a small church. "I don't want to become some sort of guru to my church members. That could be dangerous."

He is right that there are perils to avoid along this path. To avoid the pitfalls of egotism, arrogance, power, and personal overinvolvement, spiritual directors need to be under direction themselves, with either other pastors, small sharing groups, or laypersons (possibly from another congregation) whose judgment and confidentiality they trust. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ," advises Paul (Eph. 5:21). Being subject does not mean obeying blindly; no directee is ever asked to obey a director. It does mean humbling oneself to confess spiritual ignorance and need—in other words, being "poor in spirit."

"Well, that's all very well," says another minister, "but I've got a church to run, the sick to call on, marriages to perform, families to counsel, the dead to bury, the bereaved to console, a stewardship chairman who's breathing down my neck about the budget, and two sermons to write every week. When am I going to do all this individual direction?"

The best solution to this problem is to train small groups or individual laypeople who feel called by God to minister as spiritual directors. If that busy pastor would spend one or two hours a week for, say, 10 weeks, training laypeople who are already spiritually advanced, the whole congregation could be blessed by their ministry.

The training would deal only briefly with theology and should move on quickly to deeper things to prepare the directors to deal with hard questions such as Why am I so dry in prayer lately? How can I achieve more spiritual discipline? Am I compartmentalizing my religion away from my life in business? Why do some people seem to hear God when others don't? Why do we die? Am I really getting closer to Christ, or am I spinning my spiritual wheels? Does God still speak to people, or did all that end with the apostles?

Such questions need exploration and investigation, with both director and directee searching. A pat answer can be found in many popular Christian books—but a pat answer doesn't last, nor does it build up a church of mature believers. Potential spiritual directors need to do considerable reading of their own denomination's special favorites as well as some of the great Christian classics like *The Pursuit of God*, by A. W. Tozer; *The Cloud of Unknowing*, by an anonymous fourteenth-century author; and *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence.

A good spiritual director needs to be a mature Christian, well grounded in Scripture and personal prayer and deeply committed to transparent Christian living. The most necessary ingredient in the director's makeup is the ability to love unconditionally. The director must "not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting . . . with gentleness" (2 Tim. 2:24, 25).

Sometimes direction includes counsel about Christian behavior or guilt for past sin. This counsel is, of course, taught best by example; therefore spiritual directors need to "wear" all the qualities they wish to teach.

The apostle Paul was this type of spiritual director. "Brethren, join in imitating me," he wrote (Phil. 3:17). He served as spiritual director to a number of Christians, including Timothy. He offered this younger man counsel about prayer, preaching, theology, and personal demeanor, ending one of his letters with the plea "I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith" (1 Tim. 6:14-20).

Paul reminds us, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4). Spiritual directors are people who follow this counsel. They take an interest in others' needs, and exhort and encourage as they walk beside them.

### Is this psychotherapy?

Spiritual direction is not therapy. Problems that arise in the directee's life are dealt with at the level of prayer and loving exhortation. Dorothy, a spiritual

## To avoid the pitfalls of egotism, arrogance, power, and personal overinvolvement, spiritual directors need to be under direction themselves.

director to a number of people in her parish, had been giving a series of classes on prayer and meditation, and she was deeply concerned about Margaret, an aggressive, attention-getting class member who seemed to be seeking something more otherworldly than the class offered.

One morning Margaret called Dorothy, asking for a private appointment for some direction. During their talk together, Margaret suddenly burst into tears and revealed that she had been a childhood incest victim, repeatedly molested by her stepfather over a nine-year period. She also confessed that now she compensated for her feelings of powerlessness and rage by reading books about witchcraft, spiritism, satanism, and astrology.

Dorothy gulped down her feelings of horror and rage at the stepfather, prayed silently, and went to work. First, she gave Margaret the name of a Christian psychologist, and insisted that she see this person for therapy.

"I don't do psychotherapy," she explained, "and you need some help to undo the terrible harm that was inflicted on you in childhood. But I will help you undo the spiritual damage that you're doing to yourself through anger and occultism."

The two women prayed together conversationally. The weeping Margaret prayed for God to help her forgive the stepfather; then Dorothy asked for the same thing, adding her supportive prayers.

After they had prayed together for about half an hour, Dorothy spent some time counseling Margaret about the spiritual dangers of witchcraft and other oc-

cult practices and showed her a number of texts forbidding such activities. Then they prayed silently for a few minutes, asking God's forgiveness. Next they renewed Margaret's baptismal vows, renouncing Satan and all his works and professing faith in Christ as the one Saviour. Dorothy counseled Margaret to memorize Deuteronomy 6:5: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Dorothy then went home with Margaret, and the two of them burned all of her occult books in the fireplace.

Not all spiritual direction is so dramatic. Much of it deals with the day-to-day life of those who are hungry for God and for spiritual growth. But this incident points out the way that pastors and others can deal with psychological problems without trying to take over the therapist's job. (Margaret, incidentally, visited a psychologist for two years; during this same period she continued to go to Dorothy for spiritual direction.)

### Styles of spiritual direction

There are a number of styles of direction. In the traditional mode, the director advises and encourages the directee, who willingly submits to this counsel. "Soul friends" engage in a less formal mutual direction. And there are small groups that devote themselves to prayer and spiritual support, sharing their journeys with each other in frequent meetings.

Most Protestant directors prefer to think of themselves as companions on the spiritual journey—fallible people who themselves are pilgrims, and whose counsel and encouragement are given in the spirit of equality. They help directees to clarify what God is calling them to do, and how the Holy Spirit is working in their prayer and meditative life.

Whatever directional style is used, several elements are almost always present in a good spiritual relationship:

1. *Prayer.* The director should pray daily for the directee, and should open and close their sessions together with prayer. Much of the discussion will be about prayer and its practice, and the directee is encouraged to constantly enrich and extend his or her prayer life.

2. *Bible reading.* Although spiritual direction doesn't usually include a Bible study per se, it must have strong scriptural elements. Ideas and suggestions must have Scripture teachings to back

them up, and the directee should be set on a path of individual study or guided toward a Bible study group.

3. *Journaling.* The director's job is easier when the directee keeps a regular journal of his or her prayer life and spiritual growth. Keeping this journal will also clarify things in the writer's own understanding.

4. *Silence.* God loves to erupt into our holy silences, and should be given an opportunity to do so in the directional session. The persons involved may meditate on a verse of Scripture or use the name of Jesus as a "centering device" during this silence (see "Christian Meditation," by William Loveless; *Ministry*, January 1986).

5. *Love.* The director should accept his or her directee unconditionally, loving this person as Christ loves us. If there is an aura of disapproval or dislike on the part of the director, little growth can result from the relationship.

6. *Journey.* In the most successful spiritual relationships, both director and directee consider themselves pilgrims. In one of his books on spirituality, Morton Kelsey writes: "It is my measured conclusion that it is most unwise for people to be charged with spiritual formation who are not on their own spiritual journey and who are unable to be spiritual companions."<sup>††</sup>

7. *Honesty.* The people in a spiritual direction relationship must both be open and completely honest with each other. This includes not only telling the truth but being transparent, defenseless, and unpretentious.

8. *Empathy.* The pastor or layperson who offers spiritual direction must be one who can understand and empathize with the feelings, emotions, ideas, and struggles of the other person. Detachment is good, but that does not mean not caring. We best learn about God's love through the compassionate ministry of others.

9. *Submission to God.* The Holy Spirit moves through our dialogue about God; and if we are submitted to His loving ministry and to the compelling presence of Christ when we are gathered together, the relationship will place both participants at the foot of God's throne.

### The pastor's role

Pastors can make it known to their congregations that spiritual direction is available and can introduce them to its basic structures. If the pastor cannot or does not choose to do this kind of min-

## We best learn about God's love through the compassionate ministry of others.

istry, he or she can act as a catalyst, helping people discover what is their very best work for God. They may be called to be choir members or a building committee chairperson or Christian educators—or they may be called to be spiritual directors. Offering encouragement and training without being possessive with ministry is the highest form of pastoral care. ■

\*All names in this article have been changed.

†All Bible texts in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

††Morton T. Kelsey, *Companions on the Inner Way: The Art of Spiritual Guidance* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 1983).

### For further reading

Kristen Ingram, *Being a Christian Friend* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1985). See especially the final chapter, on spiritual friendships.

Kristen Ingram, *Quiet Time With God* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1984). Examines centering prayer, journaling, spiritual dreams, meditation on the Lord's Prayer.

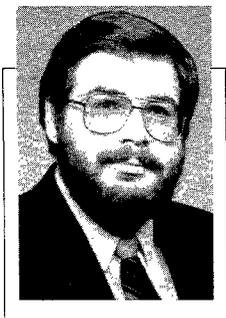
Alan Jones, *Exploring Spiritual Direction: An Essay on Christian Friendship* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982). Contains some good basics about spiritual direction and the Christian journey.

Morton T. Kelsey, *Companions on the Inner Way: The Art of Spiritual Guidance* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 1983). A brilliant book with sensitive insights about spirituality and mutual aid.

Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980). The seminal work for those who are interested in finding spiritual companions.

Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1975). Nouwen is a Dutch priest whose words about prayer are always important. See especially the chapter titled "The Prayer of the Heart."

Elizabeth O'Connor, *Letters to Scattered Pilgrims* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979). Letters that might come from one's own spiritual director, containing counsel about prayer, use of the "pilgrim journal," stewardship, and growth.



# Pebbles in the stream

Tim Crosby

**T**he weather looked inviting, so I laid aside my work and traipsed down the hill to the tracks. The train used them once a week; no one seemed to mind that I put them to good use between trains. I had spent much time walking up and down this particular section of track ever since I resolved, about five months ago, to spend one hour a day in prayer. I discovered that by praying out loud, while walking, I could concentrate and shut out the world much more effectively than I could on my knees. Even then, however, it was a battle—more so at first.

Good prayer is hard work; and it takes a while to discipline the emotions and drag them, kicking and screaming, into the attitude of petition. However, as with all worthwhile disciplines, that which is consistently practiced becomes easy and finally enjoyable.

Unfortunately, I had not been as consistent as I would have liked. In fact, well, let's be honest—I had missed the previous two days. My contacting a mild case of the flu was no excuse, for I had spent more than an hour at the computer both days.

What brought me to the tracks was the urge to share something the Lord gave me. I had been praying about a problem that I suppose every minister wrestles with: what good am I really doing? When I look around me, how many radical changes of life do I see? Not as many as I would like. Yes, there were some tri-

umphs, but I could name too many people who had sat and listened month after month to good sermons, only to return home to take up the same old petty squabbles, or the same enslaving habit.

I often stop for a few moments at a certain point to throw a pebble or two in a small stream that runs under the tracks. Today as I skipped a stone, I felt the wind of an idea blowing my way. The answer to my question lay in my hand.

What visible result did the few pebbles I had deposited on the bottom of the stream have on the water? None that I could see. The difference in the pattern of flow was undetectable. But I knew that if thousands of those pebbles were deposited all in one place in the stream, forming a dam, the stream would temporarily cease to flow until it had deepened. It might even be forced into a new channel.

Each stone did make a slight difference. My efforts, plus the efforts of others, could change the stream. Every prayer offered, every visit made, every sermon preached, is a pebble. A good minister throws a lot of pebbles in the stream. And eventually, they add up to something that is more than a match for the current.

In this age of instant solutions, the temple of God is still built brick by plodding brick. One brick makes little differ-

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**By praying out loud,  
while walking, I could  
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more effectively.**

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ence. But cathedrals are composed of little differences.

The analogy is imperfect, because for most things and most people, change is not a slow, steady progression, but a series of fits and starts. Like the San Andreas fault, the accumulating pressure causes no discernible movement until one day there is sudden, perhaps catastrophic, realignment. The causes are evolutionary, but the result is revolutionary. Streams are that way too. Now and then streams go on the rampage and wash away the well-laid stones—particularly when there are not enough of them in place. But then such a flood might also carry enough debris to complete the dam and force the stream into a new channel.

Most social or spiritual advancement is a culmination of progression and regression. Success often comes after repeated setbacks. Changing lives is like shattering rock: the hammer may strike again and again, making nary a dent, but the last blow does the trick. One must never give up too soon.

Consider the spring. As I write, the temperature is in the seventies. But it's only March 3. I want to believe that warm weather is here to stay, and my experience tells me that it must come sometime in the next three months. But I cannot place too much hope on today's thermometer, nor despair at tomorrow's freeze. Before spring comes, comes the cold again.

Cold weather or no, I know that spring will come—whether I do anything about it or not. God doesn't need my help to change the seasons. But He does to change hearts. Redemptive change is hard work, and I have not gotten in my full hour of prayer yet, so it's back to the tracks. Another pebble in the stream. ■

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# Ordination of women: a hermeneutical question

John C. Brunt

**How literally should we apply Scripture? Should women no longer lead out or teach in the Sabbath school?**



John C. Brunt, Ph.D., is dean of the School of Theology, Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

**W**henever Seventh-day Adventists discuss the ordination of women to gospel ministry, they inevitably quote certain New Testament passages. Adventists are committed to Scripture. It is our norm for faith and practice, and we turn to it for guidance on this issue. But how shall we understand Scripture aright? That is the hermeneutical question.

Does Scripture forbid or encourage the church to authorize women in ministry as it has traditionally authorized men? Some feel that 1 Corinthians 14:33-37, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, and 1 Timothy 3:2 are conclusive evidence that Scripture forbids the ordination of women. Do they? In fact, do they speak to ordination at all?

## Two significant problems

Those who would use these texts against the ordination of women face two significant hermeneutical problems.

First, none of these texts specifically addresses the ordination of women. They address other issues. If they are to be considered relevant, some bridge must be found from the issues that are focused on in the texts to the ordination of women.

Second, using these texts against the ordination of women assumes a hermeneutical principle that is neither acceptable nor traditionally practiced in Adventist theology. That is, the texts may be used against women's ordination only if they are read in a literalistic way that divorces them from their historical and literary contexts.

Let's review the texts:

*1 Corinthians 14:33-36:*

"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?"\*

*1 Timothy 2:11-15:*

"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be kept safe through childbirth, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety."

*1 Timothy 3:2:*

"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach . . ."

Some believe these texts settle the issue. As we study the texts, however, we see that not one of them speaks to ordination. They can only be used against women's ordination when one argues, "If not this [speaking in church; teaching men], then certainly not ordination."

This kind of argument will work only if the texts are understood in a literalistic way. But Seventh-day Adventists long ago decided not to interpret Scripture this way.

Let's compare the two possible positions before us if we first interpret the material in a literalistic way, and second,

if we look at the texts in a principled way, seeking to understand which principles Paul was addressing within his original context.

### **A literal view**

Assume that we as a church had adopted the literalistic interpretation of these texts. How would it affect what the church does today?

First, we would have to forbid women from speaking publicly in church, for 1 Corinthians 14 says women are to be silent in church. Under these circumstances women could not be Sabbath school teachers, Sabbath school superintendents, or speak in any other way. But the church has not taken that position.

Second, if 1 Timothy 2:11-15 were taken literally, we would have to forbid women from accepting any position in which they would teach or have any authority over men. This would exclude them from being teachers or supervisors of any kind in Adventist institutions. For instance, a woman could not be the director of nurses in a hospital in which there were male nurses. A woman could not be a college teacher in any department in which she would be teaching male students. But the church has never done this.

Finally, if we took 1 Timothy 3:2 literally, we would have to insist that all elders be married, the husband of one wife. Unmarried individuals could never serve as elders or ordained ministers. But the church has ordained many single men.

What does all this mean? It means that we have not chosen to interpret these passages in a literalistic way. Rather, we have attempted to understand them in context.

It will not do to say that these texts should not be taken literally but that they still forbid ordination to women. Only two possibilities are open to us.

Either we must return to a literal reading of the texts and drastically change our current church practice to bring it into line. Or we must recognize that these texts in and of themselves cannot settle the issue of women's ordination. There is no middle ground. This is not to say that the texts speak for the ordination of women. It is only to say that they cannot be used against the ordination of women.

### **Inconsistent use of Scripture**

An honest hermeneutic must be consistent in its use of Scripture. We must either forbid all positions of teaching and

supervision to women, forbid ordination to single men, and keep women totally silent or we recognize that these texts cannot be made to speak directly against the ordination of women. To interpret Scripture correctly, we must find which principles the texts were addressing within their literary and historical contexts.

The same approach must be used when evaluating other biblical arguments advanced against the ordination of women. For example, a number of Adventist interpreters view the fact that Jesus chose only male apostles as evidence that He intended ministers for all time to be male. They go on to argue that because Jesus broke down certain barriers between men and women and opened the way for a new understanding of women's role, He certainly would have chosen women apostles had He ever intended women to function as ministers.

The foolishness of such an argument is apparent when we realize that in His ministry Jesus also broke down barriers between Jews and Gentiles. On several occasions He willingly flouted conventional rules of conduct by interacting with Gentiles. And yet all of His apostles were Jews. Does this mean that all ministers for all time should be Jews? Such an argument is equivalent to the one that Jesus' choosing only male apostles means that women can never be ordained.

One of the dangers we face today is that in the effort to forbid ordination to women by appealing to Scripture we will so misuse it that the result will be hermeneutical inconsistency. We must not let this happen.

### **Another hermeneutical approach**

But what would happen if we were to look at the New Testament in a principled way that seeks to understand relevant new Testament passages within their literary and historical context? What would it mean for the question of ordaining women?

First, it would mean that the specific passages that are often used to speak against the ordination of women are rather to be understood as specific instructions to specific circumstances.

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul's concern is for order in worship within the context of a discussion about speaking in tongues. He obviously is unhappy with certain practices in Corinth and forbids a certain kind of participation by women. This

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## **It will not do to say that these texts should not be taken literally but that they still forbid ordination of women.**

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seems to be some type of speaking in tongues.

That Paul does not intend to silence women in worship is obvious from 1 Corinthians 11. He permits them to both pray and prophesy in church as long as they are appropriately attired (which in the cultural context of Corinth meant wearing veils). Since Paul uses the term "prophesying" to include what we would call preaching—the speaking for God within the worship service—this passage proves that Paul did not really intend to silence women in church.

If we work in a principled, contextual way, we will also recognize that 1 Timothy 3:2 is not speaking to whether or not women should be pastors or whether single males may be ordained. It only forbids the position of elder to those who have more than one wife. In 1 Timothy 2 Paul appears to address a situation in which activities by certain women have brought disrepute on the church. But his advice must not be taken to controvert his permission for women to pray and prophesy within the church.

### **Additional relevant passages**

If we take Scripture in a principled, contextual way, we discover other relevant New Testament passages that need to be considered as we discuss women's ordination.

For example, in Galatians 3:28 Paul sets forth the principle that in Christ there is no male or female. Obviously this does not mean that sexual distinctions between male and female should be disregarded. But it does mean that there are no longer any *spiritual* distinctions between male and female (as there had so

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## Did God's initiative in this new direction of involving women in ministry reach its climax in New Testament times? Or did God intend the church to continue on today in the same direction?

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definitely been in Judaism). In Christ they are equal. Any attempt to deny salvation or the exercise of spiritual gifts to women goes directly against the grain of this great principle.

We also find that the New Testament moves in a definite direction toward the participation of women in ministry.

The Old Testament completely closed the priesthood to women. But the New Testament sets forth the profound truth of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5). As a result, amazing changes come about in a short period of time. Paul takes on women coworkers such as Priscilla and Phoebe. Romans 16:1 seems to indicate that Phoebe was a deacon (not a deaconess, as some translations indicate).

Did God's initiative in this new direction of involving women in ministry reach its climax in New Testament times? Or did God intend the church to continue on today in the same direction?

### Helpful analogy

Although such questions are never easy, an analogy can help us find a clear answer. We know that in certain cases God intended the church to continue movement after New Testament times in the direction of revealed principles.

Take the issue of slavery, for instance. In the Old Testament God set forth rules governing the practice of slavery. In the New Testament (in fact, in Galatians 3:28, the very same passage that speaks to the oneness of male and female in Christ) Paul sets forth the principle that there is no slave or free in Christ. Yet he does not

completely forbid the practice of slavery.

If we accept Ellen White, however, we recognize that God did *not* intend the church to stop with the New Testament, for Ellen White forbade the practice of slavery. She went so far as to suggest that those who permitted or advocated the continuation of slavery should not have a place within the fellowship of the church. Obviously God intended movement in the *direction* that the New Testament pointed.

### Applying principles today

How do we know whether or not God expects continued progress in breaking down spiritual barriers that stand between men and women? How do we know whether it is consistent with New Testament principles to ordain women to gospel ministry today?

I believe there is evidence that God does expect continued progress. I believe there is evidence that God does want us to open the doors of ministry to all of His children. I believe there is evidence that within the cultural milieu of North America today God does intend us to invite women into full participation in ministry, including ordination.

Where do I see this evidence?

First, I see it in Scripture in which the spiritual oneness of male and female in Christ, and the priesthood of all believers, lead in the direction of full participation of male and female in ministry. I believe we should move as far as possible in our cultural context to make this principle a reality without bringing undue disrepute to the gospel of Christ. In the cultural context of North America, only the full ordination of women would appropriately represent our commitment to those principles.

Second, I find women sensing God's call in their hearts to prepare for ministry. I see that God has equipped them with the spiritual gifts necessary to carry out the difficult task of pastoral ministry. As a theology teacher, I have for years asked students who want to study for the ministry what has led them to feel God's call. In fact, we as a theology faculty search for evidence of such a call before we recommend students to ministry. We find that women express the same deep conviction and sincere commitment to ministry that we take as evidence of God's call in men.

Third, I see God blessing the ministry of women. I am privileged to be a member of a Seventh-day Adventist church

that has had women as local elders for more than a decade and a woman pastor for half a decade. I have seen the blessing that these women have brought to the ministry of the church. I have seen God use them to bring women and men to Jesus Christ. I have heard God speak to my heart through them.

All of this leads me to believe that we now stand in the very same position in which Peter and his fellow Christians stood when they went to preach the gospel to Cornelius and his household. They witnessed the Spirit being poured out on these Gentiles who had heard the Word.

It was a shocking event. These early Christians did not believe Gentiles were worthy of the gospel. They did not yet understand that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, in Christ. Dumbfounded though he was, Peter found these words: "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have" (Acts 10:47).

Adventists do not believe that ordination adds any "new grace or virtual qualification." It is rather the public recognition of divine appointment (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 161, 162). But ordination is the way our church recognizes the validity of a genuine call to minister full-time for the gospel.

As we look at the ministry that women have been and are performing through the gift of God's Spirit in the church, can we do anything else than follow Peter's example and say, "Can anyone keep these women from being ordained? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ■

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\*Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.

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## We find that women express the same deep conviction and sincere commitment to ministry that we take as evidence of God's call in men.

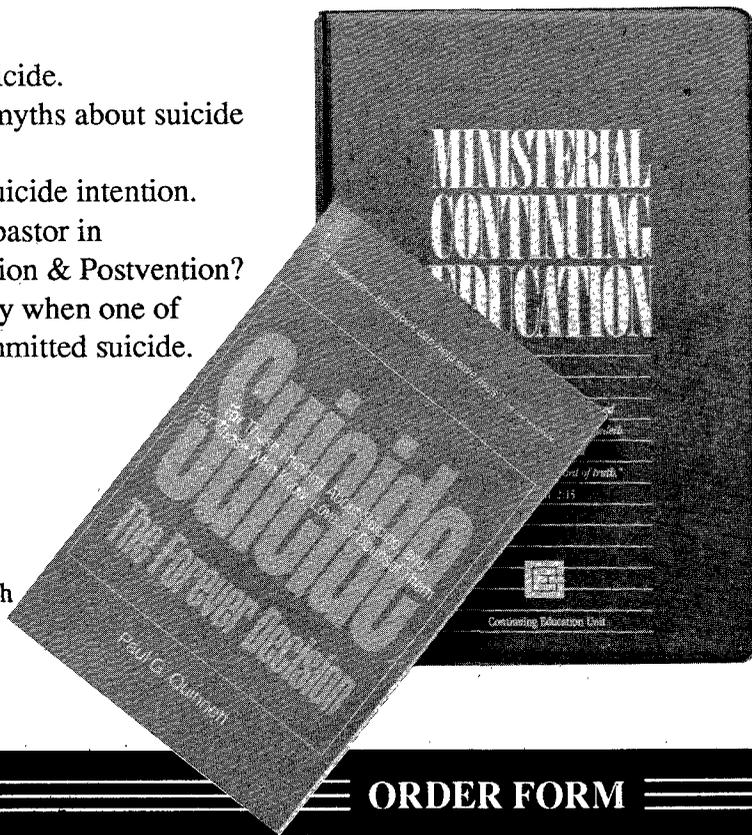
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# The phone call you don't want... **SUICIDE**

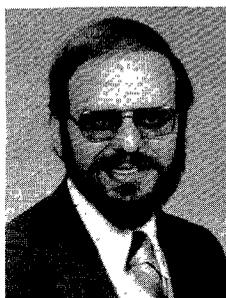
**Discover --**

- Why people commit suicide.
- What are the common myths about suicide
- Who are high risks.
- What are the signs of suicide intention.
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# Talking to myself

Gail D. Robinson

**Is your spouse's schedule such that you have to talk to yourself to have a conversation with an adult?**



Gail D. Robinson writes from Greenwood, Indiana.

**I**t was a typical day. I held off the children's dinner as long as I could. When the youngest started gnawing on a chair leg, however, I decided to go ahead. By the time my husband, Bob, arrived, his usual 30 minutes late, the rest of us had finished eating, so I warmed up his dinner in the microwave.

"No wonder you think I'm a terrible cook. You haven't eaten a warm meal in two years," I joked.

"Sorry," he replied. "I had to catch up on my charts at the hospital or I'm off the staff."

"I suppose they've disconnected all the phones at the hospital," I suggested. My sarcasm was lost in the jangle of the phone ringing. Resignedly, I put the phone on the kitchen table so Bob could take the calls from his answering service, call back the patients, and perhaps call the pharmacy.

"I think they wait until office hours are over on purpose so they can talk to you instead of your nurse," I teased. I should have saved my breath. He was listening to the person on the phone, not to me.

By the time Bob had finished his supper and his phone conversations, I was deep into algebra with my son Rod. Then it was time to take the girls to piano lessons. At nine we started the bedtime ritual—picking out tomorrow's clothes, taking baths, saying prayers.

Nine-thirty. I headed for our bedroom, where I was sure Bob would be reading the newspaper. Now we would have a chance to talk. But Bob was putting on his jacket as I walked in.

"You're on call?" I asked with a sigh.

"Yep. There are two patients in the emergency room already. I'd better go."

So much for the stimulating conversa-

tion I had looked forward to all day. The rest of the evening was lonely. I went to bed, as I did many nights, wondering if there wasn't more to marriage than passing each other on the stairs. My last waking thought was *Now I know why people talk to themselves.*

A few days later I visited a friend who was in the hospital for tests. An evangelist's wife, she was from another city, and I didn't get to see her very often. My husband, her doctor, told me that she would be in the hospital for several days.

I'd planned to visit just a short while, but soon Mrs. D. and I were deep in conversation. We found a lot of similarities between the demands made on her husband and those made on mine.

With a familiar twinkle in her eye, Mrs. D. told me that her husband had just returned from a week-long revival. "My sister was visiting me when he returned," she said. "She stayed for dinner and spent part of the evening with us. Before she left, she took me aside. 'What's wrong with you two?' she asked. 'You hardly speak to each other!'

"I just laughed," Mrs. D. continued. "I told her that when Mr. D. has been away for a week, he comes home tired. All week he has stayed in other people's homes. He has done a lot of counseling during the day, preached at nights, and has had very little time alone. When he comes home, he's looking forward to some peace and quiet. I don't bombard him with questions. I know that by the next day he'll be rested and ready to tell me all about his week. I've learned to wait until the right time."

I listened with interest as I realized how similar our situations were. My husband also ministered to other people all day long. Although he dealt mostly with physical problems, many people also brought him their emotional problems. Since the

unchurched person doesn't have a pastor to go to, Bob often found himself listening to the problems of the newly divorced man who can't cope, the unwed pregnant teenager, or the agonizing family of the terminally-ill patient. All need a listener. No wonder Bob retreated to our bedroom with the newspaper almost as soon as he walked in the door.

As I left the hospital I began to look at my problem of loneliness and lack of conversation with my husband from a new perspective. Now, instead of thinking of myself, I focused on Bob and how he felt. I visualized him driving home from the office, weary and tired of people. But for him there would still be phone calls from patients, interrupted sleep, and perhaps a drive to the hospital during the night. I realized that I needed to protect him from unnecessary intrusions. I could wait until the right time to initiate a conversation. It was unwise of me to bombard him with family problems the moment he walked in the door.

Focusing on Bob's needs rather than my own also made me view his busy schedule differently. Now I looked at it as a challenge rather than a source of irritation between us. Once I started looking for solutions, instead of playing a martyr's role, I found new ways of becoming part of my husband's busy life.

For one thing, because Bob seems to come alive about 10 p.m., I have become more of a late night person. Now we often take walks down our half-mile driveway just before we go to bed—about 11:30. By that time Bob has finished his desk work and is relaxed and ready to talk. These strolls in the quiet country air have been a tonic for us both.

Another solution we have found is the mini-vacation. I used to dream of a week away together, and my dreams were usually dashed because Bob couldn't get away for an entire week. However, he began taking Fridays off once in awhile. This gives us a long weekend to go out of town. Once we are away from the phone and the pressures of his job, Bob relaxes and becomes more talkative. Three days is enough time for both of us to return home refreshed.

My friend's commonsense approach to her problem changed my attitude. Now before Bob comes home, I talk to myself, reminding myself that we *can* find time to be together—and we have. ■

# Choosing a site for your new church

Norman L. Meager

**Twelve factors that, in addition to influencing the cost of your church building project, can even affect how your congregation grows.**



*Norman L. Meager, a retired pastor now living in Sonora, California, has been involved in the design and/or building of more than 20 churches and schools and has served as building consultant to the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

**R**eal estate people say that in selecting a home three factors are of prime importance: the first is location, the second is location, and the third is location. This caveat is as true of churches as it is of homes. Selecting a good building site is no easy task but will do more for your project in relation to time invested than most any other thing you could do. It will pay rich dividends in the overall function and appearance of your project and may to a large extent determine the growth of your congregation. This choice often directly affects even the success of the building program itself; congregations lose interest in the whole project when the location chosen is not attractive to them.

There are at least a dozen factors you must research carefully in order to find a property that will suit the needs of your church and that will not lead to unnecessary difficulties in developing it for use. The church building committee should view these 12 factors as a whole, avoiding the dissension that focusing on only one or two factors may engender. I have listed the 12 more or less in order of importance, although any one of them may become determinative in the final choice. Numbers 4 through 7 affect church growth, the others pertain to cost. You may be able to add to this list factors peculiar to your own geographic location.

**1. Cost.** In most areas of the nation, cost of the property—including purchase, site preparation, and utility hook-ups—should fall in the range of 10 to 20

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## Unless the entire church property is attractive, it will detract from the church building itself.

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percent of the total cost of the project. However, you should not allow the desire for economy to push you into buying an inferior site.

**2. Size.** The purchase of a site that is the wrong size is a common error. Maintaining a large property requires more care than a small or even a medium-sized church may find it convenient to provide. Remember that unless the entire church property is attractive, it will detract from the church building itself. On the other hand, a lot that is too small and provides no green areas or gives the appearance of being squeezed in between neighboring buildings is also unappealing.

When you are considering a lot, draw a rough layout of it, showing the location of the church, the parking area, and the driveways. Be sure the landscaped area is not so large as to be difficult to maintain—avoid the mistake of buying land that eventually grows up in weeds. Sometimes the amount you can save by purchasing a smaller-sized lot is considerable and can be applied to the building itself.

**3. Jurisdiction.** Whether or not the design and construction of your church come under the jurisdiction of the city, township, county, or the state will have major impact on your project. Zoning, building codes, utility costs, and street requirements vary widely, depending on the entity dictating them. Before proceeding with purchase of the property and design of the building, determine what jurisdictions control development of your site. Regulations dealing with lot setback distances for your building, park-

ing, driveways, landscaping, and screening, and innumerable codes relating to the structure itself, will be enforced, and you must plan for them to avoid costly errors and disappointment.

**4. Centrality.** This relates to the population of the area to be served by your church and the location of the property within that area. Factors you need to look at here include your present membership and projected growth. The distance people are willing to travel to church will determine the size of the area you consider.

**5. Visibility.** It is highly desirable that your church be seen by as many of the residents in the area it serves as possible. With the use of a map, you should determine what streets or highways offer this exposure and restrict your search for property to those thoroughfares. Most county recorder's offices make available at a nominal cost real estate maps that can aid you in locating an optimal lot.

**6. Accessibility.** Although related to centrality, this criterion also gives consideration to driveway access and the flow of traffic to your site from main arteries and expressways. You can enhance attendance and growth by taking this factor into account.

**7. Neighborhood.** Ideally, your congregation should build its new church in a growing or stable neighborhood rather than in an old, declining section (usually identified by housing 40 years old or older). Having substantial and aesthetically attractive immediate neighborhood properties will provide stability for the future of your church. Investigate the zoning use permitted for vacant lots in the area so that future development will not prove an unpleasant surprise.

**8. Zoning.** Almost invariably, commercial property is far more costly than residential. Most cities require a variance to build a church on either one. Normally you will need some architectural assistance to prepare for your appearance before the zoning board.

**9. Utilities.** Early in the process, well before selecting a site, contact your gas, electric, water, sanitary, and storm sewer offices to determine whether each of these services is available and approximately how much it will cost to bring them to the site and to connect with your facility. In some cases you will need to install a well or a septic system or arrange for propane gas. Again, you will need to obtain accurate estimates of the availability and costs of these essentials.

**10. Soil/Subsoil.** In some areas of the country, weak or wet or sliding soils pose a problem. You may need to arrange for soil tests, sometimes including test boring, to determine the weight-bearing capacity of the subsoil. In other places, soil saturation may make the use of a septic system difficult or even impossible. If you will need to use a septic system on the site you are considering, have percolation tests made before purchasing the property. You will also need to determine whether or not good quality water can be found if your site necessitates a well.

**11. Terrain.** The topography of your proposed site—whether the land slopes gradually or steeply, whether it slopes up to the rear, down to the rear, to the right or the left—will largely determine the design of your church. Ordinarily, a nearly level lot is preferable. A lot sloping downward to the rear may allow a walkout basement. A lot sloping gradually up to the rear provides an attractive setting for the church. Right and left slopes are more difficult to handle, and a lot sloping steeply up to the rear is one of the most difficult. Creeks, gullies, or ditches may require drainage, filling, or a bridge, and are not desirable. Drainage of rainwater from your property can become a difficult problem if the authorities have strict codes in this regard.

**12. Traffic.** For the safety of the attendees, you need to consider the number of lanes in the street, the traffic count at the time meetings will be held, turning access lanes, and driveway location. The agency governing street or highway access may have suggestions or opinions in regard to this.

I must make one more point. Sometimes a member or friend of the church offers to donate a piece of property as a building site. For the welfare and future growth of the congregation, the church building committee should appraise that proffered property in terms of all 12 factors. If it does not meet the criteria, the committee should not allow the property to be forced upon the church to its detriment. Most sincere donors will be happy to offer the property to the church with the understanding that if it does not meet the criteria, it may be sold at an appraised figure and the proceeds used for the purchase of a site chosen by the congregation.

If you carefully follow these recommendations, you can be virtually assured of a site that will serve your church and your ministry well. ■

# Music in the small church

Eleanor Zoellner

**You—or whoever is in charge of the music at your church—can build a choir and find other sources of music that will give your church a good musical program even if it is small.**



*Eleanor Zoellner is the organist and choir director for La Casa de Cristo Lutheran Church, Scottsdale, Arizona.*

**Y**ours is a small church. It has a tiny choir loft, an inexpensive electronic organ, no professional musicians in the congregation, and a music budget so minute you are lucky to find it mentioned in the annual report.

Sound familiar? Yes! Sound hopeless? No!

If your choir director and organist get along well, you are in luck. If your choir director has a sense of humor, you are doubly blessed. If the organist (or pianist) and choir director are one and the same, don't worry. They have probably learned to get along!

Any director with more than six months' experience is used to the problems associated with volunteer choirs. This saint quickly learns to roll with the punches—and there will be plenty. Here are some suggestions you can share with your music director.

Recruitment is usually the first (but not last) problem. Don't frighten people off by demanding tryouts. You are not directing the Robert Shaw Chorale. Take the prospective members into a room with a typewriter, a guitar, and a piano. If they can identify the piano, let them join the choir!

Don't insist that everyone who joins the choir be able to read music—you'll scare away some of the most devoted singers. Take the time necessary to teach the parts. Bring those who are learning a particular part close to the piano and let the rest visit quietly or just relax.

To keep your choir members, make

the choir fun. After a full day of work, nobody wants to spend several hours in humorless, deadening drudgery. Start rehearsals with a beverage or light snack—it is always easier to get acquainted over food. If yours is a young congregation, provide a baby-sitting service. Have the teenagers in your church take turns baby-sitting; they might as well begin learning now to become active church members.

Start rehearsals at a reasonable hour, and end when you say you are going to end. One hour of good hard work is more profitable than two hours of poorly organized singing. And next morning the alarm rings pretty early for most of us!

Does the man who makes the biggest pledge like Bach? Don't feel you must cater exclusively to him. The choir gets weary of always struggling with difficult music. Give everybody a break by picking a unison number with an interesting accompaniment or a simple hymn with a descant.

There is no money for new music and you are tired of what you have? Why not set up a cooperative with other churches in your area? Their music departments may have the same budgetary problems you do. Plan your selections far enough ahead, especially for holidays and other special occasions, so you will have a better opportunity to borrow music.

Go to a local nursing home and sing for the guests. Try Easter caroling at the hospital. Stand outside and sing Resurrection hymns and see what the response is. (Our choir tried it once, and the newspaper was flooded with thank-you letters from patients to the "unknown choir.")

What about the shut-ins who see only

the pastor? Send with the pastor a tape of several of your best anthems, or take the whole choir for an evening of singing. It will be a toss-up as to who has the most fun—the choir or the shut-ins.

Does your choir enjoy being together? Have a social hour once a month to celebrate birthdays. Have a bang-up Christmas party, and before the choir shuts down for the summer have a swim party or a picnic, or go to a good musical program together. Include the spouses or boyfriends or girlfriends of the regular choir members. Remember, they also serve who only sit and listen!

#### Other sources of music

Don't work your choir to death. Let your organist know in advance that you would like him or her to have something on tap for emergencies, as well as for planned musical meditations. Then if some weekend there is an appalling absence because of chicken pox racing through the primary department, or the flu has taken its toll of the choir members, have an organ solo. Your organist will be delighted to show off a little with a number she or he has been practicing.

Spruce up your music program with some instrumental numbers. How about that community college or the local high school that has the outstanding march-

ing band? Those students love to play, and many would be happy to work with you on some special number requiring brass or woodwinds.

Generally, the local music teachers are quite eager to give their students some exposure, and the teachers are usually more than willing to work with you so that their students will give a polished performance. Many of these students will perform just for the experience. Be thoughtful enough to at least put their names in the bulletin.

If your young people are too busy with school and related activities during the winter months to participate in the choir, why not try a folk group during the summer? Almost every congregation has a few aspiring guitar players. If not, call the local music store for names of guitar teachers, or try the parks and recreation department, to see whether in their classes they have somebody moderately accomplished who would like to play a few weekends during the summer.

How about starting a bell choir? It can add a totally new dimension to your church's musical life. Quite a camaraderie exists among bell choirs. They even have conventions!

If there are several musically talented people in your church who are not in the choir because of other commitments, try

to get them to form a barbershop quartet. This will give you built-in entertainment at your next family potluck.

And don't forget the children. Start them out young—kindergarten or preschool—and have them memorize their music. Use the Autoharp for a change of pace. You can really liven things up by using rhythm instruments from time to time. Simple, inexpensive robes can be made for the children. Enlist mothers to help with making robes and lining children up for the processional.

To keep the children's interest, use an award system. Keep rehearsals short and sweet—after a day of school they can't sit still for long! Plan parties to coincide with holidays. Keep the parents well informed of what you are doing and why, and of any changes in the schedule. Have the children sing frequently. Expect good behavior and regular attendance. The children will enjoy doing a good job, and the congregation will be enchanted.

If you or someone in your congregation will put a little effort into it, before you know it you will have the best musical program in town. In fact, it will probably be so fantastic that people will flock to your church! Don't panic. Keep smiling. Your name will be written in heaven, and it will shine like gold. ■

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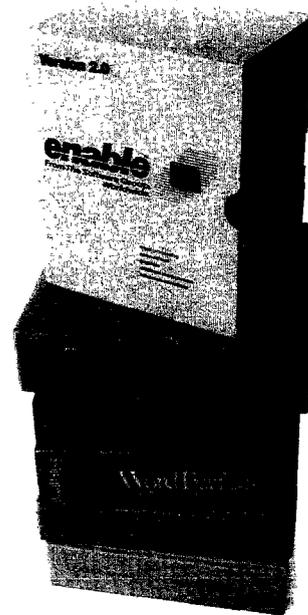
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# Rejoice!

## Ellen G. White



Ellen G. White was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**I**t is often said that Jesus wept, but that He was never known to smile. Our Saviour was indeed a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, for He opened His heart to all the woes of men. But though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining, but ever one of peaceful serenity. His heart was a well-spring of life, and wherever He went He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness.

Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or morose. The life of those who imitate Him will be full of earnest purpose; they will have a deep sense of personal responsibility. Levity will be repressed; there will be no boisterous merriment, no rude jesting; but the religion of Jesus gives peace like a river. It does not quench the light of joy; it does not restrain cheerfulness nor cloud the sunny, smiling face. Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister; and when His love reigns in the heart, we shall follow His example.

If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ has loved us; but if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit will flow out to others. We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing. Humility and self-distrust should be cultivated, and a patient tenderness with the faults of others. This will kill out all narrowing selfishness and make us large-hearted and generous.

The psalmist says, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed" (Ps. 37:3). "Trust in the Lord." Each day has its burdens, its cares and perplexities; and when we meet how ready we are to talk of our difficulties and trials. So many borrowed troubles intrude, so many fears are indulged, such a weight of anxiety is expressed, that one might suppose we had no pitying, loving Saviour ready to hear all our requests and to be to us a present help in every time of need.

Some are always fearing, and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded with the tokens of God's love; every day they are enjoying the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these present blessings. Their minds are continually dwelling upon something disagreeable which they fear may come; or some difficulty may really exist which, though small, blinds their eyes to the many things that demand gratitude. The difficulties they encounter, instead of driving them to God, the only source of their help, separate them from Him because they awaken unrest and repining.

Do we well to be thus unbelieving? Why should we be ungrateful and distrustful? Jesus is our friend; all heaven is interested in our welfare. We should not allow the perplexities and worries of everyday life to fret the mind and cloud the brow. If we do we shall always have something to vex and annoy. We should not indulge a solicitude that only frets and wears us, but does not help us to bear trials.

You may be perplexed in business; your prospects may grow darker and darker, and you may be threatened with loss; but do not become discouraged; cast your care upon God, and remain calm and cheerful. Pray for wisdom to manage

your affairs with discretion, and thus prevent loss and disaster. Do all you can on your part to bring about favorable results. Jesus has promised His aid, but not apart from our effort. When, relying upon our Helper, you have done all you can, accept the result cheerfully.

It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care. But our Lord does not deceive us. He does not say to us, "Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path." He knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. His prayer for His disciples was "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." "In the world," He says, "ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 17:15; 16:33).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught His disciples precious lessons in regard to the necessity of trusting in God. These lessons were designed to encourage the children of God through all ages, and they have come down to our time full of instruction and comfort. The Saviour pointed His followers to the birds of the air as they warbled their carols of praise, unencumbered with thoughts of care, for "they sow not, neither do they reap." And yet the great Father provides for their needs. The Saviour asks, "Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. 6:26). The great Provider for man and beast opens His hand and supplies all His creatures. The birds of the air are not beneath His notice. He does not drop the food into their bills, but He makes provision for their needs. They must gather the grains He has scattered for them. They must prepare the material for their little nests. They must feed their young. They go forth singing to their labor, for "your heavenly Father feedeth them." And "are ye not much better than they?" Are not you, as intelligent, spiritual worshippers, of more value than the birds of the air? Will not the Author of our being, the Preserver of our life, the One who formed us in His own divine image, provide for our necessities if we but trust in Him?

Christ pointed His disciples to the flowers of the field, growing in rich profusion and glowing in the simple beauty which the heavenly Father had given them, as an expression of His love to man. He said, "Consider the lilies of the

field, how they grow." The beauty and simplicity of these natural flowers far out-rival the splendor of Solomon. The most gorgeous attire produced by the skill of art cannot bear comparison with the natural grace and radiant beauty of the flowers of God's creation. Jesus asks, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 6:28, 30). If God the divine Artist gives to the simple flowers that perish in a day their delicate and varied colors, how much greater care will He have for those who are created in His own image? This lesson of Christ's is a rebuke to the anxious thought, the perplexity and doubt, of the faithless heart.

The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Jesus says, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 14:27; 15:11).

Happiness that is sought from selfish motives, outside of the path of duty, is ill-balanced, fitful, and transitory; it passes away, and the soul is filled with loneliness and sorrow; but there is joy and satisfaction in the service of God; the Christian is not left to walk in uncertain paths; he is not left to vain regrets and disappointments. If we do not have the pleasures of this life we may still be joyful in looking to the life beyond.

But even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. Then let us not cast away our confidence, but have firm assurance, firmer than ever before. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," and He will help us to the end (1 Sam. 7:12). Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fear dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage.

We cannot but look forward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may look on what is past as well as on what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength that shall be given us to bear it. Then let us take up our work just where we find it, believing that whatever may come, strength proportionate to the trial will be given.

And by and by the gates of heaven will be thrown open to admit God's children, and from the lips of the King of glory the benediction will fall on their ears like richest music, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

Then the redeemed will be welcomed to the home that Jesus is preparing for them. There their companions will not be the vile of earth, liars, idolaters, the impure, and unbelieving; but they will associate with those who have overcome Satan and through divine grace have formed perfect characters. Every sinful tendency, every imperfection, that afflicts them here has been removed by the blood of Christ, and the excellence and brightness of His glory, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, is imparted to them. And the moral beauty, the perfection of His character, shines through them, in worth far exceeding this outward splendor. They are without fault before the great white throne, sharing the dignity and the privileges of the angels.

In view of the glorious inheritance that may be his, "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). He may be poor, yet he possesses in himself a wealth and dignity that the world could never bestow. The soul redeemed and cleansed from sin, with all its noble powers dedicated to the service of God, is of surpassing worth; and there is joy in heaven in the presence of God and the holy angels over one soul redeemed, a joy that is expressed in songs of holy triumph. (Ellen White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press-Pub. Assn., 1956), pp. 120-126. ■

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# Adventists deceivers?

**Y**our article in the March 1988 issue of *Ministry* on 'The Subtle Deceptiveness of Salvation by Works' was, I fear, a clever piece of deceptiveness in itself. . . . It is commonly known that Seventh-day Adventists frustrate the grace of God in their teaching concerning salvation. . . . It is my belief that you write as you do in *Ministry* magazine to gain acceptability amongst evangelicals. . . . Why not be honest and the next time you write about salvation, tell your readers plainly what you believe?"

A man who pastors in a large Protestant denomination made these remarks in a letter addressed to me as the editor of *Ministry*. Naturally, with what they imply regarding my integrity, they hurt. And they reveal what Adventists have known for years—that many misunderstand our doctrines, confusing us with some of the cults that are prominent on the American religious scene.

There are reasons why Seventh-day Adventists are considered legalistic and cultish. Part of the responsibility for this misunderstanding is our own. Like many other denominations, the Seventh-day Adventist Church arose as a reform movement within Christianity, focusing attention on Christ's second advent and later the fourth commandment—which Christianity in general disregarded. Most of those who became Seventh-day Adventists were Christians who already believed in salvation through faith in Christ alone. So our early pioneers saw no particular need to preach this doctrine—they took it for granted.

The opposition experienced by early Adventists deepened this tendency. Per-

mitting their opponents to set their agenda, Adventists often tend to emphasize their distinctive doctrines rather than an intimate fellowship with Jesus.

But part of the reason other Christians consider Seventh-day Adventists legalists is because they have failed to take a careful look at what Adventists teach. Too often people see with one eye and hear with one ear; through a superficial or biased approach their perception of Adventist beliefs is distorted.

The doctrines the Adventist Church has voted as comprising our fundamental beliefs make clear where we stand. Fundamental belief No. 9 reads: "In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life. . . . This perfect atonement . . . both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming."

Fundamental belief No. 10, "The Experience of Salvation," continues: "In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes

God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him, we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment."

We firmly believe that "the basis for this justification is, not our obedience, but Christ's, for 'through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. . . . By one Man's obedience many will be made righteous' (Rom. 5:18, 19). He gives this obedience to those believers who are 'justified freely by His grace' (Rom. 3:24). 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us' (Titus 3:5)."<sup>1</sup>

"Many wrongly believe that their standing before God depends on their good or bad deeds. Addressing the question of how persons are justified before God, Paul unequivocally stated that he 'suffered the loss of all things, . . . that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, . . . but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith' (Phil. 3:8, 9)."<sup>2</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists believe that while the Ten Commandments point out sin, they do not save. "No deeds of the law, no effort however commendable, and no good works—whether they be many or few, sacrificial or not—can in any way justify the sinner (Titus 3:5; Rom. 3:20)."<sup>3</sup>

Because the law is absolute and immutable, a death was required to pay the penalty imposed upon those who transgress it. This requirement Christ fully satisfied by His death on the cross, making eternal life available to all who accept His magnificent sacrifice.—J. Robert Spangler

<sup>1</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* . . . (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1988), p. 121. This book, published just this year, is an exposition of Adventist doctrines intended for both members of the Adventist Church and others who are interested in understanding our teachings.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1957), p. 142.

# Spiritual hunger

**T**he young mother leaned forward in her chair, resting her elbows on the folding table that separated her from Reverend Lincoln, drinking in every word Lincoln said.

I stood nearby, glancing over the materials the psychic Reverend Lincoln had on display at her table. Among them was an old photograph that seemed to have a flaw in the emulsion. The caption identified the flaw as a spaceship from Mars.

Later, in reading over Lincoln's materials, I would discover that she believes her wisdom and special psychic abilities were given to her by her grandfather, who claimed to be the reincarnation of the prophet Jeremiah.

But for the moment I was concentrating on—well, yes, I suppose it was eavesdropping. "Just go outside tonight," Lincoln told her client. "Look up at the stars and say, 'I am here brothers; speak to me'"—apparently indicating that the young woman could communicate with beings from outer space.

"Yes! I'll do it!" said the young woman.

Meanwhile, around the room, dozens of other customers were shelling out \$20 to \$35 for the privilege of a few minutes' conversation with psychics, tarot card shufflers, I Ching enthusiasts, and aura readers—seeking contact with some sort of wisdom beyond the physical realm, psychic healing, or information about past lives. I fell into conversation with a long-haired young man who was giving "readings." He said that in meditation he

had contacted a being that "looks like the embodiment of all wisdom" who, from time to time, materializes and whispers to him.

Was I wandering through the side-shows at a carnival? Or was I in some out-of-the-way borough in Manila, or maybe San Francisco?

No. I was at the ESP and Psychic Fair at the Ramada Inn in Bethesda, Maryland, just a few blocks from the headquarters of the National Institutes of Health.

I was there to find out whether many people from such a prestigious neighborhood were interested in making contact with the "realms beyond" in nontraditional ways. The steady stream of customers gave me my answer.

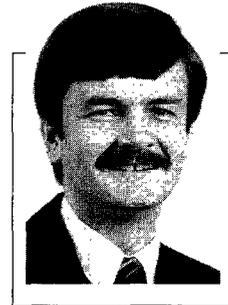
"We're supposed to be a highly developed technological and scientific culture, but more and more people are seeking some kind of symbolic transcendental experience—a religious experience. . . . It's obvious that we are not capable of sustaining a purely technological culture," a professor of psychiatry told *Omni* magazine recently.

Last year *Time* magazine subtitled a cover story "A strange mix of spirituality and superstition is sweeping across the country."

And it is not only America that feels this sweeping wind. In Great Britain, where only 11 percent of the population are church members, 48 percent report having had experiences of spirits or powers beyond themselves.

The world seems ripe for spiritual enlightenment. Secular humanism no

longer satisfies. But neither does any form of Christianity that relies more on traditions and creeds than on a personal relationship with God. Many spiritual seekers bypass the church and look for enlightenment in less traditional paths because they sense that the church is so hidebound by its forms that there is little room for real spirituality.



**Kenneth R. Wade**

Unfortunately much of the spiritual seeking we see today revolves around getting in contact with spiritual powers for self-centered reasons. The push-button-pop-pill generation is more inclined to look for a spiritual experience that promises instant, predictable, measurable blessings than to enter a spiritual discipline that focuses more on God than on individual needs. Thus yoga, and transcendental meditation with their demonstrable health and fitness benefits have a stronger appeal to many baby boomers than does the religion their parents gave lipservice to.

Paul warned Timothy about people within the church who had the form of godliness, but denied the power that godliness works in consecrated lives (2 Tim. 3:5). The power of godliness has demonstrable positive effects. The peace of mind that comes from a trusting relationship with God is just as real as the relaxation a Yogi achieves. If spiritual seekers do not see these effects displayed in the church it is not God's fault. The power of godliness is available to all who will live godly lives.

People are hungry for a meaningful spiritual experience. A relevant revelation of the power of Jesus Christ to change and improve lives is what they need. Are we ready to supply their need? —Kenneth R. Wade

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**The push-button-pop-pill generation is more inclined to look for a spiritual experience that promises instant blessings than to enter a spiritual discipline that focuses on God.**

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# Sermons are seen

Floyd Bresee

**P**reaching is something you do, not just with your mouth, but with your whole body. Research indicates that when you preach, your listeners are more influenced by what they see than by what you say. We may not like it, but our body language can speak so loudly our people hardly hear our sermon. Here are five good ways to improve pulpit body language:

## 1. Beware of mannerisms

Mannerisms are not the exclusive property of the preacher. Watch the baseball pitcher as he prepares to pitch, the batter as he gets ready to hit, the basketball player at the free-throw line, or the tennis player about to serve. Almost invariably each will go through precisely the same routine of meaningless mannerisms just before putting the ball in play. These mannerisms are so deeply ingrained that the player is unaware of them, yet would feel completely unnatural without them.

Chances are, you unconsciously make many meaningless movements in the pulpit. You may move your Bible or notes, adjust your clothing, put your hands in and out of your pockets, or fidget with your glasses. These mannerisms are probably as unconscious yet necessary to you as the athlete's are to him. The problem is, your mannerisms may be so distracting that people have a hard time concentrating on your message.

One Methodist minister's wife always lined up the family to check their appearance just before church. Her ritual included unfolding and checking her husband's handkerchief. She knew that one

of his pulpit mannerisms was to thread his handkerchief back and forth between his fingers as he preached, and she was mortified at the thought of his doing it some day with a "holey" handkerchief. Your spouse may not be trained in theology or rhetoric, but she'll pick up on distracting mannerisms in a hurry. The only problem is whether he or she dares tell you—and whether you care enough to change.

## 2. Improve gestures in daily conversation

The place to learn gestures is in everyday conversation. Watch how people express themselves as naturally through body movements as through words. Any officious tone of voice or mannerism that is out of place in friendly conversation is also out of place in the pulpit. Pretentiousness not only turns listeners off, but calls our Christian experience into question. Jesus "made himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7).

## 3. Be sure your body and mouth agree

Should you move from one side of the pulpit or platform to the other as you preach? Body movement that says nothing can be very distracting to listeners. Logically, the time to move from one place to another is when your sermon makes a transition from one direction to another. Body movement can help listeners visualize the transition.

Should you lean on the pulpit or cozy up to the microphone? Leaning forward can portray intimacy, appeal. The right rule is not one about leaning, but about making certain your gesture is reinforcing your message rather than interfering with your message. Be sure your body agrees with your mouth.

## 4. Keep your eye on your target

Since the eye is the window of the

soul, your eyes should focus primarily, not on the ceiling, or even on your notes, but on the people to whom you are baring your soul. Never allow poor lighting or tinted glasses to prevent your eyes from speaking to your people. If your congregation cannot see your eyes and the expression on your face, they may miss half the sermon.

## 5. See it, feel it, and forget it

*See it.* See pictures in your mind as you prepare your sermon and you'll naturally use gestures to describe what you see. See yourself saying it from the pulpit. Don't let Calvary be up there on your right for the first part of the sermon then down there to your left for the remainder. Imagining yourself viewing the scene from the pulpit as you prepare the sermon will prevent you from making such a distracting blunder.

*Feel it.* Improved gestures most easily result, not from practicing more, but from feeling more. Feelings naturally find their expression in the sparkling eye, the contracted brow, compressed lips, or rigid muscles as the whole body speaks. Generally, the more you rely on notes the more difficult it is to use gestures well. Following notes makes it difficult to *feel* your sermon as you preach.

*Forget it.* A gesture must be the spontaneous product of present feeling or it will seem unnatural to you and ridiculous to your congregation. In the pulpit, concentrate on just three things: your subject, your audience, and what you want your subject to do for your audience. Then your feelings and movements should come naturally, and you can rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to help you bring Christ to your people. ■

## Letters

From page 2

In carefully dealing with the total issue, Dr. Winslow lays the groundwork for understanding why many of us are both antiabortion and pro-choice. Those who are stuck on either pole have become dogmatists for whom moral truth or biblical/theological truth are not really live options. Dr. Winslow has given us an ethical basis upon which relevant, that is, workable, solutions might be founded. —Gordon E. Jackson, Coordinator, Doctor of Ministry Program, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida.

■ Dr. Gerald Winslow's article on abortion (May 1988) presents many biblical principles (often with great skill and clarity), but offers as its bottom line and decisive principle a totally unbiblical ultimate of "personal autonomy." His definitions and application of grace and freedom are distortions. These biblical terms do not defend personal autonomy, but condemn it, including autonomy over what one does with one's own body: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit . . . , and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price [grace]: therefore glorify God in your body [freedom]" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20, NASB). If one is a Christian, then every decision is submitted to God, and God always calls us into a self-sacrificial lifestyle in which we give ourselves (including our physical selves) for the good of others.

As a Christian, I believe that while a woman does have the legal right and the personal freedom to take the life of her child, she does not have God's grace or approval in such an action. Killing any innocent human life is a violation of God's commandment; it is futile for healing a damaged life, and it is sin. Doing so will not solve an emotional and moral crisis, but will only horribly deepen it.

We are false to our calling as Christ's disciples when we even intimate to a woman who may lack the support and emotional strength she needs to face her pregnancy that she will find healing and emotional strength by aborting her child. Our task as individuals and a community is to provide the support she needs to be a giver—not a taker—of

life. In the end abortions terminate innocent children, not the moral or emotional crises of their parents.

Dr. Winslow needs to remember that the Bible makes clear that God offers grace to humanity only in the context of His call for repentance—which, in essence, is a call to turn from personal autonomy to obedience to God's will. In the New Testament grace always calls us to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It never defends "personal autonomy" or defines freedom in terms of autonomy: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23, NASB).

God's grace never covers willful, cherished sin, and autonomy is the primordial sin (Isa. 14:12-14). *Autonomy* literally means "self-law"—the sinful desire to be one's own ultimate authority. In Genesis 3:4-6 it is the serpent who distorts grace into personal autonomy ("Ye shall be as gods"). Jesus' own discussion of freedom is found in John 8:28-36; here it is defined within the context of discipleship and abiding in His Word. Biblical freedom is the opposite of personal autonomy.

Because Christian concepts have been mixed with the humanist maxim of personal autonomy, there are a number of inconsistencies in Dr. Winslow's article. One example is his statement that as Christians "we must be extremely cautious about letting our respect for human life vary according to our perception of the level of personhood achieved." Then in the next sentence he states: "Prepersonal human life may have to yield to already established personal life." If by this Dr. Winslow meant those few instances when a physician must allow an unborn child to die in order to save the physical life of its mother, there would be no argument. But in his summary statement he defines such instances as any time "an unwanted pregnancy may jeopardize the personhood of the woman in many ways, some evident and some hidden." Of course, he says, the woman should take her child's life "with regret."

We are quickly buying into the mindset that sees killing as an acceptable (if not the best) answer to personal dilemmas; that sees nondiscriminating acceptance of any choice as the ultimate virtue instead of a vice; that believes that the adversarial relationship in an unwanted pregnancy actually is between

the mother and her child rather than between an active faith in God's power versus the destructive fantasy of fulfillment through human autonomy. —Richard Fredericks, Ph.D., Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

■ Los Angeles, California, 1953: an Adventist doctor advises a woman who had developed toxemia to have an abortion, telling her that she will not live if she tries to have this baby. He says, "If you die, who will take care of your other two children? And what about your husband? You must live for them. Please think about it."

This woman has been taking Bible lessons and has begun to trust in the mercies of God. Knowing that killing is a grievous sin against God, she determines to have the baby and commits her own life to God's keeping.

To make a long story short and in the words of this very woman: "Well, praise the Lord; here it is 1988, I had my child, and I'm still alive."

I have a keen interest in this remarkable woman, and I know that this story is true, for that woman is my mother and I am that child! "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). —Ernie Sanchez, Adventist Book Center Manager, Loma Linda, California.

■ It does not surprise me when a liberal mainline denomination like my own advocates a policy against life, but the Adventists—the paragon of health care, concern for others, adherence to the Scriptures? What about "Thou shalt not kill"? It would fit more into my bias toward Adventists to find you establishing crisis pregnancy centers or homes for unwed mothers or providing alternatives to abortion. —Timothy Jessen, First Presbyterian Church, Prestonsburg, Kentucky.

■ The child conceived in adultery is not guilty of that sin. That child should not die so that the woman may escape the consequences of her sin. Any appeal to justice must certainly favor the one who cannot defend himself.

I am not one who favors a constitutional amendment that outlaws abortion. I favor a return to the morality

that would make abortion a universally unacceptable alternative, without legal compulsion.—R. F. Westendorf, Pastor, Siloah Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

■ If people would give heed to the plain teachings of the Word of God, give their hearts to the Lord Jesus, and be born again, this horrible problem would disappear; people would live as unto the Lord and not to please themselves. The message of the Word of God is clear, and we as ministers must be united.—Reginald Llewellyn, The Church of God of Prophecy, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada.

■ I know a person who is not the victim but the product of rape. This person is a child of God, a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. I wonder how this person feels, thinking it was God's will that he should have been aborted? In what stage of pregnancy did this person become a living soul for whom Christ died?

I think the devil has pulled a fast one on us ethical Christians. Abortion has become our Achilles heel. While on the one hand we deny the evolutionary principle of origins—survival of the fittest, that might makes it right—because it removes the basis for moral law, are we not practicing the same by deciding on our own who should live and who shouldn't, based on the manner of origin?—Name withheld.

■ Speaking of Judas at the Last Supper, Jesus Christ said something that put Him on the side of proabortionists in some cases: "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24, RSV; see also Mark 14:21). He did not say, "Better that that man had not been conceived." To be conceived but not born is to be aborted, whether naturally or by human contrivance.

Strong evidence that militates against the idea that every new conception is instantaneously a human person are the natural processes God has made. In some cases—e.g., twins, triplets, quadruplets, etc.—the initial human zygote divides subsequently into several parts, each of which becomes a baby. In other cases the pregnancy results in a holocardius amorphous—living human tissues that have no form, no heart, head, arms, legs, or internal organs,

only muscle, bone, cartilage, and fat, covered by skin. Can this be a human being in the sense of person?

A pregnancy can also result in a teratoblastoma, or hydatid mole, which sometimes degenerates into a choriocarcinoma—a deadly cancer that before the days of modern countermeasures invariably killed the mother. Each of these instances begins with an initial zygote (a union of male spermatozoon with female ovum) that has the potential of developing into a normal human baby.

The point is that not until the period of teratogenicity, or about the end of the second month, can it be known whether what is developing is a human baby or a living but nonperson kind of entity.—C. L. Hubbell, Chicago, Illinois.

■ I can't but think of Mary. Still a teenager, not married, very poor, she declared she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit. What would we do with such a case today in our society that has become so permissive about the sacredness of life? Would we find her guilty of teenage sexual promiscuity? Would we diagnose her a schizophrenic with religious delirium? Would we find her too young, too immature, too poor, to raise a child properly? If because of her situation society told her to get an abortion, would we as a church remain silent? Could this abortion be carried out in an Adventist hospital? Could Christ, our Lord, be born in the cities of America?—Dennis Fortin, St. Georges de Beauce Seventh-day Adventist Church, Quebec, Canada.

### The invasion of Christianity

I commend Kenneth Wade for his brief but potentially important editorial, "The New Age Setup" (May 1988). Perhaps we are witnessing the fulfillment of prophecy—subtle and scarcely noticed—for which we have been looking since our movement began.

My understanding of the component factors in the formation of the beast power described in Revelation goes something like this: At a time of tranquility in the church's relation to the world, and for various reasons, the essential ingredients of paganism were incorporated into the basic philosophy of the Christian church. Heathen deities and temples and images were Chris-

tianized by renaming them and sainting them, and the doctrine of an ever-burning hell under the supervision of the god of the underworld was adopted to coerce people into the church and heaven.

This subtle, stealthy adoption of Eastern heathenism and Western spiritism into mainstream Christian thinking suggests a veritable parallel. The concepts of heathenism are alive and vigorous in our world today. And are they not being incorporated into garden-variety Christian thinking? And is not America the center of the crucible in which this melt is occurring?—T. E. Wade, M.D., Liberal, Kansas.

### Extinct as the dodo?

I read with interest Arlo Fleming's article "Extinct as the Dodo?" (May 1988). Mrs. Fleming makes a good case for women who want to be full-time homemakers while their children are growing up. I think, however, she fails to mention two of the elements essential to this happening: a supportive husband and a supportive congregation.

Pastors and churches can help by educating husbands about the psychological needs of wives who suddenly go from the activities and responsibilities of the workplace to the solitude and very different responsibilities of the full-time homemaker. And churches need to be sensitive to the needs of the pastor's wife who makes this choice.

The woman who finds a church willing to accept her as part of a ministry team and to allow her to define how she can best be involved in the life of the congregation is much more apt to be willing to work as an unpaid volunteer than one who feels squeezed into a mold that doesn't fit her training and abilities.—Judith L. Woodward, Conestoga United Methodist Parish, Pleasant Dale, Nebraska.

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## **Television and Religion: The Shaping of Faith, Values, and Culture**

Bill Fore, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1987, 208 pages, \$11.95, paper. Reviewed by Victor Cooper, Communication Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Television has usurped the role of the church in our society. It expresses our cultural essence and shapes our value systems, claims William Fore, assistant general secretary for communication at the National Council of Churches. He is also president of the World Association for Christian Communication.

"Deregulation of broadcasting is pernicious," he says, and "strikes at the heart of the democratic ideals of wide-ranging and robust discussion, of protection of the rights of minority views, of a genuine freedom of information."

Fore calls on us to respond to violence, censorship, and media regulation and protest the global implications of American media policies.

Community and church groups can encourage excellence by recognizing and giving awards to creative writers, directors, producers, sponsors, and others who provide programs that uplift ethical values and humane relationships. Local groups can monitor programming and pressure the media with research findings that show the causal relationship between the viewing of violence and subsequent aggressive behavior. Stockholders can influence companies advertising on television to "call the attention of the officers and directors to the importance of adopting voluntary guidelines which would forbid sponsorship of programs with exploitative sex and gratuitous violence."

Fore also sees a need for more drastic action such as consumer boycotts and petitions to deny license renewal. Though he recognizes that consumer boycotts may backfire.

The author recommends churches use "narrowcasting" techniques—cable, videocassette, and direct mail. Fore fears censorship as media programs deteriorate, and calls for laws that will create incentives to reduce violence. He suggests a statute requiring the availability

of children's programs in every community.

Fore would like to see the FCC act in the interests of the community rather than the broadcasting industry. He wants application of political and economic pressures, but recognizes that such action will require the strength of Samson and the wisdom of Solomon.

A realist, Fore recognizes problems inside both the industry and the church. But his readers are left wondering whether a sizable segment of concerned citizens can be galvanized for the kind of community action and educational programs that are needed.

Fore might have suggested that Christians are obligated to denounce injustice if they are energized by the teachings of the prophets and of Jesus Christ. Or has lethargy cast a spell on the churches and rocked them into sleepy silence while wide-awake media moguls increase in power?

Discerning pastors will alert their congregations to the contents of this stimulating book.

## **Object Lessons for a Year: 52 Talks for the Children's Sermon Time**

David J. Claassen, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, 113 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by R. Bruce Brigden, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Alva, Oklahoma.

Looking through a book of children's sermons for something usable is often frustrating. But this book is different. It is uniformly excellent, and any one of its sermons could be used at any time of year. The stories come from a weekly religious TV broadcast and are of a highly professional caliber.

The theology and "objects" chosen are appropriate in at least 40 of the 52 sermons. Each lesson illustrates the meaning of a specific Bible verse and will cause hearers of every age to nod in assent, for all of these talks present the great truths of the Christian faith in a memorable way.

My only negative reaction was at the rare use of informal grammar and the use of deception in two of the stories, in which I felt the object lesson worked

against the truth of the sermon. But the main problem with these stories is they are so well done they might make the rest of the service seem drab and unfocused by comparison! I would recommend the book to every church that uses children's sermons.

## **Humor in Preaching**

John W. Drakeford, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, 160 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by James L. Stevens, ministerial director, New Jersey Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The title *Humor in Preaching* may not appeal to some readers because they will think the book deals mainly with levity in the pulpit, but this is not the case. It is about how to communicate the gospel in an effective way. The contents deal primarily with making the hearing of the gospel a pleasant experience for those who attend worship services or public meetings. Humor creates an atmosphere in which an audience is more inclined to listen and respond.

John Drakeford, a professor of psychology and counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has put together a well-organized, easy-to-read book on the craft of preaching. He shows how humor can help build a relationship between preacher and audience, but states that "the humor advocated here is a kind that gives the impression of humility, and makes the listener feel relaxed and receptive." Drakeford discusses the various uses of humor, the humor cycle, and developing a communicative attitude that puts the audience at ease and able to respond to your message.

He cautions about the overuse of humor when he says, "It is important to remember that a preacher can become too interested in humor, miss the point of his calling, and sink to the role of a jester. . . . Perhaps such preachers are rare, but all preachers must learn to be sensitive to occasions when humor is inappropriate."

My evaluation of this book is that it is tremendously helpful, and we have ordered one for every minister in our conference.

## High School Ministry

Mike Yaconelli and Jim Burns, *Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan*, 1987, 300 pages, \$17.95, hard cover. Reviewed by Lester Merklin, Jr., pastor, *Blue Mountain Academy Seventh-day Adventist Church, Hamburg, Pennsylvania*.

If you are interested in "keeping the kids off the street," you may choose among many books that have been written to suggest programs to keep them busy. If your desire is to attract them to a lifelong relationship with the Lord, skip those books and read this one! The authors have included activity ideas, but this book is much more than programs.

Yaconelli and Burns help the reader understand the world of the teenager. They did not just theorize; they analyzed the need and then defined some steps to make the gospel real for youth.

The authors also take a look at the youth minister and his or her ministry. It is a relief to hear that being a "Mr. Jock" is not essential to successfully leading kids to the Lord! Caring is the primary prerequisite for working with them.

Even the suggested activities are different from the usual, because the goals of the activities are clearly given. This section is appropriately titled "Creative Learning Strategies."

This will prove to be helpful material for teen ministry even though there is not much depth on some specifics such as counseling and creative program planning. But the authors have covered other areas well by being concise and practical.

We can learn from experienced youth missionaries like Yaconelli and Burns, and youth leaders will gain insights to help increase the effectiveness of the local church in this vital area.

## Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society

Tipper Gore, *Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee*, 1987, 219 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by Anne Elver, free-lance writer and speaker, *Alex, Oklahoma*.

The primary purpose of this book is to make parents aware of the effects of media on the young, but the issues addressed affect everyone. Gore's venture into cleaning up youth entertainment began when she heard the lyrics of music aimed at teens, and her concern spread to other media. She reviews videos, movies, cable television, concerts, and teen-oriented magazines.

The strength of the book is that it arouses the reader to concern about drug use, suicide themes, violence, explicit sex, and satanic themes found in media designed for teens. Gore discusses youth concerts where crime and drug use occur and includes an interview with the president of a security company that worked with traveling rock groups. Gore reviews what she has done to help clean up the media and gives credit to performers who try to make entertainment a source of positive reinforcement of traditional values.

Examples of what has happened in two cities to make youth entertainment more safe and responsible are given in the appendix, as are sources for assistance with teen problems. Extensive footnotes enable the interested reader to investigate the issues more thoroughly.

This book not only serves as a good resource but contains a powerful message for every group dedicated to maintaining a society where wholesome values are possible.

## Church Discipline and the Courts

Lynn R. Buzzard and Thomas S. Brandon, Jr., *Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois*, 1987, 271 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Wayne Willey, pastor, *Amesbury, Massachusetts*.

In the past few years several churches have become targets of lawsuits. This book focuses upon the implications of one such lawsuit in Oklahoma, in which the plaintiff was awarded \$390,000 for being "defamed" when her church published its decision taking disciplinary action against her for adultery.

While it sometimes seems as ponderous as a legal brief, this book is thoroughly documented and will be a most useful resource. The chapters on discipline—"Constitutional Defenses" and "Staying Out of Court"—and the appendices are worth its price. The appendices on the "Biblical Church Discipline Process" and "Sample Forms for Use in Church Discipline" provide instruction on minimizing the church's exposure to lawsuits, while maintaining church discipline.

Every pastor would do well to consider the principles and suggestions in this book. It could be a matter of survival for the church!

## Recently Noted

The Making of a Writer: A Christian Writer's Guide, *Sherwood Wirt, Augsburg*

*Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota*, 1987, 158 pages, \$8.95, paper.

Christian writing can still have a great deal of influence today, because what people read, they become. Unlike other media, the right piece of literature can be kept and reflected upon. Wirt points out that every great movement that swept through human history came about through writing. This helpful guide for writers comes from a veteran of Christian journalism who has spent 20 years lecturing and giving seminars around the world.

Introducing the Sermon, *Michael J. Hostetler, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan*, 1986, 89 pages, \$5.95, paper.

It is unlikely that pastors who read this book will immediately abandon their previous preaching style and switch to Michael Hostetler's five-minute-long, four-point sermon introductions. But any minister who spends an evening with the book will at least get as many useful insights as could be absorbed from a seminar on preaching—and save money on travel too!

Sing Praises to His Name, *Louis Pratt, C. S. S. Publishing Co., Lima, Ohio*, 1986, 108 pages, \$6.75, paper.

For those clergy who help select worship resources, Louis Pratt has performed a great service. He provides 70 calls to worship, 86 prayers of confession, 19 prayers of celebration, and 76 general prayers in this volume. Some have seasonal or other themes for special celebrations. Written for pastoral and congregational interaction, the prayers often have a scriptural motif and are fresh and modern. For churches in which the tradition is extemporaneous prayers, Pratt has provided models that will encourage laypersons to give creative thought in preparing public prayers.

Involving Youth in Youth Ministry, *Thom and Joani Schultz, Group Books, P.O. Box 481, Loveland, Colorado* 80539, 1987, 204 pages, \$9.95, paper.

The main premise of this book is that youth who feel they "own" their church's youth group will gain more from it, and the program will be enhanced, by their being active in making it work. Written for those involved in the coordinating of church youth programs, this is a complete instruction manual on making such youth-led ministries work. ■

# A good deal on a good program

Kenneth R. Wade

**R**ecently, in preparing to update our Software Information Packet, I discovered that several hundred companies are now manufacturing software for church applications. Contacting all of them and supplying a packet has grown to be too big a task for our office. But I haven't given up on helping churches find good software at a good price. And have I got a deal for you this month! How would you like to get a complete membership management program for IBM PC-compatibles (with a minimum of 256k of RAM) for just \$35.00?

I've used and demonstrated the Church Membership Directory program myself for more than two years. (Although I am not currently pastoring a church and hence don't use it in that capacity, I have experimented extensively with it.) The latest version is one of the most versatile and easy-to-learn-and-use programs I've ever seen. Data entry is quick, based on an onscreen form that has context-sensitive help and explanations always visible.

Sorting names according to offices held, or map coordinates, or age, or any other category or multiple categories is fast, even with more than 1000 names included. And you can generate a multitude of lists within the directory for communicating easily with specific groups. The wide variety of types of preformatted lists, directories, even postcards, you can print out is phenomenal. You can even print individual visitation record cards to be taken along on a visit. Perhaps the most important thing about this program is that it runs just as a pastor would want because it was written by a pastor who continues to

use and upgrade it constantly.

The most recent upgrade is a complete attendance-tracking module that makes it easy for you to keep accurate records of individuals' attendance at several different weekly meetings. Planned upgrades

include a complete church treasurer's module (not yet available). Upgrades, once you have purchased the program, typically cost \$15 to \$30 depending on how extensive the changes.

By special arrangement, and through January 31, 1989 (April 30 outside North America) only, any pastor or church can order a copy of the Church Membership Directory through *Ministry* for US\$35.00 (\$40 outside U.S. and Canada). After that date a special license will make it available to Seventh-day Adventist pastors only for that price. (Normal retail is \$199.)

This program does what I would want a membership program to do if I were a pastor. I hope many of you will take advantage of this special limited offer. Orders must be on church letterhead, accompanied by payment, and sent to *Ministry* Software offer, 6840 Eastern Ave. NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

## "The Church Membership Directory"

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For IBM Compatible Computers

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- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Gender
- Race
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- Anniversary Date
- Baptism Date
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- Fast, easy operation
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- Attendance tracking
- Quick List (builds new categories)
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- Full documentation on disk
- Prints: mailing labels, postcards, rolodex cards, visitation cards, name/computer#, church directory, name/phone lists, statistics, date lists, complete information, & more
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**SOFTWARE FOR MINISTRY**
6. Mail to: **Ministry Magazine, Software Offer,**  
6840 Eastern Ave N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012.

## Building greater fellowship

Are you looking for a way to stimulate greater fellowship among your members? Potluck Sunday has worked very well at our church.

We divide the membership of the church into groups of 15 to 25 by areas of residence and appoint a host or hostess for each group. This person brings the group together to decide on a menu for the Sunday fellowship, the venue for the get-together, and what each group member should bring. The hosts and hostesses make every effort to ensure that members whose commitment to the church has been declining are invited.

On the appointed Sunday the groups meet at about 1:00 p.m. and enjoy an afternoon of food and fellowship together. At about 6:00 p.m. all the groups assemble in the church's fellowship hall for dessert and more fellowship—the evening's activities often include an informal concert, a film, or games. What makes this day special—and effective—is the opportunity that is afforded for members to get to know one another in a way they cannot during the host of Sabbath activities.—Submitted by Clinton A. Valley, pastor of the Willesden Seventh-day Adventist Church, London, England.

## Interlinear Bible

(Hebrew-Greek-English)

Need an interlinear version of the Bible? In settlement of unfulfilled orders from a bankrupt publishing house, Wayne Willey has

received 30 copies of Jay Green's *The Interlinear Bible (Hebrew-Greek-English)* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1985).

This interlinear version holds the complete Old and New Testaments in a single volume about the size of *Young's Analytical Concordance*. The type is small, but clear enough to be easily readable. The New Testament of this version offers the additional advantage of having the words keyed to the numbers in *Strong's Concordance*.

Willey will sell these volumes for \$22.95 plus \$3 for shipping and handling—a little more than half of the \$44.95 retail price, and less than they can be purchased from book discounters.

To obtain a copy, send US\$25.95 to Pastor Wayne Willey, 89 Monroe Street, Amesbury, MA 01913-3204.

## Retirement couples needed

Herbert H. Broeckel, president of the Mountain View Conference, U.S.A., writes that his conference is eager to find couples in ministry approaching retirement. "Our conference has numerous small communities with lovely little churches, perfect for retirement. We are searching for couples who wish to continue in ministry. Because it is so difficult for couples to face another move after settling in their retirement location, we are eager to talk with couples who would consider the option of moving to a community where their service is to

continue as a stipend worker."

## New church consulting manual

The North American Division has adopted the Caring Church model for its overall growth strategy. Under this model the focus is on local congregations. Conference personnel function more as facilitators and consultants than as promoters. But where can the new consultant find practical help for serving in this perhaps unfamiliar role?

Part of the answer comes in the new *A Manual for Church Growth Consulting* (CNA 1030), recently published by the North American Division. The five chapters are: (1) "A Theology of Ministry," (2) "Analyzing the Local Congregation," (3) "Analyzing the Local Community," (4) "The Planning Process," and (5) "A Pastor's Perspective." The loose-leaf manual includes exhibits and work sheets.

Order from CDS, General Conference of SDA, 6840 Eastern Avenue, NW., Washington, D.C. 20012, US\$9.35 (postage paid).

## Small wonders

Two companies have recently released credit-card-sized Bibles. Theme-cards, Inc., of 2644 Bayshore Parkway, Mountain View, California 94043, produces a card that is said to contain the entire printed Bible in reduced form. Obviously the print is too small for reading without a microscope, so the cards are being marketed

chiefly for use as a memento or special-occasion gift. Check with Christian bookstores for availability.

From Australia comes word of a complete Bible, concordance, and Bible dictionary on a silicon chip, also the size of a credit card. This Bible can be read, and the electronic concordance can do word searches, with the aid of a battery-operated hand-held reader no larger than a small book. The producers plan to have the reader and Bible, plus other books, on the market soon. Contact Megaword International, Level 16, St. Andrew's House, 456 Kent Street, Sydney Square 2000, New South Wales, Australia (phone 264-3988) for more information.

## A Ministry Professional Growth Seminar

will be held at the New England Memorial Hospital, 5 Woodland Road, Stoneham, Massachusetts 02180 on September 16, 1988. Charles Kessler will speak on ethics and pastoral care of AIDS patients, and Lawrence Geraty will speak on recent archaeological digs in Palestine.

Professional Growth seminars provide 0.5 hours of continuing education credit, and are open to clergy of all faiths. For further information contact Walter Kloss at the hospital, telephone (617) 655-1740.

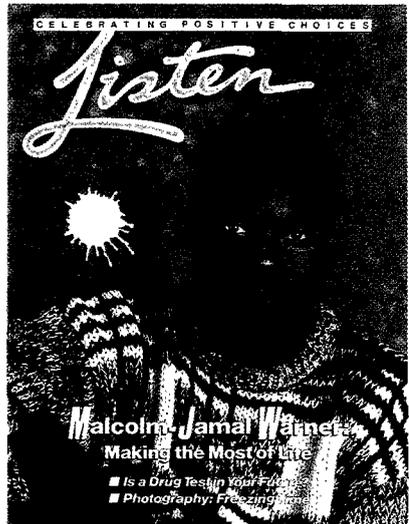
## Correction

The zip code on "For Those Who Hurt" in the July Shop Talk should have been 90308.

A great Christmas gift.

# HELP YOUR KIDS SAY NO!

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