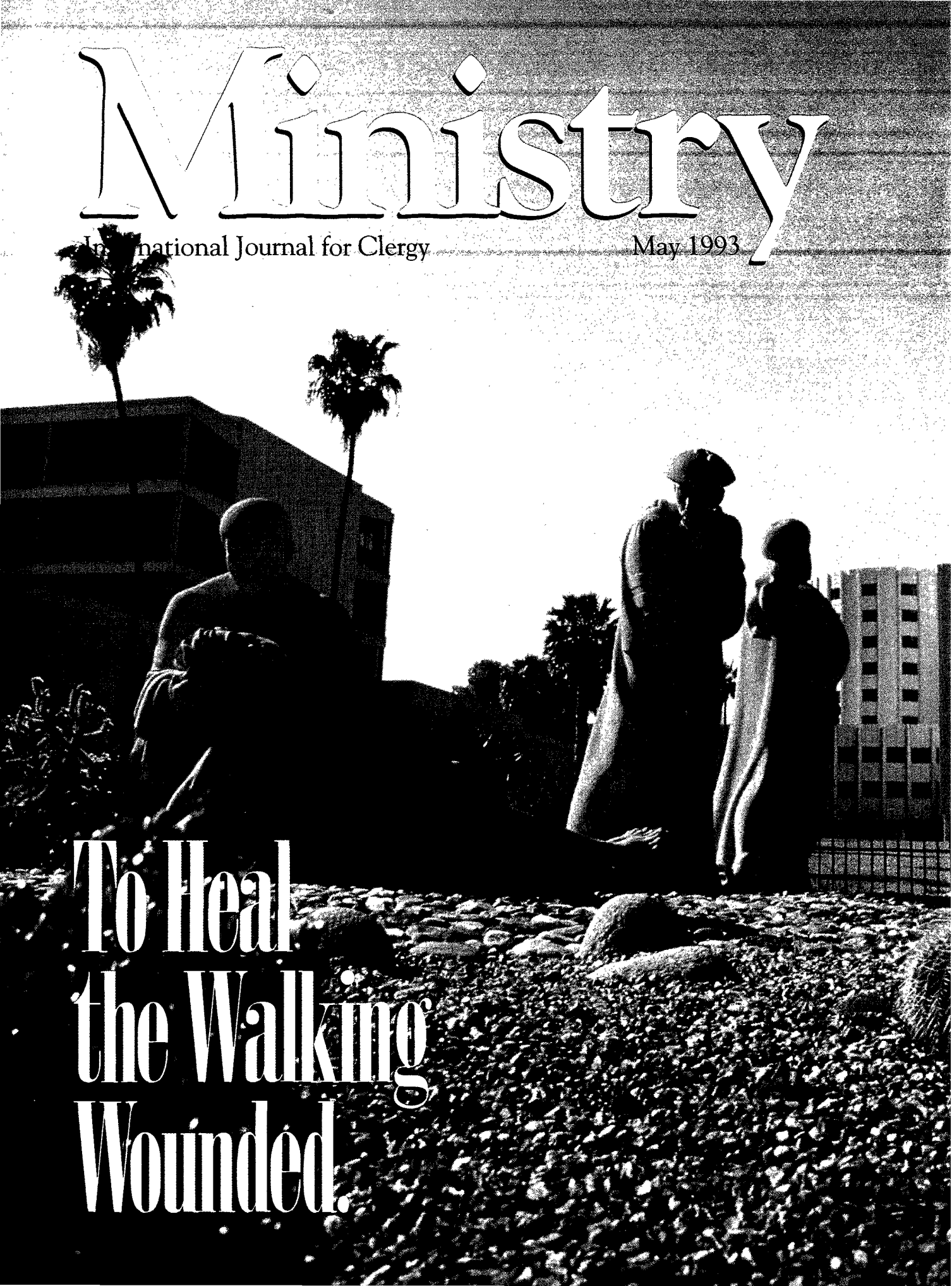


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

May 1993



To Heal  
the Walking  
Wounded.

## Where are the Spirit-filled leaders?

My heart was deeply arrested by the cover picture, as well as the question "Where Are the Spirit-filled Leaders?" (*Ministry*, January 1993). I am particularly excited that the Lord laid upon Ben Maxson the burden to write such an article.

As fine an article as this one is, it, of course, will not be enough to change the behavior of many of us who need much more spiritual growth. I found myself underlining quite a bit in the article and writing, "Yes, yes" in certain places. Oftentimes, however, I had to write, "How? How?"

I know that we are sensitive to programming and promotion. But aside from personal example and times when you say something like "We can foster and facilitate spiritual growth as we use these tools," I am convinced that we need to have more than a fine article like this one. We need plans and activities to lead our people into a major change in behavior when it comes to prayers.

I was fascinated by the quote from *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 188: "Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally." How do we do this uniting? What are materials that could be used? Obviously, we do not want just to program people, but I am convinced that we need to do more than just talk about it.—Lenard D. Jaacks, president, Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Bothell, Washington.

■ I especially appreciated Ben Maxson's article, "Where Are the Spirit-filled Leaders?" While stressing the point of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives as leaders, the article was Christ-centered and emphasized the importance of our personal relationship with Christ above even our work for Him.

As to revival, Maxson rightly

points out that we should not try to manufacture a revival, but that we can open ourselves personally and corporately to the workings of His Spirit.—Kenneth L. Hardin, pastor, Assemblies of God, Farwell, Michigan.

## Unfinished business

I am in complete agreement with James Cress's assertion, "I am convinced that church administration anywhere would take on a whole new flavor if it was bathed in the reality of those who were fresh from the field, while those who had served long and well were recirculated through congregations" ("Unfinished Business," January 1993). I came to that conclusion more than a decade ago when I heard a leader in the Ministerial Association of the General Conference admit that he could not go back into the pastorate. That was disconcerting! I least expected such a statement from one in the Ministerial Association!

Without casting reflections on any leader(s), I believe that many of our godly leaders (many of whom I love and respect and who are very capable) are limited in their ability to understand the pressures of pastoral ministry today because it has been years, even decades in some instances, since they served in pastoral ministry. Since pastoral ministry is in a state of continual change, one cannot be aware of current happenings unless one is practicing pastoral ministry. As soon as one leaves the ministry, the reality gap starts growing.

The church today, like never before, needs leaders at *all* levels fresh from pastoral ministry, committed to returning to ministry after no more than two terms in office. Such a process would breathe a new vitality of energy, realism, and fresh ideas into our church structure. Leaders fresh from pastoral ministry will focus on the local church, enabling it to achieve

its God-given task. The local church will also be greatly blessed by a pastor who has just recently served as a leader in the General Conference, division, union, or conference. As a result the work of God would be greatly strengthened in both the local church and the church structure.

If the local church and pastoral ministry is really on center stage in our church, why is there such a stigma for a leader on any level to pastor again? Why do leaders earn more than pastors? Why do people say as they did to Cress that his career was over when he had the uncommon courage to return to pastoral ministry?

We need a rotating door, as at the beginning of our movement. Leaders were not elected to term after term. Our church would be greatly strengthened by rotating not only leaders and pastors, but also religion teachers (undergraduate and graduate) through the churches, colleges, seminary, and leadership roles in the church structure. What an enormous breath of fresh air that would bring! For we are called not to be served, but to serve under Jesus, who is the head of the church.—Vialo Weis, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

## Pastors as professionals

Martin Weber states that "pastors are professionals," and that we expect professional service (January 1993). I agree, but I disagree with his statement that we should "provide them with professional tools."

When I go to a doctor, mechanic, or contractor, I deal with a professional and I expect professional service, but I don't provide them their stethoscope, wrenches, or hammer. That is not my responsibility. I expect them to come equipped for the occupation they have chosen.

Are we to believe that a minister who doesn't have access to a personal  
(Continued on page 30)

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

**It's always interesting** when husband and wife disagree in public—especially when they happen to be a pastoral couple. In “Year of the Pastor’s Wife, Too,” Sharon Cress testifies how her method of crowd control clashed with Jim’s—and what they did to salvage an embarrassing situation one Sabbath morning.

**Pastor, make that call!** Jim Cress confesses how he failed to heed his own counsel one night, thus sparking a discussion with Sharon followed by a confession session. As you will quickly discover, both Jim and Sharon don’t mind sharing lessons learned from their own shortcomings for the benefit of *Ministry* readers.

**Another interesting person** in the G.C. complex, besides Jim and Sharon, is Roland Hegstad. In his unique and compelling style, the longtime editor of *Liberty* magazine explains and illustrates how evangelistic preaching of Adventist doctrine can minister to human needs. “To heal the walking wounded” will assist you in using the “fulfillment approach” when presenting Bible truth. Incidentally, did you know that Roland was instrumental in establishing our PREACH project, which sends *Ministry* bimonthly to 60,000 non-Adventist clergy?

**Is there any word from the Lord?** Julia Vernon shares her frustration with well-intended but nonbiblical chaplaincy training. She also presents her vision for hospital pastoral care that deals sensitively yet forthrightly with life’s basic issues of sin and salvation.

*Martin Weber*

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# Year of the pastor's wife, too

Sharon Cress

**T**

he year 1993 has been designated as "Year of the Pastor." During this time our church has chosen to honor and reaffirm the value of pastors.

I'm gratified that our organization has placed this emphasis on pastoral ministry, and I believe we should uphold and support our pastors at every opportunity.

However, in this long-overdue affirmation, it is important not to overlook the other half of the ministerial team—the pastor's spouse. I doubt that anytime soon there will be a year named to honor her (I use "her" even though I realize there are some male pastors' spouses). Sometimes we take for granted the valuable contribution that the pastor's wife makes to the church family where she also serves (usually unpaid) with her husband.

With that in mind, as we celebrate this special year for pastors, let's also honor the pastor's spouse. And begin at home! Pastors, how about being a "help meet" to your wife? You can do this by being a *help* and by *meeting* her needs, too. I know from experience that "what goes around comes around." If you will expend the extra effort and energy to make her life happier, easier, and more affirmed, you will find the benefits boomerang back to you and you will reap the blessings! Think of it this way—you can affirm yourself by affirming your partner in ministry.

If you want some ideas to implement, almost any pastor's wife could give you

a detailed list of her personal needs. However, here are general areas that my friend Lori (also a pastor's wife) and I came up with that can help make this a better year for us—the pastors' wives!

## Realize the complexity of living in another person's shadow

Living with the resident "holy man" isn't the easiest position in the world. Pastors usually get ongoing accolades from parishioners for thought-provoking sermons, mission goals reached, budgets not exceeded, or well-presented classes and seminars. Their wives need such affirmation too. So verbally affirm your wife to your church family whenever you have the opportunity. Publicly value her. Hearing that my potluck roast was really delicious doesn't go nearly as far toward building my self-esteem as hearing my husband express to the congregation credit for an idea I came up with for his sermon illustration. This builds up my confidence and makes the shadow a little warmer.

Affirmation and support work both ways. When your wife hears stinging criticism about you from members too cowardly to approach you directly, she will defend you like a mother tiger. Do the same for her. If members find her less than their expectations, uphold her. Defend her. If you disagree with something she did, settle it in private.

I'll never forget the fateful Sabbath morning when *Mission Spotlight* was being projected in the sanctuary between Sabbath school and worship. Every few seconds the doors of the sanctuary were swinging open and the noise from fellowshiping members and exuberant children was making it impos-

sible for the people seated in the back of the church to hear the presentation.

I enlisted the brawn of two deacons and made it my responsibility to "guard" the doors and keep the excess noise confined to the lobby. Suddenly as people started backing up and more than 100 waiting worshipers filled the foyer to capacity, Jim's voice boomed above the commotion, "What's going on? Whose idea is this mess?" Not backing down, I stated my case that we were confining the confusion to the lobby to avoid disturbing those in the sanctuary who were trying to hear. In response to his protests, I insisted that we keep the doors closed until the presentation was finished. At that moment a hush fell over the crowd as they discovered it was *much* more interesting to watch as Jim and I "discussed" the pros and cons of my decision. And while it was clear he would have done it differently, he did support my initiative. Later I heard that our working relationship was as thoroughly chewed over as Sabbath lunch in many homes of our members.

## Put her first once in a while

Of course, emergencies come up, and pastors are overextended, overbooked, and overly responsive to the crisis situations of other people. However, any pastor's wife will tell you that the following are not emergencies: a hastily called deacons' meeting because Brother Bell can't come any other time to discuss a new trash-removal service, or spending the evening on the telephone calming Sister Straight because she didn't like the country flavor of last week's guest musician, Bubba-Joe. When scheduling conflicts occur, it

*Sharon Cress is the General Conference Coordinator for Shepherdess International.*

seems that the needs and plans of pastors' families are the first and easiest thing to cancel. Most of the time we try to be understanding even though the hurt may cut to our hearts. Think of the message you communicate to your family when they are always the ones crossed off your "must do" list when something "more important" comes up. Is your family really the most dispensable, unimportant entity to you? We tend to give up the things that we consider less important in favor of those we believe to be of higher significance.

Is this really the message you want your spouse and children to hear? Once in a while, try it the other way. Show us that we are, next to God, the most important element in your life. Cancel someone else for a change—at least someone who is not experiencing a real emergency. Let your wife know that your time with her and your family is a priority to you. And by your example, let your church family know that nurturing their

families should take priority in their busy schedules.

### Your most overused volunteer

Protect your wife's time and energies from being asked to fill every position no one else will accept. While the pastor's wife should set an example of an active Christian life, remember that she can burn out also. The realities of balancing small children, and too often a full-time career as well as myriad other responsibilities, eat up her time. She has only the same 24-hour days that anyone else is given. Make it clear to your church family that you do not expect her to show up at every "cat hanging."

And while you work toward getting the congregation under control in this matter, it wouldn't hurt to reassess your own expectations. Don't automatically ask her to do all your secretarial work, produce bulletins, and run church errands because you are too busy, forgetting that she also serves as your personal

message-taking service. If your wife is home most of the day, have a second ring-in telephone line added to your regular number. The small extra cost will be minimal expense for the peace she may experience. Encourage the members to call at specific hours or at the church office for routine matters.

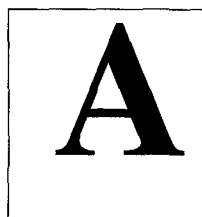
### Keep her informed

I despise being the last to know that Sister Jones had her new baby, that the board voted to redecorate the kindergarten room, that Brother Smith is seriously ill in the hospital, or even that Brother Bob had hair transplants. It is disconcerting for your wife to come to church on Sabbath morning to find everyone else talking about the latest news and know nothing about what is already an "old story." While the last thing you may want to do at the end of a long day is recite the various events you encountered, remember that women love hear-

*(Continued on page 30)*

# A salute to pastors

John M. Fowler



As a boy I was impressed by the enormity of my Anglican pastor: in size, in authority, and in status. He was the leader of the community. Politicians sought his advice. Educational leaders invited him to their functions. Businesspersons paid him due respects. For his flock, his word was the law. When he stood behind the highly elevated pulpit, I couldn't help being struck with the awesomeness of "him up there and us down here." In the first 12 years of my life, never once did I shake his hand or see him visit our home. Distance defined pastorhood for me, fear and deference our relationship.

But then came an experience that

changed my concept of pastor. A young and dynamic Adventist preacher pitched a tent in our mining town, not far from Bangalore, south India. He preached a gospel that was strange, frightening, and hopeful. Strange because we had never heard such biblical preaching before. The Bible leaped alive before our eyes. The books that we had never opened before confronted us with a message that history is meaningful, and that life is not the poet's "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing."<sup>1</sup> Daniel and Revelation moved out of a mysterious apocalyptic zoo into a loving, caring, relational gospel that told us God is in control of the direction of history, including my own.

His preaching also frightened us out of our lethargy. To hear him tell us that

we live between verses 13 and 14 of Revelation 6, or to watch him portray that three angels of Revelation 14 were flying over our town that very night, or to come to grips with a message of the impending return of Jesus and our accountability in the judgment hour was indeed frightening.

The absolute conviction with which he preached and the certainty with which he sounded the biblical trumpet drove me to repentance. While the onrushing crisis created fear, "fear not" was the main thrust of his message. He placed hope as central to Christian proclamation, and that has re-



mained the principal affirmation of my philosophy of life ever since. Hope in Jesus of the cross. Whatever this pastor preached, the cross was always there—to save, to challenge, to comfort, to live. He liked quoting Luther as he spoke of the eternal assurance of the cross: “When the merciful Father saw that we were being held under a curse, and that we could not be liberated from it by anything, He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: ‘Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that You pay and make satisfaction for them.’”<sup>2</sup>

*He was a proclaiming pastor.*

When this Adventist pastor came to our town, his preaching did cause quite a stir. But more than his powerful exposition of Scripture, his pastoral style left an indelible impression on youth. Prior to his arrival in town, pastorship was marked by distance, thunder, and anonymity. The pastor had his world, his job, and we had ours, and seldom did the two meet. But not with this dashing young pastor. He was a man for all seasons, a parson for all people. To him, visiting the parishioner’s home was as important as mounting the pulpit. As a teenager I looked eagerly forward to his visits. He came when my mother was ill. He came when my friend’s father had an accident. He came when there was no particular reason. He sat with us on the floor, around a kerosene lamp; opened the Bible and gave some of the most cherished studies I have ever heard in my life; sang songs with us; eagerly answered our questions ranging from biblical mystery to theological nonsense; and ate what little we had or what he himself had brought to share.

He was a people parson. The sick, the poor, the unjustly molded clay of this earth, the children—these were part of his caring passion. But then he also reached out for the other side of the human equation—the Nicodemuses, the Corneliuses, the Priscillas, and the Aquilas of our community. He embraced all of us, and He became a part of us. He believed that the “Lord wants men to forget themselves in the effort to save souls. Our life is worse than a failure if

we go through life without leaving waymarks of love and compassion. . . . God’s workers . . . are to bring into their efforts the goodness and benevolence and love of Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

*He was an incarnational pastor.*

Three years after my first encounter with this pastor, I entered the final year of my high school, and became eligible to enroll in the school’s debating society. On one occasion the quarterly debate focused on the issue Is honesty the best policy? Just turned 15, and at the peak of intellectual arrogance not uncommon to that age, I registered for the debate. The auditorium was filled with faculty and students. My four opponents were brilliant students, all of them open agnostics, and particularly antagonistic to Christian values. They argued their points well and showed the dilemma of moral uprightness in a society of hypocrisy and corruption.

When it came my turn to speak, I had a simple argument to put forth: History vindicates that moral uprightness is a possibility in a polluted environment. And I spoke of Jesus, my recent discovery. Then I turned to Gandhi. Someone from the audience heckled, “You are talking of gods and saints. Tell us about people.” Instantly, I burst out, “Yes, I know of someone in our town.” And then I named my pastor. A few in the audience who knew him clapped their hands. I didn’t win the debate, but to a teenager and to his fellow church members, here was a pastor who was a model—morally and spiritually. Tough in standards, tender in compassion, generous in giving, stingy in self-indulgence, quick to forgive, going the second mile, our pastor exemplified that love that “brings with it its own secret joys, and desires no other reward.”<sup>4</sup>

I finished high school with a state scholarship to go for engineering or medicine or any other profession. And when my father asked what I planned to choose, I answered without any hesitation, “I want to be like my pastor.” “The proper authority of spiritual leaders,” writes James Means, “lies in their spiritual authenticity, the validity of the Word of God, and the ministry of God’s Spirit demonstrated in their lives. Good spiritual leaders have enormous ethical power as models, instructors, and guides.”<sup>5</sup> Such a spiritual example was my pastor.

*He was a modeling pastor.*

If his parishioners perceived him as a model, he himself looked upon his ministry as a means of service and nurture. No one who ever attended any of his services—be it a midweek prayer meeting or a Sabbath worship service or a cottage devotional—came away without a transcendental charge from God and His Word. He was a diligent student of the Bible and a believer in the bended knee. That combination ensures both power and passion, and with that He nurtured his church well.

Climbing the ladder of hierarchical power within the denominational structure was never his pursuit, but when he did receive an invitation to be the secretary of the union, he found it was natural to use that office to strengthen evangelism and nurture in unentered areas. Administrative duties did not diminish his enthusiasm for the pulpit, nor his fervor for the pastoral call. Was it Shelly who said that “power, like a desolating pestilence, pollutes whate’er it touches”? Well, the pestilence never hit my pastor, for he tempered power by servanthood, and he never let executive leadership tempt him away from his primary commitment to God and His people. He never forgot his ordination oath that he would be a shepherd and a servant first and foremost.

*He was a servant pastor.*

Young he came, and young he died. Thirty years after I first met him, it fell to my lot as a minister to lay my pastor to rest until the dawn. In this Year of the Pastor I honor the memory of Pastor D. S. David, a servant of God whose ministry molded the lives of many in India. Even as I do, I thank God for our valiant pastors around the world whose ministry, marked by proclamation, incarnation, modeling, and servanthood, touches and shapes the lives of so many every day, not just for now but for eternity. ■

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, scene 5, lines 26-28.

<sup>2</sup> *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1963), vol. 26, p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 629.

<sup>4</sup> John Stott, *Essential Living* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1978), p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> James E. Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 120.

# To heal the walking wounded

Roland R. Hegstad

**Evangelistic preaching is fulfillment preaching—meeting a human need.**



*Roland R. Hegstad is editor of Liberty, a magazine of religious freedom.*

**S**he looked like a veteran teacher—no-nonsense eyes, graying hair pulled into an unpretentious bun, tiny age lines between a thin nose and thinner lips. But I learned that she lacked enough confidence to teach a Sabbath school class. She had dropped out of college in her 20s; a marriage had ended in divorce. In a moment of candor she told me: “As a child I could never do anything right. My mother never commended anything I did. Intellectually I know what happened to me, but emotionally I’m a casualty.”

He was slim, tall, professional appearing. I overheard him speaking to a friend as he left the Sabbath service at a suburban church. “I keep wondering why I come back. It’s the guilt. I leave the church with more than I brought.”

Look over your congregation and you’ll see them in every pew: Worthless and Guilt sitting self-effacingly, seeming to disappear into the woodwork when witness is called for. When they disappear from the congregation, they’re hardly missed. Few needs mount a greater challenge to the pulpit ministry. How should we respond?

I found the answer in what I call fulfillment preaching—meeting parishioners’ needs in such a way that they can achieve their potential in Christ. If you’ll find a pew, I’ll show you. And if you’ll meet me in the foyer afterward, I’ll let you listen to the testimonials of the

“walking wounded.”

First, however, let’s look at key elements in Christ’s approach to broken victims of sin. What needs does He address? With what results?

**Christ’s mission: to make humanity whole**

In His inaugural address at the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus said His mission included healing the brokenhearted and preaching deliverance to the captives. Their regret, their mourning, and their disheartened spirit were to be met and overcome by “good tidings” (Isa. 52:7, KJV). The result: praise and gladness. All this that God might be glorified.

Remember the parable of the good Samaritan? Christ affirmed in that story that our ministry must meet the needs of the bruised and the wounded in our midst. Christian ministry cannot pass by on the other side, rushing to serve the routines of a theoretic religion. It must put on, as did the Samaritan, flesh and blood, address human distress, and bring about a total healing.

In addressing human needs, in pointing fellow sinners to completeness in Christ,<sup>1</sup> I am following the prescription of the Great Physician.

Psychologists speak of human needs that must be met if we are to be whole. In addition to food, water, clothing, and housing, these needs include love, companionship, a meaningful philosophy of life, security, serenity (peace of heart), recognition as a person (self-esteem, self-respect), and freedom.<sup>2</sup> When con-



structing a sermon, I visualize these needs incarnate sitting before me in church. And in the name of Christ I extend His invitation: "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6, KJV).

Two incidents, involving a paralytic and the Samaritan woman, illustrate key aspects of Christ's fulfillment ministry to broken victims:

1. *The therapy of sonship.* Before healing the man suffering from palsy, Jesus removed his guilt and consequent self-loathing. "Son [explore the dimensions of status implicit in *that* word!], be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you" (Matt. 9:2).<sup>\*</sup> Similarly, He elevated the status of the Samaritan woman by speaking to her in defiance of social convention.

Also, in His conversation with her, Jesus emphasized

2. *The primacy of relationship.* When Jesus revealed His knowledge of her sordid past, she sought to divert His probing by introducing a doctrinal controversy—where one should worship, at Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem. Doctrine is important: it gives us insights into God's character. But it is not more important than relationship. In ministering compassion to the woman, Jesus said, in effect, "Woman, the sinful life you have lived *without* Me is not so important as the fulfilled life you may live *in* Me."

Her lifestyle also revealed

3. *The inadequacy of sin.* The Samaritan woman had sought to fill her needs for love, belonging, self-esteem through sin (a counterfeit satisfaction). Sin seeks to satisfy legitimate needs, needs God Himself put in us, in an illegitimate way—that is, in a way contrary to the laws that govern our well-being. Sin, short-term, may meet a physical need; in some cases, a mental need. But it falls short of meeting the needs of a physical-mental-spiritual being. In fact, one definition of sin (Old Testament, *chata*, New Testament, *hamartia*) is "miss the mark"—as when an arrow falls short of the target.

Jesus, to the contrary, emphasizes the full life—one in which our needs are met on every level. Because we are not just bodies, stocks and bonds can't satisfy our need for spiritual security. So He assures us that nothing can pluck us from His hand. "Do not fear," He says to the insecure, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke

12:32). The respect Christ showed the Samaritan woman, combined with His acceptance of her despite her past, had an interesting result: she rushed into town saying, "Come, see a Man who revealed my past! He must be the Messiah!" (See John 4:29.) As in other instances, fulfillment resulted in witness—a consequence that would enliven many congregations.

The therapy of sonship, the primacy of relationship, the inadequacy of sin (which translates into a testimonial for the fulfilled life)—each is worth many a sermon. And, I should add, many a *doctrinal* sermon. If, however, you remain skeptical of fulfillment preaching, let me pause here for station identification: Sonship begins at Calvary; relationship starts with the new birth, and provides a powerful corrective for legalism; and the realization that sin cannot meet our needs opens our heart to the multidimensional ministry of Him who offers to make us whole.

Now, let me invite you to slip into a back pew if you're at least willing to be convinced, and to sit up front if you just want to rejoice in what you've already found convincing. My sermon title, "What's in a Name?" is listed in the bulletin. What doctrine will it communicate? Not the state of the dead, not the Sabbath, nor baptism, nor stewardship. Perhaps not what some of you consider doctrine. But doctrine nevertheless. In the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, you'll find my subject under three headings: "The Doctrine of God," "The Doctrine of Man," and "The Doctrine of Salvation." I shall not, of course, exhaust these subjects in one sermon.

All doctrines reveal how God wishes to be perceived. Says the book: They reveal "what we believe about His love, kindness, mercy, grace, justice, benevolence, purity, righteousness, and peace. . . . Every doctrine, every belief, must reveal the love of our Lord. . . . Christ-centered doctrine performs three obvious functions: first, it edifies the church; second, it preserves the truth; and third, it communicates the gospel in all its richness. True doctrine calls for far more than mere belief—it calls for action."<sup>3</sup> I invite you to look for these elements, these functions, and these calls in my sermon, "What's in a Name?"

I step to the pulpit, open my Bible to Revelation 2:17, and read: "I will give him [who overcomes] a white stone, and

on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

## Introduction

*[With fulfillment objectives in mind, I'll touch context (Revelation as apocalyptic literature) only in the introduction. Brackets encompass explanations or condensed material. Watch for elements that evoke felt needs and awareness of accepting counterfeit satisfactions. I'll begin by projecting my needy listeners into a victory scenario.]*

"Use your imagination to step with me onto the sea of glass. See yourself standing there with other overcomers. The real you. No mask anymore. And in that transcendent glory you find it hard even to remember the defeats, the humiliations, the loneliness of sometimes being you.

"And then Jesus steps forward, and you see mirrored in His eyes all the love of the universe, time without end, pouring over you. And in those nail-scarred hands is a white stone with a new name written.

"There may not really be a white stone. The book of Revelation is apocalyptic literature. But there will be a new name, as many verses document. A name that represents the real you. The unique you. (Fingerprints, signatures, and DNA prove there is no one just like you in all the world.)

"Ever since our first parents put on fig leaves, we've all been wearing masks, hiding. But God wants to restore us to our authentic self. And someday He'll have a new name for us. What will it mean, that new name? What's in a name?

"Let's think deep thoughts about names. About yours and mine. We'll explore (I) the importance of your name, and (II) the character, (III) identity, and (IV) potential involved in it.

## I. Names are important to God

*[In this section I'll establish God's benevolent involvement in the life of every person. And I'll step into the sermon—an important element in any sermon and even more so in fulfillment preaching, which must be relational.]*

"Some Eastern religions teach that the individual means nothing. That our destiny is to attain nothingness by merging into the great cosmic all. Happiness



will be attained, we are assured, when [use names from the congregation] are no more. When all that's left is a great homogenized lump of nothingness.

"But that's not the scenario God projects. Every person, however little known, is important to Him. Most everyone's favorite verse is John 3:16: 'God so loved the world that He gave . . .' But I'm even more thrilled by the idea that He loves even Roland R. Hegstad. [Here I speak of my own childhood in a home so humble it didn't even have a number—all it had was a location.] God knew me before I uttered my first squalling demand for attention. I surprised Mother by coming two months early—but I didn't surprise God.

*[I quote Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 45:1-4; and Genesis 17:19, 21—all to show that even before the cradle, God knows us.]*

"He knew me before I was born. And when the doctor laid me in a shoe box on the newspaper-covered kitchen table, when he told my folks not to expect me to live, that I was too small—under three pounds—God knew that, too. In fact, He didn't see only a baby whose survival seemed in doubt. He saw me here today. And you, too—every one of you. And He saw us on the sea of glass with a new name written, a name with a meaning that penetrates the secret coding of our DNA, that reflects our victories over hereditary tendencies and habits. And someday God will call us by that new name, and we'll walk through the fields together. We'll walk and talk as good friends should and do. We'll clasp our hands; our voices will ring with laughter. All because names are important to God.

## II. Names are indicative of character

*[My argument—incorporating a facet of the doctrine of God—is this: God's name Yahweh stands for integrity. It assures us that we can count on Him. What does your name stand for? If you've taken the name of Christ, your traits may be identified as His.]*

"A name tells us something about a person. The name is the person, and the person is the name.

"The Hebrew word for 'name,' *shem*, can be translated 'person.' To a Hebrew a name indicates (1) the character of the person named, (2) the thoughts or emo-

tions of the one giving the name, or (3) circumstances at the time the name was given.

"When a person passed a significant test of character, his name might be changed. Thus Jacob, a crook who cheated his brother, became Israel, overcomer or prevailer.

"Aspects of God's character are con-

veyed through His names. He is called El Shaddai, most often translated 'God Almighty.' But the best translation may be 'Bountiful Giver,' for whenever this name is used, the verse speaks of God pouring out blessings. God chose to reveal a new dimension of His name Yahweh in connection with bringing His people out of their Egyptian slavery. 'I



# Rejoice With Me!

## *Project to Reclaim Inactive & Former Members* **Pastor's Check List for Success**

1. Set an objective for your church — how many names will you collect? How will you effectively minister to those who return.
2. Establish a plan with your church leaders. Appoint elders to visit each inactive member to invite their return. Place them on your mailing list.
3. Immerse the whole process in prayer. Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God! Begin an intercessory prayer group in your congregation. Remember, *Prayer Works!*
4. Preach spirit-filled sermons that meet needs. Train your members how to relate to returning members and guests. Give an opportunity for decision after every sermon.
5. Make reclamation a spiritual priority. Emphasize its importance to your members again and again. Repeat the name-collection process over and over — at least six times! **Explain that all names of inactive or former members should be submitted from wherever they live, not just your community.**
6. Submit all names through your conference so they can be included in the North American Division mass mailing.
7. Plan special events to which you can invite both guests and former members. Many will come for a special occasion who initially will not promise to attend every week.
8. View each returning member through heaven's eyes. Remember, each inactive member is someone's loved one!

am Yahweh,' He said, 'I made my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan. . . . Say this, then, to the sons of Israel, "I am Yahweh. I will free you of the burdens which the Egyptians lay on you. I will release you . . . with my arm outstretched. . . . And I will be your God"' (Ex. 6:2-7, Jerusalem).

"God's very name, then, stands for never-changing purpose, for integrity. To know God is to know the reality of His promises. It shall be. It cannot be otherwise. It is as sure as His name.

"And what about your name? What does it stand for?

*[I examine some names: Hildegard, Elizabeth, Wendy—and a selection from the congregation. I refer to people who have given their name to a trait of character: Rodomont—a braggart or boaster; Pollyanna—perpetual optimist; Maverick—a nonconformist (the name of a rancher who refused to brand his cattle); Quisling . . .]*

"Could it be that your name too may become synonymous with your character? No, you may never make the dictionary, but the neighborhood may think of you when someone mentions—what? Happiness? Kindness? Gossip? Complaining?

"If you've taken the name Christian, your traits of character may be linked with God's name. His objective for us is that we give Him glory, that is, demonstrate His genuine goodness to the world He came to save.

"Names are indicative of character. And so also will be that new name 'which no one knows except him who receives it.'

### III. Names help us realize who we are

*[Here I have several objectives. One is to penetrate facades. Another, to suggest that we lose identity by letting others define us. Another, to probe self-images. I have prepared my listeners to believe God's promises are as sure as His name. Now I want to bring them assurance of His unconditional love and grace while they are yet sinners. And finally, I shall ask: If, with all your blemishes, the Father counted your life of more value than that of His Son, can you not then accept yourself?]*

"We don't always know who we are. We wear masks. We put on masks to

escape the responsibility of being us. Or to gain acceptance through an image that we think others will like better than the real us.

"So we wear masks like Diligent Student, Faithful Wife, Pious Parson, Erudite Editor, Respectable Teacher, Committed Christian.

"What's wrong with wearing such benevolent masks?

"Edgar Allan Poe tells the story of the parson who wore a mask that he refused to take off. When he died, his curious friends slipped it off, only to find that the parson was faceless.

"Wear a mask too long, and you may forget what you're really like and become faceless. Or you may set up such a conflict between what you are and the mask you wear that your personality may split [example: *Three Faces of Eve*].

"We play games until we delude ourselves. We lose identity by letting people define us. By running with the crowd. That's what they were doing in Pergamos [*Here I give a textual exposition that shows why God's warning is warranted.*]. In the book *Roots* the significance of Kunta Kinte's being made to call himself Toby may be missed. It is this: While he was able to define himself he couldn't be anyone's slave.

"Have you faced up to the problems that motivate masquerades? Ask yourself: Have I accepted myself fully? Have I accepted my gifts? my limitations? Have I accepted my lot in life? my sex? my age? Have I accepted my status as a single? my financial situation? my health? the way I look? In short, do I accept what I am?

"A young man heard his folks arguing. They were dredging up old issues. They were blaming each other for his birth. Mother had forgotten to take the pill. He was an accident. Unwanted. So he tried suicide.

"What was the meaning of his life when he was not supposed to be born? If his parents didn't want him, who did?

"Jesus did. He knew what it meant to be unwanted, unaccepted. After all, who really believed the story about God being His Father! It took the intervention of an angel to get Joseph to go through with the wedding after Mary told him she was pregnant. And at the end those to whom He had come tried to rid Him out of this world, on a cross!

"What a heart He must have for the unwanted. The unwanted child. The

unloved wife. The rejected suitor or husband. The lonely. How acutely He feels our rejection, our loneliness, our pain.

"Thank God that Jesus came down to show us what it means to be wanted! To be loved! To be accepted as part of His great universal family! At Bethlehem, Love came down and walked among us, Love with a name above all names—Jesus.

"He came when we were no-names in the universe, the victims of child abuse from our father the devil. And He adopted us into His family! Gave us the legal right to be called His sons and daughters—His heirs! And, thank God, He gave us the power to live up to the family name. [*Jesus says of Pergamos: "You hold fast to My name."*]

"Why shouldn't I accept myself when Jesus accepts me? How do I know that Jesus loves me? The cross. How do I know that the Father accepts me? The cross. How do I know my real worth? The cross.

"That beautiful book on the life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, emphasizes our value: 'The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name.'<sup>4</sup>

"It is this understanding of our value in Christ that enables us to accept ourselves. And only then can we accept and love others. So it was with Jesus. Jesus knew Himself. He knew He was God's Son. So can we be God's children. The virtue does not lie in us, but in Him. Our salvation does not depend on us but on the righteousness of our Saviour. The Father counted our sins to be His; then He poured (the Greek meaning) His righteousness into us (2 Cor. 5:21). And when the Father looks down on us, He does not see the vileness of the sinner, but rather the likeness of His beloved Son!

"So with John, 'consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called "children of God"—and that is not just what we are called, but what we *are*. . . . Here and now, my dear friends, we *are* God's children' (1 John 3:1, 2, Phillips).

# The fulfillment approach to three doctrines

Roland R. Hegstad

## The second coming of Christ

Yes, let's emphasize the certainty of His return. But then consider the ambivalence of our response. Use your imagination to sit in the pew with your parishioners. Probe for their unspoken responses; consider and address the felt needs that fuel them. Here are several likely responses. A teenager: "I'd sure like to have a sexual experience before Jesus gets back; up there, after all, we've got to live like brothers and sisters." Anyone: "If only I could be sure I'm ready." Another, in good health and living the good life: "I'm a Christian, but it isn't easy to trade the known for the unknown." A wife or husband: "We won't get to have children there, will we? Yes, come back, Lord Jesus, but don't rush it!"

How do we meet these needs? 1. Provide a meaningful philosophy of the life to come (documented with what we do know of the afterlife). 2. Add assurance of salvation, perhaps linked with Christ's present ministry on our behalf; emphasize that it is the God-man who represents us before the throne of God. 3. Say that while here He experienced our needs, and that He knows just the kind of life we will most enjoy. 4. Speak of the love we lavish on our spouse or our children—it is an even greater love that impels Jesus to share the riches of His glory with us. Perhaps fulfillment preaching could better be titled sensitivity preaching. Or empathy preaching—in which two hearts, the preacher's and the parishioner's, tug at one load.

## The Sabbath

Easy. "The Sabbath was made for

man (Mark 2:27)." What does this mean? What if Christ's response had been "Man was made for the Sabbath"? Explore the distinction between the two and you will discover a magnificent facet of the way God relates to the happiness of His creation. You will also discover a corrective to legalism in presenting the Sabbath doctrine.

Explore Christ's Sabbath ministry: Is it significant that a number of His recorded miracles were performed on the Sabbath? What does Hebrews 4 tell us about Sabbath rest? To what need will this emphasis minister? Set a Sabbath sermon within the structure of Isaiah 61, which reveals our Saviour's relationship to broken victims. How may our ministry as repairers of the breach (Isa. 58:12) apply to the relational chasm between us and our Creator?

## State of the dead

When early in my ministry I preached on death, my objective was to prove a point: the dead sleep. They are neither in heaven nor in hell. They sleep. Period! So I figuratively hammered nails into coffins.

For a fulfillment text on the state of the dead, choose John 10:10: "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." In fulfillment preaching, the text must meet the need before the listener is prepared to accept the doctrine to be expounded.

When preaching on death, try filling the need for a meaningful philosophy of life.

1. Such a philosophy addresses the Why? Why did my baby die? Why were we at the intersection at precisely that moment? Embodied in the response may be the laws governing the universe, the wages of sin on this one rebel world, and the rules of the game. Point out that the right question is not Why? but Who? Who brought death? Who offers us eternal life? Does God always answer a prayer for healing? Some say no. Some say that He always answers, but that the answer may be no. A better response: He always says yes to the plea of His child for healing. But He may say "Wait, child; sleep awhile before I do it on resurrection morning."

2. A meaningful philosophy of life embraces the totality of one's being—physical, mental, spiritual. By cooperating with the laws of God governing health, we may not only extend our life but also enhance our happiness.

3. A meaningful philosophy of life addresses the phenomenon of death. Is humankind's future eternal oblivion? Some trees live thousands of years; does God love them more than human beings, the crowning act of His Creation? Try I Corinthians 15; how many felt-need truths can you find in this chapter? How can we ensure that we shall emerge victorious from the valley of the shadow?

The preceding lines of thought will lead to other felt needs. Freedom: When Christ frees us from the fear of death, we are able to address and to determine our future. Security: Our Saviour holds the keys to eternal happiness, and He's never found a lock they didn't fit!

"As God's children, we must not let others define us. Our Father is King of kings and Lord of lords. And He's coming back for us soon. His very name assures us of that. And we have a heritage beyond the stars and an appointment on the sea of glass, and a new name written.

#### IV. The potential in your name

"Our text hints at the potential, for it suggests that your true identity is a great treasure, to be fully realized only at the

last day when all things are to be made whole. And that is what God wants to do for you—to make you at last fully and finally yourself.

"But even in the here and now God sees in you a potential that He can use to bring glory to His name.

*[I point out that few of us achieve our potential. I recite names copied from the World War I Memorial in Ypres, Belgium. Then I ask: "Was there a Jonas*

*Salk among the 250,000 young men who died in the Ypres salient between 1914 and 1918? Someone who would have conquered cancer? A Martin Luther King, Jr.? A political leader? A great evangelist? What was the potential in their names? What is the potential in yours?" I step back into the sermon to tell of my resisting God's call to service. I emphasize the fear I had of public speaking, my inability to see how I could be of use to God. "But God saw something in me that I didn't. And who are we, the creatures of His hand, to argue with God? The God who made me, who knew me before my members were formed, who took me off the kitchen table of that little shack in Oregon, blew life into my lungs, and invited me to take His name." ]*

"No, we may not change the world. But what of our home? Our school? Our neighborhood? Is there someone walking its sidewalks a little less lonely because of you? What of your church? What is your response, you who are called by His name?

"To take His name means more than we sometimes realize. *[What were the consequences of holding fast God's name in Pergamos?]* It means we are to accept all that name stands for of character, integrity, spirit, audacity, sacrifice, love, service, obedience.

"Maybe, just maybe, you've thought you could just opt out of this great cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan. Maybe you've thought that one person more or less doesn't matter. But war isn't just masses of planes, cannon, thundering, armies marching. War is a foxhole. Your own little piece of shell-pocked real estate. Dirt in your hair, smoke in your eyes, the sword of the Spirit in your hand. Little do we know the impact one well-fought foxhole may have in the cosmic conflict raging about us.

"Consider Mr. Job. Beings from other worlds had discussed his faithfulness. Satan had charged that Job would curse God if things went bad for him. What if Job had opted out? He didn't know that the theater of the universe was filled to watch his performance. Standing room only up there. A review being written that would thrill audiences for 30 centuries and more.

"All he knew were boils and pain and financial disaster and personal tragedy, not to mention insensitive friends who thought he was being punished for being

In the "forbidden zone"!

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a hypocrite. He never heard the cheers and shouts from a million worlds as the production he starred in moved toward its climax:

*"You can do it, Job! Hang in there!"*

"He never heard the intake of breath across the galaxies as they waited to see whether he would curse God. And when his words came at last—'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him'—the universe erupted! Hundreds of worlds wobbled in orbit at the shock wave of cheers for him! His name on a billion lips: 'Job! Job! You did it! You brought glory to God's name!' The name Job means 'one persecuted.' But I wonder whether, on that white stone, his new name will mean 'one vindicated.'"

"God too seeks vindication through the rest of those who are called by His name. The Revelator's appeal to give God glory (Rev. 14:7) translates into permitting Him to give free expression to His genuine goodness through our witness. Yes, you too are part of something big. The universe out there knows you. Shed a tear and far-off worlds weep with you.

"They're all counting on you, you see. Counting on you to do your part. To live up to your name. To live up to God's name. And it may seem so little—a kind word, a helping hand, words wisely spoken, a quiet No under temptation, a church position well filled, a willing spirit. It may seem so little, so very little . . .

"But wars are not won on big maps.

Wars are won on little beachheads. In personal foxholes. And a record is being kept of the fierce encounters; and somewhere the victories—*your* victories—are being inscribed on a white stone by a laser beam of holy light.

"And there awaits you a new name written, a name that stands for victory over synthetic self, a name that shall witness eternally to the loveliness of the real you—the you who dared to say, 'Yes, Jesus, I'll take Your name.'"

*[We sing "If Any Little Word of Mine," and I ask whether I may pray especially for one who wishes to make a commitment to take Christ's name, and then for those who wish to recommit themselves to the values for which it stands. Many respond, and after prayer I invite all to walk out as befits sons and daughters of the King. You and I meet in the foyer just as Sister Worthless and Brother Guilty come by.]*

"You know," Brother Guilty says introspectively, "week after week I've walked out of here with a load of guilt. Today I'm walking out standing tall. I'm a child of the King! There's royal blood in my veins. The universe knows me, and God loves me!"

Sister Worthless tells us she's always loved God but could never really believe He loves her. "I can't tell you what God has done for me this morning," she says. "Suddenly all the years my parents told

me I was worthless have faded away. For the first time I know my heavenly Parent loves me without reserve."

There's more: Two weeks later she stops to tell me that she has purchased four tapes of "What's in a Name?" She's listened to the sermon a half dozen times and shared the other tapes with friends. As I said, witness follows worth. When we know who we are, we are freed to love. And that's fulfillment. ■

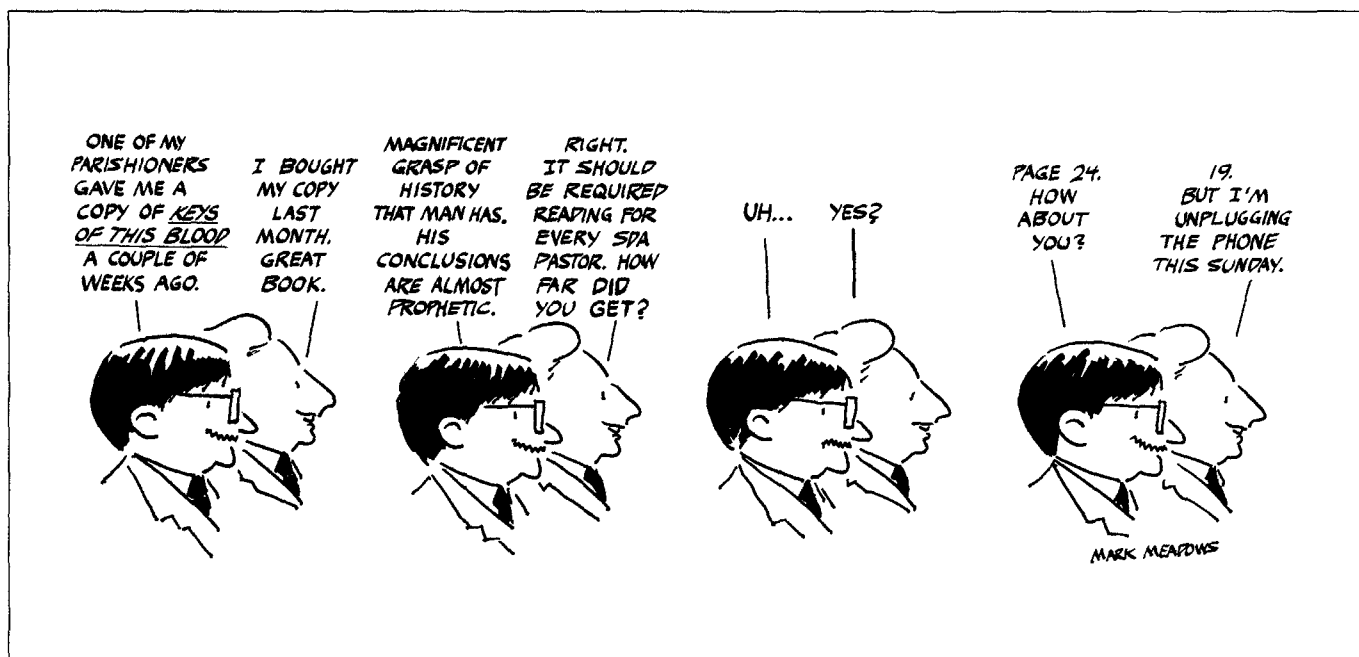
\* Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations in this article are from The New King James Version.

<sup>1</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See Silvano Arieti, *The Will to Be Human* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (Washington, D.C.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), pp. vii, viii.

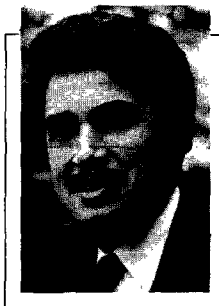
<sup>4</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 668.



# Lurking legalism and liberalism

**Martin Weber**

**Even pastors are vulnerable to both extremes.**



*Martin Weber is an associate editor of Ministry.*

**T**wo of Christianity's most persistent and perplexing problems are legalism and liberalism. Pastors must deal with them daily in solving church controversies, in counseling confused members, in evangelism, and even in their own spiritual struggles. Maximizing one's ministry and personal faith requires insight into the legalism and liberalism that lurk everywhere.

Liberalism is religion that maximizes love and minimizes law; legalism majors in law and tends to minor in love. By not realizing how the living God's love involves keeping His commandments—and vice versa—both liberals and legalists have a superficial concept of religion. Both groups are skating on thin ice, yet they are true Christians if their faith, though shallow, is sincere. The blood of Christ covers honest ignorance—but not willful blindness (see Acts 17:30; John 9:41).

Intense religiosity isn't necessarily sincerity. The clergy who crucified Christ retained zeal while succumbing to hypocrisy. Spiritual fervor can be a smoke screen for secret sin and also an attempt to atone for bad habits with good works. Only God knows when legalists and liberals go so far as to forfeit what feeble faith they might have. The church at Galatia crossed that line into damnation, having turned away from "the grace of Christ, to a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6).<sup>\*</sup> In abandoning their faith to legalism, they were taking the high road to hell: "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace"

(Gal. 5:4). Zeal is no substitute for faith. When ignorance becomes willful unbelief, people lose their salvation.

## **Lukewarm legalism and liberalism**

Many legalists and liberals have a superficial spiritual commitment that accompanies their superficial concept of God's law and grace. Jesus said of them: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. 15:8). Lukewarm legalists and liberals are more religious than they are secular, yet their worship is more an exercise than an experience. They claim Jesus as Saviour while not knowing how much they need His salvation. They sing about a closer walk with Christ when, more than that, they should be clinging to Him for their very lives.

Lukewarm liberalism is not outright worldliness, but a subtle yet serious undermining of behavioral principles to which faith must remain faithful. Lukewarm legalism even more deceptively compromises Christianity, because it vigorously promotes God's law while shunning fanatical extremes—yet it neglects the caring and compassion that are the essence of true commandment keeping.

Lukewarm legalists and liberals don't have the commitment to join the self-denying ministries that represent their respective beliefs; they would rather sit back and send donations (tax-deductible, of course). Lukewarm liberals talk about following Christ's loving example like Mother Teresa, but they would rather applaud her than go and do likewise. Lukewarm legalists also speak much about following Christ's example, in



terms of fulfilling the law's requirements as He did. But they fail to devote themselves entirely to the high standards they champion.

### **Legalism and liberalism in us all**

All of us are vulnerable to both legalism and liberalism; in fact, to some extent both legalism and liberalism afflict every human being, saved or unsaved. Depending upon one's personality, environment, and attitude, there may be a predisposition that puts either legalism or liberalism on center stage—yet the other is also there, hiding behind the curtains.

Even straitlaced legalists experience wild fantasies that they dare not indulge or even acknowledge. And on the other hand, reprobates despite their sinful lifestyle have invisible, unfulfilled yearnings for legalism. Their conscience may be rusted and warped, but it still works. When particularly troubled by conviction, they sin with a frenzy, seeking to silence God's still small voice. In their sober moments they make sporadic resolutions to overcome addictive or abusive habits, hoping to work their way back to the Father's house from the playpens and pigpens of their far-off land. But they are deterred by the steep stairway to God they think they would have to climb.

Many fear they could never be forgiven, or if they got past that hurdle they could never walk across the tightrope of divine expectations for daily living. Thus hopeless, they remain helplessly trapped by the latent legalism that often smolders underneath the surface of sinfulness.

Liberalism and legalism may both be active, often in binge/purge behavior. Guilt from an ice-cream feast might launch a week of atonement fruit fast. Extremes of both liberalism and legalism sometimes get entangled in an incongruous mess. One fundamentalist whose family I counseled assigned his wife daily readings in health and dress testimonies, forcing her to adopt rigid and outmoded standards. Meanwhile he enjoyed the charms of well-adorned girlfriends and regularly raped his daughter.

Most church members wouldn't descend to such degradation, but all of us suffer cravings for both legalism and liberalism. Without the moment-by-moment intervention of the Holy Spirit, unenlightened conscience pulls us toward legalism, and unrestrained flesh

pulls us toward liberalism. We may train ourselves not to heed these cravings or to suppress one kind beneath the other, but the fact remains that both legalism and liberalism in varying proportions attract each of us. Despite disagreements about theology and differences in lifestyle, we have much more in common with fellow believers and lost sinners than we realize or might want to admit.

Unaware of their shared weaknesses, proponents of legalism and liberalism view the errors of the opposing camp and thank God they don't participate. Their continual contention is fueled by extremism on both sides. For example, some liberals in the name of love repudiate doctrine. Sabbath rest becomes just a vacation from the office and classroom. To many of them, hell and the judgment are outmoded myths. Their social gospel marches in step with secular humanism. In contrast, some legalists are so zealous for doctrine that they are devoid of God's love. They live in the desert at Mount Sinai. Their lives are like the burning bush, but with the flame of God's blessing gone out. Not satisfied sin's dead leaves are burned off, they also break off life's innocent branches. Finally they become an unadorned stump of stern spirituality.

### **Christ-centered legalists and liberals**

We must not condemn extremist legalists and liberals; many are tragically sincere. They may even devoutly follow Jesus as their example. Christ-centered legalists pursue a relationship with Him mostly for the sake of strength to fulfill the law as He did so they can be saved. Trusting in their own attainments rather than in Christ's accomplishments on their behalf, they unwittingly compete with His substitutionary merits. It matters not whether they depend on their own strength or on Christ's; the fact is they are trying to become good enough to go to heaven. This is legalism, Christ-centered legalism. Its victims want to love Jesus with all their hearts, but they worry more about their own love for Him than they rejoice in His love for them.

Christ-centered liberals also seek a relationship with Jesus, more for His comfort and companionship than for strength to obey His requirements. They feel uneasy about the commandments, seeing them as a set of strictures generating guilt and legalism. Declaring that

## **Without the moment-by-moment intervention of the Holy Spirit, unenlightened conscience pulls us toward legalism, and unrestrained flesh pulls us toward liberalism.**

relationships are more important than rules, Christian liberals devote themselves to following Christ's example by relieving suffering. Their misguided compassion on moral matters such as homosexuality and abortion is based more upon human reasoning than upon Bible principles. Many regard misconduct as moral sickness and an expression of low self-esteem rather than as sin. They see humanity as inherently good but deprived of love. Their solution is the popular gospel of affirmation and self-worth that denies or downplays the Bible doctrine of human depravity and regards Christ more as an understanding friend than as a Saviour from the condemnation of the law—when He is both.

### **The solution is the same**

Solving the shortcomings of liberalism begins with gaining respect for God's law. Humanistic morality is insufficient; "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 16:25). Lest we drift away from God on the shifting tides of relativism, we need the anchor of His absolutes. Genuine love does not deny or downplay the law, but fulfills it (see Rom. 13:10). Christian liberals need the Ten Commandments to teach them truth. Prodigal liberals also need deeper insight into the law to convince them that keeping all their New Year's resolutions isn't enough to make them good people. God is absolutely holy, and none can ever become righteous enough to deserve acceptance; the only hope of relieving sin's debt is the gift of God's grace in Christ.



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## We become grace-oriented instead of law-oriented.

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Perhaps surprisingly, the solution for legalists is also a deeper understanding of God's law. They would hunger and thirst for Christ's righteousness—His alone—if they fathomed the hopelessness and sinfulness of their own supposed goodness. Before they can truly appreciate the Saviour, they must comprehend what He is saving them from. For that they need the convicting testimony of God's law.

Any time the law is mentioned, though, those who tend toward liberalism will raise the charge of legalism. Actually, those who rightly regard God's law can never live as legalists, hoping to be saved through success in keeping the commandments. Honoring the high demands of the holy law produces what the Bible calls "the fear of God," which involves respect for His righteousness. Convinced that we cannot do business with Almighty Yahweh on the basis of our merit, we crave His mercy. Fleeing Mount Sinai, we find refuge at Calvary, crying "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Thus saved from the curse of condemnation, our gratitude for life-giving grace unites us to the Saviour. We become grace-oriented instead of law-oriented.

We also cease being sin-centered, since faith in Christ requires that we shun the world's counterfeit fulfillments. Ancient Lot learned this the hard way after pitching his tent toward Sodom. Today's environment is even more treacherous; even the airwaves around us have sodomized with televised temptation. Many liberals let the devil ravage them with his allurements. They need to repent of this spiritual fornication, but they don't welcome warnings about breaking God's law. They want a pastor who affirms them in loving themselves rather than one who guides them in loving God and losing themselves for

Christ's sake. Without old-fashioned repentance for sin, however, confidence in God's mercy amounts to presumption. Mere infatuation with God's forgiveness is not faith. Happy songs of praise and even fervent prayers can be an exercise in damnation: "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

### Politically correct camels

Legalists rightly condemn such liberalism, affirming the importance of a life in harmony with the law. While speaking up for moral standards, however, they are seriously deficient in their own spirituality. They magnify obedience while minimizing the principle of unselfish love that undergirds the law. Jesus had this in mind when He warned about straining out gnats while swallowing camels. We must not focus more on what people believe about eating than whether they actually have food to eat. We cannot stress the doctrine of dress reform more zealously than we clothe the poor. Liberals want to dismiss health and dress standards altogether, while legalists base their religion upon such rules and regulations. We need a balance. There is a time and place for instruction on lifestyle standards, but first things first. Isn't relieving poverty and suffering with the love of Christ even more basic in fulfilling the law?

One pastor told me about an elder who condemned a young member for being a liberal because she wore a fancy wedding ring, but the elder himself wore a Rolex watch and jeweled cuff-links. He accused her of adorning herself, oblivious that his own jewelry, although politically correct on earth, might be condemned in heaven. Could exquisite hand-tailored suits also qualify as adornment? And what about adornment on wheels . . . or that living room adorned with antiques? Was his selective conservatism an attempt to compensate for his darling indulgences?

Such victims of legalism major in minors but have "neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Matt. 23:23, NIV). They try to get the specks of dust out of the liberals' eyes while neglecting the beams of their own blindness. They speak of "raising the standards," not knowing that Sinai's righteous standard is much higher than their own compre-

hension. To God, "the inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin,"<sup>1</sup> while heaven-born love fulfills the law.

The irony of such legalism—any kind of legalism, lukewarm or otherwise—is that its own standard is *too low*. It cannot adequately measure and quantify the absolute holiness required by God's commandments. In reality, the law condemns not just obvious sins of commission such as killing, stealing, and fornicating, but also sins of omission. Neglecting to bear one another's burdens violates the law of Christ. Withholding an encouraging word of witness is a sin. Any failure to show the total love of Christ in every situation is sinful behavior. Thus by God's standard all of us are sinners, unworthy servants. We all fall short of accurately reflecting Christ's character of caring. Our only hope is to come to the cross and lay hold upon His mercy.

### Assurance of salvation

Having forsaken what the world offers for what God offers us at Calvary, we may rejoice in His salvation. Lukewarm liberals overlook the importance of repentance before claiming assurance in Christ. They refer to the welcoming arms of the prodigal's father, forgetting that the repentant son came home empty-handed. He wasn't bringing back the wine bottles of his former lifestyle.

When listening to lukewarm liberals, one pictures Saint Peter at heaven's gate happily handing out lollipops to everyone alike, no matter how each one lived. Going to the other extreme, legalists would portray the mythical gatekeeper with his arms crossed, wearing a suspicious scowl, grimly disqualifying any poor soul who had recently indulged in a chocolate bar.

Many legalists consider any assurance of salvation as something of a questionable amusement. Others have fallen prey to a cruel and deceptive counterfeit: "Sure, you can have the assurance of salvation! Just pray for the Holy Spirit's power to overcome all sin, and then based on your victorious experience, you can know you are saved." That sounds simple enough, except that all of us are sinners. So who can have any assurance? We had better find a better basis than our own perfection.

"Wait a minute," someone objects. "Are you limiting the power of God to overcome sin in your life?"

No, there isn't any deficiency on

God's part in helping us overcome sin. We have, however, a limit on our ability to appropriate His power. Before overcoming a sin, we must become convicted of it; we must know a specific action is wrong before we stop doing it. Agreed? Now here's the problem: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Our sinfulness is so pervasive that we can't even know it all, so how can we possibly overcome it all?

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children" and lower than the lowest human thought can reach is the depth of our depravity. While there is no limit to God's power over sin, our self-knowledge is finite: now we know in part. So not until we have holy flesh will we be able to live totally sinless lives. That will happen when Christ comes and makes our vile bodies like His glorious, sinless body (see Phil. 3:21). Not till mortal puts on immortality will corruptible put on incorruption (see 1 Cor. 15:52, 53). And so we must content ourselves to live with the mercy of God as our assurance of salvation. But if we reject His grace in order to live by the law, we will also die by the law.

To have any assurance of salvation, legalists are forced to join liberals in compromising God's commandments. They accommodate the law to their capacity to comprehend sin and overcome it. Let us commend them for lamenting worldliness and immorality, but isn't it also immoral to be intolerant, insensitive, unloving, racially prejudiced, or greedy? Why don't they protest these fundamental sins more vigorously?

Without appreciating our need for God's mercy we have no basis of assurance, little mercy of our own for fellow sinners, and nothing to show a lost world. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). So the true uniqueness of God's remnant people is shown in love for one another. And what about holding fast sound doctrine? Yes, but only in a spirit of love. This has to be our witness to the world. Without such love overflowing from our hearts, we need repentance from sin in its deepest sense.

Since liberals enjoy assurance, mistaken though it is, their worship is emancipated from anxiety about the Almighty. Sometimes their services are sophisti-

cated and sometimes boisterous. Legalists, by contrast, have an aura of counterfeit reverence that may reflect spiritual apprehension. They are solemn and subdued. Everything is decent and in order—as it should be—yet there is no heartbeat in their worship. But watch them come alive Sunday afternoon during the football game. See them clapping and celebrating. Does their refusal to rejoice in heavenly things while they adore the things of this world say anything about their spirituality?

Not that it's necessarily wrong to watch a football game, nor is celebration the only proper worship format. The point is that whatever our style, we must worship God in spirit as well as in truth, with our hearts and souls as well as with our minds. If we are incapable of spiritual emotion but full of enthusiasm as sportsaholics, perhaps our faith is fundamentally flawed.

God alone can judge. And He will. A holy God must ultimately punish sin in even the least of its manifestations. So let us hide ourselves in Christ. Only through the Lord's mercies are we not consumed; thus we must cease making sinlessness our hope of salvation. Whatever good is in our lives is never good enough to make us worthy.

When we learn to respect the height and depth of God's law, we will become ashamed of our own works and glorify the works of Jesus Christ. We will cease being enamored with all we are doing for Him and feel our utter need of what He offers us. We will consistently and exclusively present the truth as it is in Jesus. Then the Sabbath will no longer be a 24-hour tightrope on which to perform our holy acts; we will honor it as the memorial of Christ's accomplishments. Heaven's sanctuary will no longer be a furniture showroom of denominational antiquities; when we think of Christ's final phase of priestly ministry, as symbolized by the Second Apartment, we will focus on the mercy seat, the throne of grace. For a long time God has been waiting there to meet with us. As we make ourselves at home in His merits, Christ's coming will no longer be the cursed threat of those who lack assurance of salvation; it will indeed become our blessed hope.

### The final generation

From the tragedy of the *Titanic* we get a symbol of the saints who survive

## Realizing that we have been forgiven much, we will love much.

the shipwreck of legalism and liberalism in the last days. Imperiled passengers no longer segregated themselves into first class, second class, and steerage. They crowded together on the sloping decks, praying and singing as they waited for the lifeboats. Likewise, when our human institutions and organizations collide with the icebergs of earth's final crisis, we will not mind mingling with one another while waiting for Jesus, our lifeboat. No longer will we segregate ourselves along racial, cultural, or economic lines. Huddled together under the shelter of His wings, we will sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee." And we will mean it.

Perhaps what many of us need most right now is to get jolted by some lightning and thunder from Mount Sinai. That would wake us up from both liberalism and legalism. Then we will be able to hear that still small voice from Calvary: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). Drawn by that tender love to make an uncompromised commitment, we will welcome lifestyle standards—but we will also acknowledge that vegetarian virtues are not kosher enough to qualify us for the kingdom. Realizing that we have been forgiven much, we will love much. Filled with hope, joy, and peace through believing in Jesus, we will have the Holy Spirit's power in our lives (see Rom. 15:13). With the faith of Jesus in our hearts, we will finally be keeping the commandments of God. No longer will we be satisfied offering merely the turtledoves of tithe. Restored to the joy of His salvation, we will offer bullocks of personal sacrifice. That's what it will take to finish the work of God. Nothing less will do. ■

\*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture texts are from The New King James Version.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 163.

# Is there any word from the Lord?

Julia C. S. Vernon

## The role of the Bible in pastoral care and chaplaincy training.

Julia C. S. Vernon serves as chaplain at Holy Cross Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah.

**B**ack in 1950 when Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, one of the movement's founders, Anton Boisen, stated: "This movement has no new gospel to proclaim: we are not seeking to introduce anything into the theological curriculum beyond a new approach to some ancient problems. We are trying, rather, to call attention back to the central task of the church, *that of saving souls*, and to the central problem of theology, *that of sin and salvation*. What is new is the attempt to begin with the study of *the living human document* rather than with books and to focus attention upon those who are grappling desperately with *the issues of spiritual life and death*."<sup>1</sup>

CPE's rejection of the traditional book-centered approach to learning in favor of the person-centered approach has succeeded in opening the world of humanness to ministers. As a result, CPE students truly learn from one another and from their patients the spiritual needs and frameworks of people, and discover that communication occurs in myriad ways.

The person-centered approach of clinical pastoral care has given other benefits as well. There is an heightened ministerial sensitivity to the needs and spiritual context of those from vastly different faith traditions. Communication has become possible with large segments of society that can never be reached by traditional means. The chaplain can

minister even as Christ did with a measure of love and empathy for people in their natural context. The study of and interaction with the "human document" fit ministers and laity alike to "get down in the muck" where people really live and suffer. In the process, the CPE-trained chaplain can effectively portray Jesus as the lover of people.

While the emphasis on the human document has resulted in appreciable benefits to clinical ministry, there has also come a tragic loss. The discarding of books as primary learning tools has been accompanied by varying degrees of rejection of the Book as the primary tool of a healthy life and ministry. Because of the neglect of the Bible, the issues of sin and salvation that Boisen speaks about are also slipping into a limbo reserved for nonissues.

True, the role of the Bible needs to be different in hospital and other crisis/institutional ministries than in traditional ministry. Ellen White cautioned: "Our peculiar faith should not be discussed with patients. Their minds should not be unnecessarily excited upon subjects wherein we differ, unless they themselves desire it; and then great caution should be observed not to agitate the mind by urging upon them our peculiar faith."<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly the sickroom is an inappropriate environment for heavy doctrinal instruction or proselytizing. But does it mean that the sickroom is an inappropriate place for direct Bible communication?

Many ministers, including Seventh-day Adventists, sense a profound call to address the basic issues of sin and salva-

tion in clinical environments—and to address them with the Bible. Even in “mundane” chaplaincy tasks such as helping patients to find coping tools, providing a healthy beginning to the grief process, and trying to bring peace and comfort to the distressed many ministers sense an urgency to base their ministry openly in the Bible, sharing its wisdom, comfort, and insights directly with the patient.

Along with her caution, Ellen White also affirms the appropriateness of Bible sharing. “The religion of Christ is not to be placed in the background and its holy principles laid down to meet the approval of any class, however popular. If the standard of truth and holiness is lowered, the design of God will not then be carried out. . . . There is an abundance to dwell upon in regard to Bible religion.”<sup>3</sup>

However, in today’s chaplaincy training programs, Bible ministry has fallen in disrepute. Ministers who have undergone training in programs where the Bible has had no central role have expressed to me their pain in words such as: “Talking about the Bible was off-limits.” “Whenever I referred directly to the Bible, my peers [and/or supervisor] crucified me.” “My group would ask me what I believed and why. When I quoted Scripture in my answers, they would be angry at me.” “I felt very intimidated every time I mentioned my reliance on the Bible.” “When I quoted the scriptures to my patients, I was severely censured.” “I was under pressure to abandon my faith in the Bible and my use of it in ministry.”

Were all these people the kind who pound people over the head with Scripture? If so, perhaps the system was merely trying to instill perspective and tolerance. But no. Only one of them remotely fit that description. The ministers were sensitive, filled with empathy for the needs and beliefs of others, skilled in bringing out appropriate treasures from the Bible to enrich and comfort sufferers. Tragically, they all had one experience in common. They all received the same message from their various CPE units: the Bible is irrelevant, offensive, and grossly inappropriate for use in modern pastoral care. Even more tragically, some of them bought into that idea, and left their Bibles behind.

The words of Anton Boisen evoke a dream of training ministers by contact

with the living documents. The aim is to employ the principles and tools of the Bible in a new way in order to meet the Bible-mandated goals in the struggle with the Bible-defined issues. But that is not happening, if the feedback I’m receiving is accurate. Indeed, in some cases the opposite is taking place. If this is so, we need to find out why, and decide whether or not this is the direction Seventh-day Adventist ministers of tomorrow need to go in order to be fitted for this special ministry.

### The vital interplay

Part of the answer lies in the vital interplay between two aspects of gospel ministry: *diakonia* (loving acts) and *kerygma* (verbal proclamation). Ideally, both come together, reinforcing and complementing each other. In hospital chaplaincy, which is the primary context for CPE and similar programs, *diakonia* is predominant. The hospital context provides more opportunities for loving acts, especially the act of “being with” the patient, than it does for traditional verbal proclamation of God’s Word. Naturally, the more conspicuous art comes to assume the larger share of approval.

*Diakonia* also receives much more educational emphasis. It is often the area in which students are least skilled. We know how to do good deeds on a large scale, but many of us have not developed or refined the hidden, subtle skills of empathy—to be with and to encourage others to trust and communicate. Thus, pastoral care training programs are slanted to educate us and refine our skills in these areas.

Sadly enough, another reason that *diakonia* skills get overemphasis is our love of *kerygma*. We may come to CPE with a high degree of interest and skills in *kerygma*, especially if we are from a “basic Bible” tradition. In order to ensure that we do not get carried away by inappropriate preachiness, argumentativeness, and doctrinal fine-tuning in our dealing with patients, programs emphasizing *diakonia* may be stressed. This compensation can become overcompensation, leading to the danger of the loss of *kerygma* from the language of pastoral care.

Other reasons for suppressing Bible proclamation include the varying traditions of CPE instructors and how they view the Bible; the pressure exerted by

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**But the Word was still the same, still at odds with popular wisdom, and so Jeremiah was returned to the prison.**

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peers and the hierarchy who view Scripture proclamation with disfavor; and efforts to find a neutral way to minister to those who do not hold favorable views of the Bible. No matter what the cause, the result is increasingly a Zedekiah-like reaction to the Bible within the chaplaincy training community.

### A Zedekiah complex?

Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah because his proclamation of the Word was unpopular, out of touch with current theory, and different from what people hoped to hear. King Zedekiah, however, had a glimmer of belief in that *kerygma*. It was enough for him to bring Jeremiah secretly out of the prison and ask him, “Is there any word from the Lord?” (Jer. 37:17). But the Word was still the same, still at odds with popular wisdom, and so Jeremiah was returned to the prison.

In training our ministers, we start them off with the Bible, teaching them to acknowledge it as the one and only reliable guide. Next, we send them off into an atmosphere where the Word is imprisoned for its lack of popularity, discounted as inappropriate or unreliable. When we send for our ministers again, wanting them to answer the cry of soul-wounded people who in some way are asking “Is there any word from the Lord?” what will their response be? Will they still be competent and willing to minister in the form of *kerygma*, to communicate the undiluted Word of God? Or will they only give the ministry of *diakonia* and leave the eternally vital question unanswered? While loving deeds are

(Continued on page 30)



# Pastor, make that call!

**James A. Cress**

**I**

was in the proverbial hot water. That should have come as no surprise. Had I been alert, I would have known I was in trouble even before

arriving home two hours later than promised. Worse, the difficulty was not my wife's intolerance of the unpredictability of a pastor's schedule. Her frustration was caused by my own failure to fulfill our agreement to telephone if either of us would be unexpectedly detained.

At 10:30 p.m. when one of my church leaders stopped me in the church parking lot and began what I thought would be a brief conversation, I initially reasoned that circumstances overruled the agreement with my wife. After all, I thought, I would soon be on my way. So rather than returning to the office and phoning my wife about the delay, I agreed to listen to a story that grew longer than I could have ever dreamed.

By the time I arrived home, my wife's fear that some late-night tragedy had befallen me had grown to the temptation to inflict that tragedy herself. No plea of circumstances could persuade her that I shouldn't have kept my bargain and called her so she wouldn't worry.

With more thought of self-preservation than repentance, I renewed my vow to call her when I would be detained. After all, that is what phones are for. So whether it is to alert your spouse, make amends with an estranged colleague, or express care and concern for a member in crisis—Pastor, make that call!

### Leaders make judgment calls

Pastors often have to make judgment calls as well. Often you must choose between the greater of two benefits.

Competing good ideas or strong advocates of contrasting worthy opinions will press you to take a stand. And you must. It's a leader's job.

The Bible speaks of those who know the times and understand what God's people should do. A leader must establish priorities, focus vision, and lead in making decisions. Your task is to facilitate clear thinking, seek for God's will, hope to arrive at consensus and ultimately to move forward. After all, that's what leaders are for. So whether it is to establish a school, plan an evangelistic outreach, prioritize funding for competing worthy projects or move forward into wider horizons with your members—Pastor, make that call!

### Calling sinners and servants

There is yet another call that you have the responsibility and privilege to make—the call to discipleship and to service. In fact, it is unfortunate that we have too often seen these as separate calls. The biblical understanding views them as phases of the same call that comes to all believers—acceptance of Jesus Christ anticipates long service for the Saviour.

The call to sinners for repentance and acceptance of Jesus should be your goal in every public presentation. Preach for decisions. Expect people to respond to your message, and make sure you give them the opportunity. Why are you preaching if you expect nothing to be done about your message? So whether it is your weekly morning sermon, a devotional message to your elementary students, or a fireside conclusion with your youth group—Pastor, make that call!

You also have the responsibility and privilege to call believers into service and leadership. Discovering talented

members and enlisting their service are your duty. To paraphrase inspired counsel: "The work of the minister is to work the members!" If you know of unused or underutilized capabilities lying fallow in the lives of your members, you must call them to do more for the Lord than they may have believed possible. Dream with them and for them as to what they can become under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit. Seek out the best and brightest of your young people and ask them to consider prayerfully a life of ministry and service both in occupation and avocation.

Search for the worth in even the most unlikely candidates. Make it your prayer that you will view people, not through the limits of their present capacities, but through the eyes of God who sees the potential for everyone who will heed His invitation to service. So whether they are capable and talented members who underemploy their potential, elderly saints who think there is nothing they can contribute, or youth who simply need a vision of future service brought to their minds—Pastor, make that call!

### End-time urgency

The overwhelming surprise of Jesus' second coming to unbelievers should not catch those unawares who are "waiting and watching." The apostle Paul declares that we are not the children of darkness but of understanding. Jesus Himself questioned how we could be so adept at understanding nature's signs of changing seasons and fail to read the signs of the present age. So whether it is to unconverted sinners or slumbering saints, read and preach Matthew 24 again. Now, more than ever before—Pastor, make that call! ■

# Hospital visitation: an important ministry for elders

**M**embers in the hospital need pastoral visits, but not always from the pastor. Local lay elders can have a vital hospital ministry. The following guidelines will be helpful.

1. **Turn gossip into a gift.** Assign members who always seem to know everything that goes on the responsibility of notifying the pastor or head elder when a member is hospitalized.

2. **Go immediately.** Hospital stays are getting shorter and shorter, and people feel neglected and even rejected if someone representing the church doesn't visit.

3. **Check at the nurses' station** as a courtesy to the caregivers. You might learn something about the patient's illness and ensure that a visit is not out of order. This is especially important in an obstetrics ward, where special rules may apply.

4. **Befriend others in the room.** They may be longing for spiritual encouragement.

5. **Don't wake the patient.** Finding rest is difficult in a hospital. Write a sentence or two on a card and leave it by the bed.

6. **Don't sit or lean on the bed.** This can bring serious discomfort to a sore body. Instead, offer a lingering handshake as you begin your visit. It shows your care.

7. **Be cautious in asking about illness.** The patient may be facing im-

mediate surgery or a serious diagnosis, such as malignancy. The direction of your visit and its length should follow the particular need of the situation. It is

### Suggested scriptures for hospital visitation

#### *General texts:*

Psalms 23; 46; 101; 103  
Jeremiah 30:17  
Matthew 15:30, 31  
Romans 5:3-5; 8:16-39  
James 5:13-16  
3 John 2

#### *Before surgery:*

Psalms 91; 103:1-5  
Isaiah 43:1-3; 58:8, 9

#### *In pain:*

Isaiah 26:3, 4  
Matthew 11:28, 29  
John 14:27

#### *Facing death:*

Psalms 23; 56:11; 90:1-6, 10  
Isaiah 56:11  
John 3:14-16; 14:1-4, 25-27  
Romans 8:35-39  
2 Corinthians 5:1-4

#### *On recovery:*

Psalms 34:4-8; 107:1-9  
Luke 17:12-18

#### *Childbirth:*

Matthew 18:1-6  
Mark 10:13-16  
Luke 1:46-49

better to get your information at the nurses' station, but the nurse might not be available or willing to tell you. So you might ask the patient: "Are you in for something serious?" or "How are you feeling?" You could also say with a reassuring smile: "Tell me what's been happening with you." You'll learn whatever the person wants to share about the illness.

8. **Be sensitive to anxiety.** Some patients suppose that good Christians should not suffer fear or worry. They simulate a courage and bravado that they don't genuinely feel. If you sense this happening, gently encourage them to air their negative feelings so you can bring relief.

9. **Be positive.** Bring in a little sunshine. Keep in mind, though, that the hospital is not a place for boisterous frivolity.

10. **Listen much.** Don't talk too much, but enough to assure patients that you have heard and understood them. Your mere presence says a lot.

11. **Share a text if appropriate.** Carry a pocket Bible. Suggested scriptures are in the shaded box below.

12. **Be brief.** Leave almost immediately if the patient is in pain. In other cases, a 5- to 10-minute visit is usually adequate.

13. **Pray.** Take the patient's hand and pray specifically for the needs expressed. Pray a special prayer with new mothers, asking God to bless their babies.

14. **Leave soon after prayer,** while its aura prevails. The blessing of the Lord will remain with the patient, and the results of your visit may prove to be eternal. ■

# Statement I — guidelines on abortion

**The 1992 Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee (October 5-12) adopted guidelines on abortion and care for the dying. The Council also voted official church positions on temperance principles and the environment.**

*VOTED, To approve Seventh-day Adventist Guidelines on Abortion as follows:*

Many contemporary societies have faced conflict over the morality of abortion.<sup>1</sup> Such conflict also has affected large numbers within Christianity who want to accept responsibility for the protection of prenatal human life while also preserving the personal liberty of women. The need for guidelines has become evident, as the church attempts to follow Scripture, and to provide moral guidance while respecting individual conscience. Seventh-day Adventists want to relate to the question of abortion in ways that reveal faith in God as the Creator and Sustainer of all life and in ways that reflect Christian responsibility and freedom. Though honest differences on the question of abortion exist among Seventh-day Adventists, the following represents an attempt to provide guidelines on a number of principles and

issues. The guidelines are based on broad biblical principles that are presented for study at the end of the document.<sup>2</sup>

1. Prenatal human life is a magnificent gift of God. God's ideal for human beings affirms the sanctity of human life, in God's image, and requires respect for prenatal life. However, decisions about life must be made in the context of a fallen world. Abortion is never an action of little moral consequence. Thus prenatal life must not be thoughtlessly destroyed. Abortion should be performed only for the most serious reasons.

2. Abortion is one of the tragic dilemmas of human fallenness. The church should offer gracious support to those who personally face the decision concerning an abortion. Attitudes of condemnation are inappropriate in those who have accepted the gospel. Christians are commissioned to become a loving, caring community of faith that assists those in crisis as alternatives are considered.

3. In practical, tangible ways the church as a supportive community should express its commitment to the value of human life. These ways should include: (a) strengthening family relationships, (b) educating both genders concerning Christian principles of human sexuality, (c) emphasizing responsibility of both male and female for family planning, (d) calling both to be responsible for the consequences of behaviors that are inconsistent with Christian principles, (e) creating a safe climate for ongoing discussion of the moral questions associated with abortion, (f) offering support and assistance to women who choose to complete crisis pregnancies, and (g) encouraging and assisting fathers to participate responsibly in the parenting of their children. The church also should commit itself to assist in alleviating the unfortunate social, economic, and psychological factors that may lead to abortion, and to care redemptively for those

suffering the consequences of individual decisions on this issue.

4. The church does not serve as conscience for individuals; however, it should provide moral guidance. Abortions for reasons of birth control, gender selection or convenience are not condoned by the church. Women at times, however, may face exceptional circumstances that present serious moral or medical dilemmas, such as significant threats to the pregnant woman's life, serious jeopardy to her health, severe congenital defects carefully diagnosed in the fetus, and pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. The final decision whether to terminate the pregnancy or not should be made by the pregnant woman after appropriate consultation. She should be aided in her decision by accurate information, biblical principles, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, these decisions are best made within the context of healthy family relationships.

5. Christians acknowledge as first and foremost their accountability to God. They seek balance between the exercise of individual liberty and their accountability to the faith community and the larger society and its laws. They make their choices according to Scripture and the laws of God rather than the norms of society. Therefore, any attempts to coerce women either to remain pregnant or to terminate pregnancy should be rejected as infringements of personal freedom.

6. Church institutions should be provided with guidelines for developing their own institutional policies in harmony with this statement. Persons having a religious or ethical objection to abortion should not be required to participate in the performance of abortions.

7. Church members should be encouraged to participate in the ongoing consideration of their moral responsibilities with regard to abortion in light of the teaching of Scripture.



<sup>1</sup> Abortion, as understood in these guidelines, is defined as any action aimed at the termination of a pregnancy already established. This is distinguished from contraception, which is intended to prevent a pregnancy. The focus of the document is on abortion.

<sup>2</sup> The fundamental perspective of these guidelines is taken from a broad study of Scripture as shown in the following "Principles for a Christian View of Human Life."

## Principles for a Christian View of Human Life

### Introduction

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3, NIV). In Christ is the promise of eternal life; but since human life is mortal, humans are confronted with difficult issues regarding life and death. The following principles refer to the whole person (body, soul, and spirit), an indivisible whole (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23).

#### *Life: Our valuable gift from God*

1. God is the Source, Giver, and Sustainer of all life (Acts 17:25, 28; Job 33:4; Gen. 1:30; 2:7; Ps. 36:9; John 1:3, 4).

2. Human life has unique value because human beings, though fallen, are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 3:2; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18, 19).

3. God values human life not on the basis of human accomplishments or contributions, but because we are God's creation and the object of His redeeming love (Rom. 5:6, 8; Eph. 2:2-9; 1 Tim. 1:15; Titus 3:4, 5; Matt. 5:43-48; John 1:3; 10:10).

#### *Life: Our response to God's gift*

4. Valuable as it is human life is not the only or ultimate concern. Self-sacrifice in devotion to God and His principles may take precedence over life itself (Rev. 12:11; 1 Cor. 13).

5. God calls for the protection of human life and holds humanity accountable for its destruction (Ex. 20:13; Rev. 21:8; Ex. 23:7; Deut. 24:16; Prov. 6:16, 17; Jer. 7:3-34; Micah 6:7; Gen. 9:5, 6).

6. God is especially concerned for the protection of the weak, the defenseless, and the oppressed (Ps. 82:3, 4; James 1:27; Micah 6:8; Acts 20:35; Prov. 24:11, 12; Luke 1:52-54).

7. Christian love (agape) is the costly dedication of our lives to enhancing the lives of others. Love also respects personal dignity and does not condone the oppression of one person to support the abusive behavior of another (Matt. 16:21; Phil. 2:1-11; 1 John 3:16; 4:8-11; Matt. 22:39; John 18:22, 23; 13:34).

8. The believing community is called to demonstrate Christian love in tangible, practical, and substantive ways. God calls us to restore gently the broken (Gal. 6:1, 2; 1 John 3:17, 18; Matt. 1:23; Phil. 2:1-11; John 8:2-11; Rom. 8:1-14; Matt. 7:1, 2; 12:20; Isa. 40-42; 62:2-4). *Life: Our right and responsibility to decide*

9. God gives humanity the freedom of choice, even if it leads to abuse and tragic consequences. His unwillingness to coerce human obedience necessitated the sacrifice of His Son. He requires us to use His gifts in accordance with His will and ultimately will judge their misuse (Deut. 30:19, 20; Gen. 3; 1 Peter 2:24; Rom. 3:5, 6; 6:1, 2; Gal. 5:13).

10. God calls each of us individually to moral decision-making and to search the Scriptures for the biblical principles underlying such choices (John 5:39; Acts 17:11; 1 Peter 2:9; Rom. 7:13-25).

11. Decisions about human life from its beginning to its end are best made within the context of healthy family relationships with the support of the faith community (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 5; 6).

12. Human decisions should always be centered in seeking the will of God (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 6:6; Luke 22:42).

# Statement II — historic stand for temperance

*VOTED, To approve the Historic Stand for Temperance Principles and Acceptance of Donations Statement:*

From the very inception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, temperance has been a major focus, and the church has played a key role in struggling against the inroads of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other drugs. While some Christian denominations have lessened their emphasis on temperance, Seventh-day Adventists have continued to vigorously oppose the use of alcohol, tobacco, and improper drugs. The stand of the church advocating abstinence from harmful substances is well established in the church's fundamental beliefs.

There is evidence indicating that in some areas there has been a relaxation in the promotion within the church of the principles of true temperance. This development, coupled with the relentless advertising campaigns of the alcohol and tobacco industries, has revealed that some Seventh-day Adventists have not been impervious to such negative and insidious influences.

An issue that arises from time to time is the offer of funds to religious organizations by the alcohol or tobacco industries. It is the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that such offers of funds shall not be accepted by the church, nor by any of its institutions. Such money

is tainted by human misery and, in the case of the alcohol industry, "has come through the loss of souls of men" (Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 15, 1894). The gospel mandate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to rebuke evil and not praise or encourage those who manufacture "poisons that bring misery and ruin" and whose "business means robbery" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 337).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church reaffirms its historic stand for the principles of temperance, upholds its policies and programs supporting Article 21 of the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, and calls upon each member to

affirm and reveal a life commitment to abstinence from any form of alcohol and tobacco and irresponsible use of drugs.

The 1992 Annual Council calls for a revival of temperance principles within the church and urges individuals and

church organizations to refuse donations and favors from identifiable alcohol or tobacco industries.

## Statement III — caring for God's creation

*VOTED, To approve Caring for Creation—a Seventh-day Adventist Statement on the Environment as follows:*

The world in which we live is a gift of love from the Creator God, from "him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7, NIV; cf. Rev. 11:17, 18). Within this creation He placed humans, set intentionally in relationship with Himself, other persons, and the surrounding world. Therefore, as Seventh-day Adventists, we hold its preservation and nurture to be intimately related to our service to Him.

God set aside the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial and perpetual reminder of His creative act and establishment of the world. In resting on that day, Seventh-day Adventists reinforce the special sense of relationship with the Creator and His creation. Sabbath obser-

vance underscores the importance of our integration with the total environment. The human decision to disobey God broke the original order of creation, resulting in a disharmony alien to His purposes. Thus our air and waters are polluted, forests and wildlife plundered, and natural resources exploited. Because we recognize humans as part of God's creation, our concern for the environment extends to personal health and lifestyle. We advocate a wholesome manner of living and reject the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs that harm the body and consume earth's resources; and we promote a simple vegetarian diet.

Seventh-day Adventists are committed to respectful, cooperative relationships among all persons, recognizing our common origin and realizing our human dignity as a gift from the Creator.

Since human poverty and environmental degradation are interrelated, we pledge ourselves to improve the quality of life for all people. Our goal is a sustainable development of resources while meeting human needs.

Genuine progress toward caring for our natural environment rests upon both personal and cooperative effort. We accept the challenge to work toward restoring God's overall design. Moved by faith in God, we commit ourselves to promote the healing that rises at both personal and environmental levels from integrated lives dedicated to serve God and humanity.

In this commitment we confirm our stewardship of God's creation and believe that total restoration will be complete only when God makes all things new.

## Statement IV — care for the dying

*Voted, To approve A Seventh-day Adventist Statement of consensus on Care for the Dying as follows:*

For people whose lives are guided by the Bible, the reality of death is acknowledged as part of the current human condition, affected by sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom 5; Heb. 9:27). There is "a time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccl. 3:2). Although eternal life is a gift that is granted to all who accept salvation through Jesus Christ, faithful Christians await the second coming of Jesus for complete realization of their immortal-

ity (John 3:36; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). While waiting for Jesus to come again, Christians may be called upon to care for the dying and to face personally their own death.

Pain and suffering afflict every human life. Physical, mental, and emotional traumas are universal. However, human suffering has no expiatory or meritorious value. The Bible teaches that no amount or intensity of human suffering can atone for sin. The suffering of Jesus Christ alone is sufficient. Scripture calls Christians not to despair in

afflictions, urging them to learn obedience (Heb. 5:7, 8), patience (James 1:2-4), and endurance in tribulations (Rom. 5:3). The Bible also testifies to the overcoming power of Jesus Christ (John 16:33) and teaches that ministry to human suffering is an important Christian duty (Matt. 25:34-40). This was the example and teaching of Jesus (Matt. 9:35; Luke 10:34-36), and this is His will for us (Luke 10:37). Christians look in anticipation to a new day when God will end suffering forever (Rev. 21:4).

Developments in modern medicine

have added to the complexity of decisions about care for the dying. In times past, little could be done to extend human life. But the power of today's medicine to forestall death has generated difficult moral and ethical questions. What constraints does Christian faith place upon the use of such power? When should the goal of postponing the moment of death give way to the goal of alleviating pain at the end of life? Who may appropriately make these decisions? What limits, if any, should Christian love place on actions designed to end human suffering?

It has become common to discuss such questions under the heading of euthanasia. Much confusion exists with regard to this expression. The original and literal meaning of this term was "good death." Now the term is used in two significantly different ways. Often euthanasia refers to "mercy killing," or intentionally taking the life of a patient in order to avoid painful dying or in order to alleviate burdens for a patient's family or society. (This is so-called active euthanasia.) However, euthanasia is also used, inappropriately in the Seventh-day Adventist view, to refer to the withholding or withdrawal of medical interventions that artificially extend human life, thus allowing a person to die naturally. (This is so-called passive euthanasia.) Seventh-day Adventists believe that allowing a patient to die by foregoing medical interventions that only prolong suffering and postpone the moment of death is morally different from actions that have as their primary intention the direct taking of a life.

Seventh-day Adventists seek to address the ethical issues at the end of life in ways that demonstrate their faith in God as the Creator and Redeemer of life and that reveal how God's grace has empowered them for acts of neighbor love. Seventh-day Adventists affirm God's creation of human life, a wonderful gift worthy of being protected and sustained (Gen. 1, 2). They also affirm God's wonderful gift of redemption that provides eternal life for those who believe (John 3:15; 17:3). Thus they support the use of modern medicine to extend human life in this world. However, this power should be used in compassionate ways that reveal God's grace by minimizing suffering. Since we have God's promise of eternal life in the earth made new, Christians need not cling

anxiously to the last vestiges of life on this earth. Nor is it necessary to accept or offer all possible medical treatments that merely prolong the process of dying.

Because of their commitment to care for the whole person, Seventh-day Adventists are concerned about the physical, emotional, and spiritual care of the dying. To this end, they offer the following biblically based principles:

1. A person who is approaching the end of life, and is capable of understanding, deserves to know the truth about his or her condition, the treatment choices, and the possible outcomes. The truth should not be withheld, but shared with Christian love and with sensitivity to the patient's personal and cultural circumstances (Eph. 4:15).

2. God has given human beings freedom of choice and asks them to use their freedom responsibly. Seventh-day Adventists believe that this freedom extends to decisions about medical care. After seeking divine guidance and considering the interests of those affected by the decision (Rom. 14:7), as well as medical advice, a person who is capable of deciding should determine whether to accept or reject life-extending medical interventions. Such persons should not be forced to submit to medical treatment that they find unacceptable.

3. God's plan is for people to be nourished within a family and a faith community. Decisions about human life are best made within the context of healthy family relationships after considering medical advice (Gen. 2:18; Mark 10:6-9; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 5; 6). When a dying person is unable to give consent or express preferences regarding medical intervention, such decisions should be made by someone chosen by the dying person. If no one has been chosen, someone close to the dying person should make the determination. Except in extraordinary circumstances, medical or legal professionals should defer decisions about medical interventions for a dying person to those closest to that individual. Wishes or decisions of the individual are best made in writing and should be in agreement with existing legal requirements.

4. Christian love is practical and responsible (Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13; James 1:27; 2:14-17). Such love does not deny faith nor obligate us to offer or to accept medical interventions whose burdens outweigh the probable benefits.

For example, when medical care merely preserves bodily functions, without hope of returning a patient to mental awareness, it is futile and may, in good conscience, be withheld or withdrawn. Similarly, life-extending medical treatments may be omitted or stopped if they only add to the patient's suffering or needlessly prolong the process of dying. Any action taken should be in harmony with legal mandates.

5. While Christian love may lead to the withholding or withdrawing of medical interventions that only increase suffering or prolong dying, Seventh-day Adventists do not practice "mercy killing" or assist in suicide (Gen. 9:5, 6; Ex. 20:13; 23:7). They are opposed to active euthanasia, the intentional taking of the life of a suffering or dying person.

6. Christian compassion calls for the alleviation of suffering (Matt. 25:34-40; Luke 10:29-37). In caring for the dying, it is a Christian responsibility to relieve pain and suffering to the fullest extent possible, not to include active euthanasia. When it is clear that medical intervention will not cure a patient, the primary goal of care should shift to relief from suffering.

7. The biblical principle of justice prescribes that added care be given the needs of those who are defenseless and dependent (Ps. 82:3, 4; Prov. 24:11, 12; Isa. 1:1-18; Micah 6:8; Luke 1:52-54). Because of their vulnerable condition, special care should be taken to ensure that dying persons are treated with respect for their dignity and without unfair discrimination. Care for the dying should be based on their spiritual and medical needs and their expressed choices rather than on perceptions of their social worthiness (James 2:1-9).

As Seventh-day Adventists seek to apply these principles, they take hope and courage from the fact that God answers the prayers of His children and is able to work miraculously for their well-being (Ps. 103:1-5; James 5:13-16). Following Jesus' example they also pray to accept the will of God in all things (Matt. 26:39). They are confident that they can call on God's power to aid them in caring for the physical and spiritual needs of suffering and dying individuals. They know that the grace of God is sufficient to enable them to endure adversity (Ps. 50:14, 15). They believe that eternal life for all who have faith in Jesus is secure in the triumph of God's love.

## Christianity With Power

Charles H. Kraft, Vine Books, Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1989, 230 pages, \$8.99, paper. Reviewed by Derek Morris, professor of preaching and pastoral theology, Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

Charles H. Kraft, a professor of anthropology and intercultural communication at Fuller Theological Seminary, addresses the crucial issue of how our worldview impacts our openness to the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Is it possible that we have allowed the worldview of Western culture to distort our view of reality? Have we adopted a subbiblical paradigm that falls far short of authentic Christianity?

Kraft suggests that evangelicalism has rightly emphasized the word aspect of the gospel, but has ignored and minimized the power aspect. As a result, "though it provides abundant knowledge about the things of God, there is not a corresponding demonstration of the works of God." The root of our problem, according to Kraft, is the worldview that we have adopted. He defines worldview as "the culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments underlying a people's perception of reality." Kraft asserts that only God sees reality in all its fullness. Our perception of "the big R"—reality—is subjective, limited, and partial. But we should strive to learn as much as possible about reality and adjust our "small r" reality accordingly. The author suggests that evangelicals have adopted the naturalistic worldview of western culture and abandoned the supernaturalistic worldview of Scripture. As a result, they, along with Western culture, have become obsessed with materialism, humanism, and rationalism. Kraft, therefore, asserts that it is time for evangelicals to stop acting like deists, cast off the naturalistic worldview, and rediscover authentic Christianity—Christianity with power. He observes that an increasing number of non-Christians in Western culture are already expressing dissatisfaction with the naturalistic worldview and are turning to the occult and New Age religions in search of a more adequate view of reality.

Kraft not only presents the problem, but also provides practical ways to escape from "worldview captivity." This

book is filled with firsthand experiences that demonstrate not only a paradigm shift from a naturalistic to a supernaturalistic worldview, but also a "practical shift" from a powerless ministry to a ministry of spiritual power. Theologian Clark Pinnock may be right in hailing *Christianity With Power* as a "landmark publication." It is certainly worthy of your careful study and may well revolutionize your ministry.

## The Seven-Day-a-Week Church

Lyle E. Schaller, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1992, 192 pages, \$10.95, paper. Reviewed by Chad McComas, pastor, Medford, Oregon, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

From the prolific pen of Lyle Schaller flows another great book. *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church* deals with the dynamic of the changing church that moves from one morning a week to a full seven-day activity.

Schaller shares what he believes needs to happen in the local church for it to survive the 1990s. He outlines what churches have done to draw the crowds.

When I read what needs to be done, I realize the radical changes that have to take place in my own church. What makes this perplexing is recognizing the energy and pain that would go into such

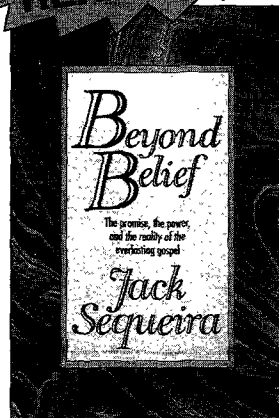
changes. But I have two alternatives: continue as we have been doing since the 1950s and slowly die out; or develop a church with multiple options for the community. Such options involve entry points rather than just Sabbath worship.

My only criticism of Schaller's book is that he does not outline a formula for success. Instead he merely shares what he has learned from researching seven-day-a-week churches. He describes the variety of ways the churches approach leadership, government, worship, and programming. The frustration for me would be deciding what might work in my church.

I reluctantly admit, however, that Schaller has chosen the best way to present his material. I am the one who needs to think carefully about the implications of the changes my church needs to make. I must ask such questions as: What will be best for my members at this time? Where do I start? What can I learn from others?

Schaller has written this book for pastors and spiritual leaders dedicated to leading their congregations through the nineties into the next century. He gives insights essential to survival. Pastors and their local church leaders need to read this book—it will spark a church-changing dialogue.

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**Renewal on the Run: Encouragement for Women Who Are Partners in Ministry**

*Jill Briscoe, Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1992, 176 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by Janet White, a pastor's wife living in Flint, Michigan.*

In her delightful yet practical style Jill Briscoe once again brings to partners in ministry an excellent book. Ministers' wives have specific needs rarely touched in most books for women. This volume offers encouragement for pastors in understanding their helpmates.

Briscoe, herself a pastor's wife, sees the role of ministry partners as a privilege. She suggests how to: cope with limited resources and high expectations; deal with criticism; manage time and stress; nurture friendships; balance home and church life; develop spiritual gifts; work in partnership with pastor husbands; and nurture our relationship with God in the midst of busy schedules.

Since ministry constantly changes,

priorities and flexibility are essential. Pastors' wives are called in the sense that each has a personal spiritual responsibility to God. And God never calls without equipping. Briscoe urges the reader to be hospitable, available, and flexible for God's interruptions. A great deal can be done for the kingdom by "little servants" with "little skill" and "little training" if they have big hearts for God.

Good ministry partners operate like joint heirs in Christ, learning and living His plan together. They don't operate solely as individuals. They simply have to do their best and leave the rest to God, who is not as concerned as people are with roles. A man of quality is never threatened by a woman of equality.

Sprinkled though the book are Briscoe's poems and prayers, illustrations, and pithy quotes. This well-written book addresses the needs, questions, struggles, and joys of all church workers.

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**A man of quality is never threatened by a woman of equality.**

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**Fatal Attractions: Sermons on the Seven Deadly Sins**

*William R. White, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1992, 85 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Caesar Wamalika, chaplain and pastor, Western Kenya Field, Eldoret, Kenya.*

The title of this book indicates an urgency in knowing the names of the seven deadly sins. But William White, a senior pastor of a large Lutheran church, writes that the preacher's goal is to announce the good news that we have

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already been forgiven. Unfortunately, this truth receives little emphasis until the last chapter of the book.

According to White, the task of preaching is not only to announce the ways of God but also to help people understand the ways that are not of God. He feels the sermon must identify and name sin by its right name. The author correctly acknowledges that this is no easy task. The preacher faces the trap of making people feel guilt without leading

them to repentance. He argues that one of the reasons preachers avoid talking about sin is that they perceive the subject as too negative.

White points out that the preacher's greatest challenge is finding ways to awaken an awareness of sin in the hearer. His sermons focus on what he calls the seven deadly sins: pride (the great sin), envy (grumbling against God), anger (let God fight for us), sloth (forever spectators), greed (giving up our idols),

gluttony (food without friends), and lust (settling for sex only).

I feel the author missed what I believe to be the root of all sins—unbelief in God. This root disappears not by discussing the sinful fruit, but by lifting up Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is Christ who creates in us the conviction that we who are dead in sin cannot live any longer in sin.

Only the good news of God's love, forgiveness, and death can free the soul and nourish love. We love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19), and He has broken down the dividing wall that is the hostility between us (Eph. 2:14). "Therefore, if any one is in Christ he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17, RSV).

The book's value lies in its demonstration of the power of proclaiming the gospel in a variety of literary styles. It gives us a timely word for our modern problem of self-deception, especially when we feel we are nice, virtuous, and decent people.

## 20/20 Visions, the Future of Christianity in Britain

*Ed Haddon Willmer, SPCK, London, 1992, 154 pages, £9.99, paper. Reviewed by Patrick J. Boyle, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Hertfordshire, England.*

Winston Churchill observed, "It is never wise to commit suicide, especially if you live to regret it." Likewise to engage in conjectures and live to be found a fool is an experience to be avoided. But the eight contributors to this volume dare to address the question "What will Christianity be like in the year 2020?" This is risky speculation but not irrelevant.

The Christian faith finds itself forced to respond to a whole spectrum of negative issues that are not going to go away. How to respond to them is the nub of the matter. What is going to happen to Christianity as it engages a "New Age society with its free-flowing post-Christian pluralism"? How will the increasing power and influence of non-Christian faiths like Islam affect it? How are the internal change elements in Christian faith going to develop?

What will be the influence of feminism, liberalism, right-wing evangelicalism, ecumenism, charismatics, and the shifting balance in membership from the First to the Second and Third Worlds? Will they be radical, or in the end neu-



*"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers..." -Malachi 4:5-6*

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tral? This book offers a variety of responses. What value we give them will depend upon where we are coming from as we engage them. This book is a stimulating one. It causes reflection. It moves one to ask the question: What is my answer to a 20/20 vision? Do I even have one?

### Out of Every Tribe and Nation

*Justo L. Gonzales, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1992, 128 pages, \$10.95, paper. In Canada contact R. G. Mitchell Family Books, Willowdale. Reviewed by Desmond L. Francis, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Mount Vernon, New York.*

This volume originated in the work of the Roundtable of Ethnic Minority Theologians, a group of United Methodist scholars who met for more than four years.

This theological work attempts to interpret the Bible from the perspectives of various minority groups. The author and members of the Roundtable do not seek to create tension between groups. But they do make distinctions in interpreting biblical passages according to the frame of reference of various people groups. Bible stories are explained in the light of their research. Gonzales gives such examples as Moses and the Israelites moving from Egypt to Canaan, placing emphasis in the story on the position of master in opposition to that of the slave.

This timely book cannot be read lightly, but requires patience and much thought. The varied cultures represented at the Roundtable give the volume depth and enrichment. This is a valuable book that can aid in the cross-cultural understanding and misunderstanding of passages and doctrines of the Bible.

### The Challenge of the Empty Pew

*Linford L. Martin, Greater New York Conference, Manhasset, New York, 1992, 174 pages, including 55 pages of appendices, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Betty Cooney, communication director, Greater New York Conference.*

*Empty Pews* is about the urban churchgoer. Martin uses his former Manhattan pastorate as a case study for his worship-enhancement program. He eschews theological jargon as he highlights the history of worship in the Bible. He discusses contemporary worship and speaks of practical problems such as finding

parking spaces in cities.

The author emphasizes worship's focus on God, but stresses response and interaction as vital in true worship. He suggests ways of stimulating such interaction.

The extensive appendices include questionnaires used in the Manhattan congregation, as well as outlines of eight sermons on worship.

While increasing attendance is important, another goal surfaces in the book. Martin monitors attendance and learns how well his worship approach meets the needs of his flock. But the author's greatest desire is that congregants know joy and richness in worship and in fellowship with each other. He writes about developing a church climate in which this deepened experience can be realized.

### Recently Noted

*The Variety of American Evangelicalism, Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, eds., University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1991, 285 pages, \$39.95, hardcover.*

This scholarly work defines evangelicalism as a set of distinct subtraditions each with its own history, organizations, and priorities. For each of 12 major traditions, a leading scholarly interpreter explores the relationship be-

tween their movement and broader evangelical issues. In summary chapters, the editors draw their own conclusions.

Russell L. Staples, chairman of the Department of World Mission and professor of world mission at Andrews University Theological Seminary, writes on Adventism.

*The Adventist Healthstyle, David C. Nieman, D.H.Sc., Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1992, 127 pages, \$7.95, paper.*

This informative volume gives the results of studies on diet, exercise, stress management, and weight loss. It tells how Adventists compare with the rest of the public in regard to major diseases; how to change habits relating to health; and how your church can promote healthful living.

*Deceived by the New Age, Will Baron, Pacific Press Publishing Assn., Boise, Idaho, 1990, 220 pages, \$5.95, hardcover.*

Long a best-seller among Adventists, this dramatic and well-written first-person account of escape from New Age involvement needs to be read by every Christian. Baron warns people about the dangers associated with New Age philosophies and practices he sees infiltrating some Christian churches.

## Stepping on the Issues

### Wrestling With Reality

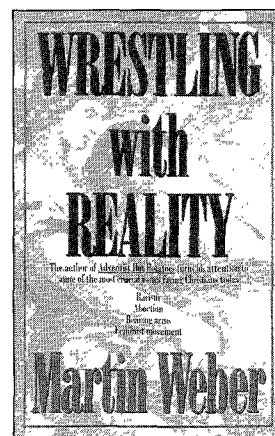
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## Letters

From page 2

portable computer is only half as efficient as one who does? I hope not.

By definition the word minister means to serve. Let's not get so caught up in computer-generated clip art, membership lists, concordance references, multiversion Bibles, and CD ROMs that our ministry, our service, can no longer be effective unless those being served provide the tools for that service.—Donald B. Krpalek, Mount Bethel, Pennsylvania.

### Year of the Pastor

To Pastor Peter Campbell's expectations concerning the "Year of the Pastor" (January 1993), I would add the following. Our denominational administration seems to underestimate the demoralizing impact the present unprofessionally low ministerial remuneration rate has on North American Seventh-day Adventist ministers and their families, with incalculable consequences for the church. It is taking a quiet toll like a slow but certain death.

Also the continued practice of placing as church pastors individuals without the proper professional-academic ministerial training (M.Div.) and, at the same time, not differentiating in remuneration rate between those with that training and those without it is not fair.—Hans Killius, Edmore, Michigan.

## Year of the pastor's wife, too

From page 5

ing news about the people they love. Perhaps you could jot down several important and interesting or humorous events to share. What may seem trivial to you could be of great interest to your wife. Share the "good stuff" with her, not just the fact that the head deacon

chewed you out again because someone left the back door of the church unlocked.

### Show her tangibly how much you love her

Every woman will be different in how this should be specifically applied, but aim for a once-a-week surprise. If it has been a while since you have been this attentive, prepare for some initial skepticism. At first, she may suspect you accidentally put her favorite sweater in the Community Services box, or wiped up oil off the garage floor with her best towels, or spent the holiday money on a splurge at the Christian bookstore. However, once the initial shock of increased attention wears off, she will love you for the thought. And remember, it may be the thought that counts, but it will be your actions she remembers!

### Try some of these "surprises"

- Offer to keep the children while she goes out alone for the afternoon or evening. Feed and bathe the kids while she is gone. And don't wait until she is completely exhausted and feeling hopeless about child-rearing before you step in to give some relief.

- Complete a chore for her that she particularly dislikes. Say something like "I know you like the windows bright and clean but don't like climbing the ladder. I'll do them for you as my gift to you." (Have some smelling salts ready to revive her if you try this one!)

- Plan a date that she will enjoy. Plan one like the kind you enjoyed before you were married when you were still trying to convince her that she really *did* want to be a pastor's wife. Book a baby-sitter. Take her out and assume complete responsibility for the evening. Better yet, set regular dates for these special times that only real emergencies will be allowed to postpone (not cancel).

- Wash and detail-clean her car. (This is a hint to my husband, Jim!) You could even make sure your car is clean if you expect her to enjoy riding in it.

- Whatever you do, somehow find a way to give her the gift of you! Your energy, your time, yourself!

If you want 1993 to really be the Year of the Pastor, try implementing these five general areas of emphasis, and, like the bread cast upon the waters, the rewards will return to affirm you a hundredfold! ■

## Is there any word from the Lord?

From page 19

truly a word from God and constitute a living epistle, often only a firm "Thus says the Lord" will answer the most painful needs of human beings in, as Boisen said, "the central task of the church, that of saving souls." Only the Word will engage the central problems of "sin and salvation."

Ministers and students progressing through the chaplaincy phase of their education are not neutral or unaffected by the discounting of the Word that they receive in their programs. Some grow under the pressure. They cling to the Word and answer, "I know whom I have believed." Like Peter, they remain ready to give a Bible answer to everyone who inquires of them (1 Peter 3:15). Sadly, others absorb the material set before them, and come away as great doers, great pastoral listeners, great "be-withers," but without any abiding confidence in the authenticity of the Bible as the preeminent authority of and tool in pastoral care.

If a direct, practical, Bible-based atmosphere is vanishing from existing chaplaincy programs, we as a people need to reexamine our use of these programs. We need to weigh the gains and losses they offer on an eternal scale. Our students, the shepherds and spiritual healers of tomorrow's flock, may learn marvelous skills of listening, communicating, empathizing, and relating to those from other faiths; but if in the process they lose the wonder, awe, and trust of the Word of God, then we have lost everything. It is time to bring Seventh-day Adventist chaplaincy training back into communion with the life-and-death issues of a biblical gospel. ■

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Lawrence E. Holst, ed., *Hospital Ministry: The Role of the Chaplain Today* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 1985), p. 16. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1951), p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## Children's journals

We provide small, sturdy, ruled notepads for children coming into the sanctuary, along with pencils. They return them after each service. The children's names are on the front covers. We have extra pads for visitors, marked "Visitor" on the front.

The children draw a picture about the sermon, count the number of key words and Bible texts used, and/or write a note to the pastor about anything they wish to share. The deacons/deaconesses choose children to hand out and collect the books. Each entry is stamped with a happy face, and every child collecting 13 stamps is given a small gift during the story time. I am always delighted with the creative drawings and generous appreciation the children express each week.

We also provide a special journal for adults with name, address, and phone number of all attending members, with members' birthdays and anniversaries, and with several Bible reading plans for their devotions. It is a loose-leaf binder designed to be kept with their Bible and hymnal for ready reference, with lots of ruled sheets for notes on any sermon, Sabbath school class, or lecture they attend. Entire sermons can be recalled with only a few key words and illustrations. Many inspirational thoughts and encouraging ideas are lost because we are not prepared to catch them.—Bud Beaty, Mickleham, Victoria, Australia.

## Script pamphlets

*About Choosing the Right Marriage Partner* (South Deerfield, Massa-

chusetts: Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., 1991), 15 pages. Usually sold in bulk orders, the price varies. The first book is \$1 plus handling and postage.

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## Streamlining my library

Recently I took an educational leave of absence in order to attend seminary full-time. I've reflected on what to do with all those books, magazines, cassettes, and files I have accumulated in the ministry while still in the process of acquiring more. Fortunately, I was in an environment in which my less-needed books would be appreciated by other students. At the end of each semester I reviewed sections of my library and brought another load of books to the seminary, where they vanished in a couple days.

Knowing that more than 50,000 Christian books are currently in print in English, with thousands more published annually, I have endeavored to read more selectively. If I read two books a week (or 100 books a year) for 50 years, my lifetime reading achievement would reach only 5,000 books. Having concluded that space is a premium, I developed the following questions as criteria for evaluating and updating my pastoral library:

## If yes, save—if no, toss

### General questions

1. Have I ever read or used this resource, or will I ever read or use this resource?
2. Is it really that good to keep and carry? Is this a superior book on this topic?
3. Do I really need it? Have I used it in the past five years? Does this book have lasting and useful value to me? Will I ever miss it?
4. Does this reflect my primary fields of interest?
5. Is it from a reputable or favorite author or publisher?
6. Has it been recommended by someone whose judgment I respect?
7. Would I spend the money to buy this resource now?

### Specific questions

1. Is it contemporary and relevant? Is it on the cutting edge, making a strong statement for a current issue?
2. Is it scholarly, comprehensive, or content-oriented?
3. Does it contain helpful charts or diagrams? Do I have the whole set?
4. Is this a classic or does it have enduring value? Will this book stand the test of time?
5. Is this one of my sermons or my devotional journals?
6. Does this contain potentially useful sermon illustrations?
7. Will this resource be valuable to pass on to my children?

## If yes, toss; if no, save

1. Do I have this material elsewhere in books? Can it be easily accessed, purchased, borrowed, or replaced if necessary?
2. Is this shallow fluff and plainly unexceptional?
3. Is it outdated or an older edition now updated?
4. Is this someone else's sermon material?
5. Is this a second copy? Is this a paperback rather than hardbound? Has this now been edited and compiled into book format?

In summary, I've learned the following: *Be ruthless. Be very selective. Think twice. When in doubt, toss. Err on the side of streamlining.* My penchant

for book collecting is tempered by my proverb: "There is a time to collect and a time to toss."—Rev. David John Smith, South Nyack, New York.

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