

Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

August 1997

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*"That the World
May Know..."*

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Going beyond unity in diversity

I received the December issue of *Ministry* today. One of the first things I read after the letters was your editorial. You did not say, but I wondered if you asked the person in question, "To which church will you go?"

I suspect that too many of us are willing to cut off our so-called intellectual nose to spite our spiritual face.

None of us are seen exactly like another person by God. I think that this is one reason we are so important to Him, each one of us. Not only do we bring our thoughts before Him, but He also has the opportunity to bring His thoughts to us in a way that is different from the way in which He has presented them to any other person.—Stanley Murphy, Zephyrhills, Florida.

Recasting our vision

Ministry has never been more on track than in the February issue. Many readers will salute you for recasting the original reasons for our existence as a church. Our divine beginnings assure our ultimate triumph.—Roy R. Henneberg, Hayden, Idaho.

Take a vacation—you need it!

Sharon Cress's editorial in the April edition clearly indicates the subtle force of an addiction that our church is full of—workaholism. In a powerful book by Carol Cannon entitled "Never Good Enough" (published by Pacific Press) workaholism is pointed out to be just as damaging as any chemical addiction. It destroys the person with the addiction and the family of the addict. Taking a vacation is a good start, but it will not be able to change the thinking of the addict who believes that they find satisfaction and reward in doing a good job. Work is the drug of choice and it produces the good feelings and the high that continues

to be needed in ever increasing intensity to produce the next high. Our organization needs to take a look at how it fosters workaholism. Even though it may say it is ok to take time for oneself and family the subtle, but strong message is that those who work harder and produce more are more worthy in the organization.—Chad McComas, Medford, Oregon.

Homesick for a story

I wanted to tell you how touched I was by your editorial "Homesick for a Story" in March's *Ministry*. It was a breath of fresh air for me. Your comment that "we are turning from the depth of Judeo-Christian meaning and story as we move to connect ourselves instead with the great horizontal networks that all but take the place of divine mysteries inherent in the upward connection" is so very true!—Caroline Supensky, Ohio.

Divine design for dealing with ethical issues

Elden K. Walter's letter "Divine Designs for Dealing With Ethical Issues" and Ron du Preez's response (November 1996) require another response.

Walter argues that the Jerusalem Council discarded a practice instituted by a clear "thus saith the Lord" without a contrary clear "thus saith the Lord." He says that the community of believers, when led by the Holy Spirit, may reverse a practice formally held as inviolate. Du Preez's reply, however, has an exegetical error. He says, "Obviously, by omitting any reference to circumcision, while mentioning other vital moral matters, they were indicating that they understood that this Old Testament ritual was not binding on Christians. . . . Circumcision was actually part of the ceremonial law (in its broader sense) that was done away with at the cross."

The Jerusalem Council actually

reinforced two laws from the ceremonial law while at the same time discarding circumcision. In Acts 15:20 new believers were told to refrain from blood and the meat of strangled animals. In Deuteronomy 12 God gives detailed instructions on worship and the ceremonies involved. He prohibits the eating of blood (verses 16, 23), not as a health law, although it may well be, but as part of the proper way to eat the sacrifices offered as part of worship. Verse 23 gives the reason for the restriction because "the blood is the life."

If the Jerusalem Council had discussed the wider issue of the whole ceremonial law and what was proper and not proper in worshiping God, they would not have continued these prohibitions. Du Preez cannot have it both ways. He ends his response by saying that the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures will not contradict each other. But they did, if you define contradiction as reversal of what had previously been considered absolute truth, when the Holy Spirit reveals to the community the need to advance in truth even at the expense of such reversal.

God is sovereign. He can undo any command He has given unless it were to violate His own character. For example, God cannot command us not to love. It is the work of the believing community to keep so close to God that it will always be sensitive to His guidance and learn when it is to build on present truth and even at times discard what before had been considered present truth.—J. David Newman, assistant professor of religion, Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Appreciation

Your magazine has been of tremendous insight to me in many instances. Keep up the great work.—Phillip R. Seaton, California, Maryland.

Free Subscription

If you're receiving *Ministry* bimonthly and haven't paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 *Ministry* has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. We believe, however, that the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share our aspirations and faith in a way that will provide inspiration and help to you as clergy. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulder, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you can't use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Requests should be on church letterhead and addressed to the editorial office.



January 12. Another meeting at the office. . . . I was spoken of *very sharply*. . . . Uriah Smith was spoken of some."

"January 20. Meetings today by the ministers for the crooked. . . . Votes of censure passed on 'several.'"

"January 21. The committee are after the crooked."

"February 19. Martha reprov'd for the birthday party. . . . I believe it is now or never with us all, especially us 'crooked ones.'"¹

So appear a few of the early 1870 entries in the diary of George Amadon, an interesting figure in mid-nineteenth-century Adventist history. It is intriguing to note that the forebodings expressed in the February 19 entry became reality shortly after they were written when Amadon, a printer at the Review and Herald, was put out of the Battle Creek church along with a staggering proportion of the members of that congregation. "In three months the official membership of about four hundred was reduced to an apostolic-like twelve."²

The issues in the Battle Creek purging

It seems that members who were unenthusiastic about adopting certain reforms were subjected to this discipline. What is most disconcerting as one tries to revisit this striking little corner of Battle Creek history is that clearly, even those of a moderate bent came under the scrutiny of a group of people who sincerely believed they were only doing the right thing in pressing for their reforms as they did.

Another thing that strikes me about this historical vignette is that the issues by which these people were judged were, though pressing, not crucial in terms of the great essentials of Adventism or the Christian faith. Yet somehow at Battle Creek they were given an inquisitorial weight seriously disproportionate to their actual significance.

In the Spirit of Christ

W I L L E V A

With exceptional insight Jacques Ellul observes the tendency in sincere Christian people to make dominant in the church that which is in fact secondary or even erroneous, "All that one can say is that originally the teaching was *almost* completely in conformity with the truth of God . . . almost, because for some reason or other, whether intellectual or spiritual, there was a small addition, a slippery interpretation, an elision, an overemphasis on a practical theme; yet always very close to a correct understanding of the biblical text. . . . In the ensuing evolution, it is the mistake or elision, that is, the wrong aspect, that achieves dominance. When there is in theological thinking an element of error, a fragment of ambiguity, some dreg of laxity or syncretism, these are the things that capture attention and become the focus of interest. These are the things that Christian people have retained and prized."³ I might add that these are the things that are often enough used to measure the loyalty and theological correctness of one's fellows. It is this disproportion of issue and attitude that dominated at Battle Creek in 1870.

A significant observation

One more observation growing out of the Battle Creek incident is most significant. Though struggles such as the one at Battle Creek are heavily laced with behavioral, theological, or propositional issues, the underlying realities often have much more to do with the spiritual, attitudinal, and personal dynamics of the situation. It is a common human longing in all of us to be part of an elite group, one of the truly initiated, one of those who really "know." Once this elitism grows into a defining way of life within a given

group, it often becomes only natural for the group to take things just one step further. That is, not satisfied with their present degree of distinctiveness, they come to advocate in one way or another the existence of a remnant within the remnant, an even more elite elite.

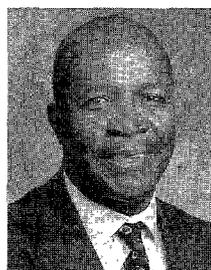
To create this spiritual or theological upper crust, it is necessary to define certain pet issues so precisely that only the select few are seen to be true believers. Again, often the fastidious expression of a relatively obscure aspect of theological teaching (or that of some admired teacher) becomes the inquisitorial criterion applied to everyone. Those who come to believe in it are vulnerable to developing into well-meaning though frighteningly destructive investigative specialists. If the faith once delivered to the saints is seen by them to be significantly threatened from any quarter at all, the stakes immediately go up, and the chances of this kind of attitude swinging into action rise proportionately. This is the kind of context that inspired the horrors of Golgotha.

These same dynamics were part of another more consequential ecclesiastical skirmish in Minneapolis a number of years after the Battle Creek incident. A candid and powerful letter was written to a significant ministerial player in the midst of this later situation. Here are words of unusual wisdom that I know my soul needs to embrace: "You are not even to allow yourself to think unkindly of them, much less to climb upon the judgment seat and censure or condemn your brethren. . . . If a brother differs with you on some points of truth . . . do not misinterpret his words and wrest them of their true meaning. . . . Do not present him before others as a heretic, when you have not with him investigated his positions, taking the Scriptures text by text in the spirit of Christ to show him what is truth. You do not yourself really know the evidence he has for his faith, and you cannot clearly define your own position. Take your Bible, and in a kindly spirit weigh every argument that he

Continued on page 28

UNITY IN DIVERSITY IN CHRIST

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a community of believers from diverse countries, cultures, languages, and ethnic groups. The church sees its mission as taking the “everlasting gospel” of Jesus to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Rev. 7:9).



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This diversity is a good and necessary thing. Indeed, it can be a strength to the body of Christ, as the diversity of gifts is. However, the well-known expression “unity in diversity,” helpful as it is, does not express enough by itself. A further element is indispensable. If unity is to be achieved among us, the church must authentically experience and demonstrate unity in diversity *in Christ*.

Consider Paul’s metaphor of the body as he tried to share with the Corinthians the fundamental importance of unity in diversity in Christ (1 Cor. 12). The church, Paul says, is a body made up of diverse elements. Unity among diverse elements comes through the deep sharing of a relationship of mutual responsibility that includes the various members of the body of Christ. But when diversity disrupts the unity of the body, it often gives rise to a dangerous condition. For example, disruptive diversity becomes destructive and sinful when one part of the body claims that it will not function if all the others do not go along with it. In order for authentic unity to become a reality, every part of the body must judge its distinctive position and examine its faith-

fulness to unity in terms of the ministry and mission of Christ.

Paul was aware of the state of affairs in the Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 he challenged the believers to overcome dissension and division in order to present a picture of real unity and interpersonal faithfulness to the world. Although some would have liked to claim Paul’s support for their particular position or faction, the apostle refused to become part of their bickering and divisions. Instead, he appealed to them *in the name of the Lord* to be united, because he was aware that the divisions among them were more a matter of nationalism, politics, and culture than of theology. Further, the “party politics” in the church was based not on substantive theological diversity, but more on class and economic status. The diversities within the Corinthian fellowship had become contentious and incompatible with the spirit of Christ. Thus Paul appealed to the “body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27) metaphor, finding it helpful in communicating with the Corinthians the concept of unity in diversity in Christ.

Our understanding of the biblical teach-

W A L T E R D O U G L A S

ing of unity in diversity is tied to our understanding of the nature and function of the church. Traditionally Adventists tend to work with an organizational or structural definition of unity. And within that definition there is an increasing tendency to interpret diversity as being acceptable only in the light of a unified institutional structure that is one in polity and hierarchy. But a more accurate biblical and theological image of the church is the unity demonstrated in organism rather than in organization.

Church as an organism

When we view the church as an organism, a body, or a community of believers different in gender, culture, ethnicity, nationality, etc., the question of unity in diversity tends to take on a theological and biblical meaning with cultural and sociological implications rather than the rather limited institutional implications that often tend to dominate our vision of the church.

We know that as the church moves into the future, it will have to be more open to change and become more responsive to its broadening environments without sacrificing its essential faith and unity. If the church is seen more as an organizational machine, the question of unity in diversity will be threatened or seriously jeopardized. This way of viewing the church will cause us to assume mistakenly that as long as the machine is properly serviced and cared for, it will function in precise and predictable ways no matter who issues the directives, where they originate, or to whom they are directed. We will also tend to expect that when a similar "machine" is reproduced, it will own the same predictable features and respond in almost identical ways in any part of the world.

Organisms are quite different from machines. To influence an organism, you must look into its personality and take account of the circumstances to which it is exposed. You must reckon with the elements of unpredictability and individuality. You have to be prepared to listen, reason, revise, and develop new strategies in the light of the different environments in which the organism lives. If this is done responsibly, the process need not threaten or endanger the essential unity of the body; on the contrary, it will enhance authentic unity. This is consistent not only with the principles of unity

in diversity, but with the further divine dimension of unity in diversity *in Christ*, who is the head of the body (Col. 1:18).

This organism paradigm is legitimate and consistent with the diversity of the New Testament images of the church. While Paul refers to the church as a body or as the body of Christ, John speaks of it as a community. Peter describes it as the people of God and the household of faith. All three apostles apply the description "bride of Christ." These designations are more consistent with the organism paradigm than the institutional one.

There is an increasing tendency to interpret diversity as being acceptable only in the light of a unified institutional structure that is one in polity and hierarchy. But a more accurate biblical and theological image of the church is the unity demonstrated in organism rather than in organization.

The New Testament genuinely advocates unity in diversity—unity in core doctrines and diversity of forms expressing the variety within the community. This diversity does not threaten the essential unity of the church, nor does it compromise the proclamation of the gospel.

In the light of this the question of women's ordination, for example, need not lead to disruption of the church's unity in places in which it is appropriate. Rather it may provide the church an opportunity to correlate possible diversity with necessary unity. It will enrich and strengthen fellowship, deepen spirituality, create new possi-

bilities for mission, and multiply the church's effort to accomplish its task in the world. Embracing the differences inherent in the diverse races, cultures, and ethnic makeups of the world church will enhance the unity of the church, if national, cultural, and racial identities are not made to be definitive over and above the makeup of the whole body as it receives its collective identity in Christ. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (1 Cor. 12:13, NIV).

The New Testament spirit

The New Testament church consistently demonstrates a pattern of unity in diversity. Yet often enough the diversity within the church became so acute that Paul had to struggle to prevent outright separation. For example, the discussion in Acts 15 surrounding the issue of circumcision demonstrates the sensitivity of both Paul and Peter in allowing the Gentiles to continue to be an integral part of the church without requiring the rite of circumcision. Peter, Paul and the whole delegation at the Jerusalem Council agreed: "Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are" (verses 10, 11, NIV).

Although Paul's roots were Jewish, he did not allow these roots to be an impediment to his missionary work. His definitive principle amid the diversity he constantly encountered was always Christ. He was aware that human thought of every kind is historically, culturally, and sociologically conditioned. And this knowledge helped him look at the Gentiles with insight, hope, love, mercy, and compassion. Paul spoke to the Gentiles about the great revelation that was given to him. This great revelation was not that the Gentiles should be expected to become Jews in order to benefit from the blessings of God's saving grace, but that every diverse group ultimately belonged to Christ. He consistently established his point by focusing on unity in diversity as it was realized in Christ.

Paul recognized that diversity may include an unnerving array of convictions, but as long as it was not openly divisive, as long

as God's acceptance of divergent men and women was recognized and affirmed, the peace and the building of God's household would be sustained. Paul trusted God to ensure the continuity of the body, even when women and men were unsure of it. He called for an open structure, so long as the gospel itself was honored. In his own life and work Paul demonstrated the principle that it was not enough for him or the church to have a message and be convinced by it. The message had to make sense and have meaning for his hearers. People had to comprehend it in terms of the intellectual discourse and social milieu they respected.

Dare we do less? We must acknowledge that ministry does not have a single universal pattern. The message has, but not the method. We need to remind ourselves consistently that diversity of form does not threaten the essential unity of the body. The biblical understanding of diversity allows us to engage every legitimate gift God has placed in His church when it comes to gender, race, language, culture, ethnicity, tribe, and nationality.

The case of Cornelius

Consider one more biblical example, the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10). This remarkable story has insight and guidance that can aid our understanding of the freedom of the Holy Spirit at work within diverse cultures and backgrounds. As Peter told the story of Jesus to Gentile Cornelius and his household, a remarkable thing happened. The Holy Spirit began His work in the listeners (verse 44). This unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit on a group of Gentiles was surprising and baffling to the Jews who accompanied Peter (verse 45). They were amazed that the Holy Spirit could be available for both Gentiles and Jews. Up to that point it had been a customary belief, indeed, for some a theological conviction, that the Holy Spirit was an ethnic spirit—Jewish. Now they were learning, perhaps for the first time, that God has no favorites. His Spirit is not bound by race, culture, gender, or nationality. Even Peter himself was astonished by this freedom and the transcending power of the Holy Spirit as He fell upon the Gentiles. Peter expressed his acknowledgment of this divine activity: "Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people,

now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?" (verse 47, Jerusalem).

In his dealing with Cornelius, Peter showed the exemplary courage to change. Later he would lapse into his ethnocentrism and thus force a confrontation with Paul (Gal. 2:7-16). But in this case he demonstrated obedience to the leading of the Spirit.

This beautiful story illustrates at least two things that are relevant to our discussion on unity in diversity. In the first place, it demonstrates that the gospel cannot be exclusively identified with any particular culture and that it must be allowed to condition a given culture to be open to the specific work of the Spirit in all cultures. We must acknowledge the truth that God reaches people within their historical and cultural context. Along with this, there may be significant times when aspects of people's culture may, surprisingly to us and counter to our cultural preconceptions, be used by God to build up His kingdom and advance His mission in the world.

Second, the church in a particular diverse

context will have to determine when a specific element, idea, or action is capable of becoming a suitable expression of the good news. The church must be vigilant in detecting how God may be leading it to a deeper comprehension of its mission within a particular culture. When God sees in His providence that the time is right, He may guide the church in this or that part of His vineyard by a startling means that may seem inconsistent with what has been considered the "true" or recognized way. The crucial question is whether the church in that particular place and time is willing and bold enough to follow God's leading. Within the biblical and theological framework of unity in diversity in Christ, the church must be responsibly open to experimentation and variety, or it may fail to follow the prompting of the Spirit Himself.

The church and culture

Historically, within the context of Adventist mission we have sometimes allowed the church to determine when a par-

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ticular element in the culture is capable of becoming a suitable expression of the good news. What yesterday we considered objectionable in our missionary endeavor in a given country may today be considered an opportunity, culturally appropriate for the evangelization of the people. For many Adventists such diversity may not feel safe, but theologically and biblically it is right on the path of the Holy Spirit's guidance. What is required today of both leaders and laity is to act faithfully and responsibly in seeking

to discover how God is at work in a particular culture, time, and place.

Again let us take the example of women's ordination. Against the backdrop of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's dynamic understanding of diverse local conditions in various parts of the world field under the guidance of the Spirit, perhaps our world divisions should reconsider and support North America in its effort to do what is best in the interests of God's mission where they are. We have to trust that what is true and

good in Christ will succeed. Like Peter and Paul, we have to trust God to ensure the continuity of unity in diversity even when men and women are unsure of it. We honor God as the originator of unity by expressing the unity through the diversity we have and share in Christ.

Unity in diversity versus unity through polity

Conversely, North American Adventists must be careful not to think that African, South American, and Asian Adventists must become or think like them. What really holds us together is not unity through polity, but our common confession of "one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." This oneness is articulated and set forth in what we consider to be the core beliefs of Adventism.

The New Testament genuinely advocates a unity in core doctrines, while allowing a diversity of forms that will express the variety within the body of Christ and the Christian experience. The degree of diversity required to fulfill our mission will vary from place to place, from situation to situation. The Holy Spirit has not yet exhausted the structural possibilities and forms of ministries possible in the church. The New Testament does not encourage us to think that something should not be done simply because it is being done for the first time. The apostolic church and the Adventist Church have done things that Jesus did not do. And this thinking by no means applies only to the example of women's ordination.

As I review our global diversities, I am led to conclude that our danger lies not in the decision for or against such issues as women's ordination, but in a structural fundamentalism in which unity is derived through polity, as though polity is almost to be equated with absolute truth. My plea is that we not allow structure to distract us or to sabotage our essential oneness in Christ and His mission.

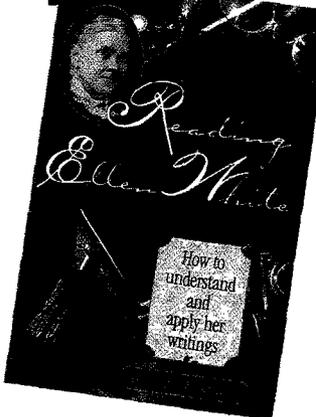
The beauty of the biblical view of unity in diversity in Christ versus unity through polity is the freedom of God to work in His church in fulfilling His mission in the world. He may will a new step in one place while practice continues unchanged elsewhere, for He takes account of all the facts, including sociological and cultural ones. ■

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THE CASE OF THE OVERLOOKED POSTSCRIPT: A FOOTNOTE ON INSPIRATION

The year 1912 was an excellent time for questions to arise over the nature of inspiration. After all, the revised edition of *The Great Controversy* had recently been released, and some were questioning how it was that an inspired document could be corrected or even changed in matters of historical detail.



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The General Conference on inspiration

Similar questions had arisen in the early 1880s when Ellen White had attempted to publish a revision of the first four volumes of *Testimonies for the Church*. In response to objections, the 1883 General Conference session went on record saying, “We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed.”¹ Thus at the 1883 General Conference session the denomination had gone on record as being opposed to adopting a belief in verbal inspiration.

That opposition, however, was not remembered or even accepted by some. That was especially true when a cherished viewpoint came to be challenged. A case in point is Stephen N. Haskell’s reaction to the “new” position on the “daily” of Daniel 8:13.

The “daily” crisis

The struggle over the meaning of the daily

had begun in earnest in 1907 when W. W. Prescott and others began to question the traditional Adventist interpretation. Prescott held that the daily referred to the heavenly sanctuary service rather than to Roman paganism. Haskell reacted by saying that any new interpretation was a rejection of Ellen White’s authority, since in *Early Writings* (pp. 74, 75) she had specifically set the identity of the daily for all time. Even though Mrs. White rejected the use of her writings to settle such issues, Haskell persisted.²

For example, on May 30, 1910, Haskell wrote to Mrs. White, appealing to both her writings and to Adventist tradition. As he saw it, “the ‘new light’ is a stepping off from the platform that has stood for sixty years.” Again, he feared that “if this can be changed, soon there will arise individuals all over the country claiming other changes.” Haskell then went on to suggest that the “new light” forces would even cry for more changes in *The Great Controversy* in order to bring her writings into harmony with the so-called facts that histo-

G E O R G E R . K N I G H T

rians were bringing to light. Haskell would have nothing to do with such thinking. For his part, he cared more “for one expression” in her writings “than for all the histories you could stack between here and Calcutta.”³

In October 1912 Haskell wrote to J. N. Loughborough, noting that an Adventist brother by the name of Manous had raised the issue of “whether the statements of historical facts found in *Great Controversy* are infallibly correct, or whether such statements are based upon [historical] evidence and subject to correction.” To Haskell all such changes were based upon “precisely the same reasoning of the higher critics of the Bible” and “destroys the inspiration of the Testimonies. It introduces a principle that does away with all the force of the chapter in *Early Writings*” on issues related to the daily. “The whole question,” noted Haskell, “resolves itself into this: Has God set any man to rein up the Spirit of God by contradictory historians?” Four days later he mailed a copy of the Loughborough letter to W. C. White, claiming in an accompanying note that “the questioning of [Ellen White’s] writings on points of chronology or of dates according to my mind is entering upon forbidden ground.”⁴

A very important letter

W. C. White’s reply on October 31 is of crucial importance to a correct understanding of inspiration in its relationship to the *details* (rather than broad outlines) of history. “Regarding Mother’s writings,” penned White, “she has never wished our brethren to treat them as authority on history. When *Great Controversy* was first written, she oftentimes gave a partial description of some scene presented to her, and when Sister Davis [Mrs. White’s literary assistant] made inquiry regarding time and place, Mother referred her to what was already written in the books of Elder Smith and in secular histories. When *Great Controversy* was written, Mother never thought that the readers would take it as an authority on historical dates and use it to settle controversies, and she does not now feel that it ought to be used in that way.”

White went on to note that “if it had been essential to the salvation of man that he should have a clear and harmonious understanding of the chronology of the world, the Lord would not have permitted the disagreements and discrepancies which we find in the

writings of Bible historians.”⁵

In this letter we find an interesting example of two Adventist leaders “doing battle” through the use of two different theories of inspiration. S. N. Haskell espoused a rigid, inerrantist, verbal approach, while W. C. White held a more open view. The view that White held had been the one that Haskell had condemned in his October 19 letter to Loughborough. That perspective, Haskell claimed, utilized “precisely the same reasoning [as] the higher critics of the Bible,” which “destroys the inspiration of the Testimonies.” Both Haskell and White, it should be noted, held that Ellen White’s inspiration was of the same quality as that of the Bible writers.

In this letter we find an example of two Adventist leaders “doing battle” through the use of two theories of inspiration: S. N. Haskell espoused a rigid, inerrantist, verbal approach, while W. C. White held a more open view.

Of course, W. C. White was aware of the differences between himself and Haskell. As a result, he met Haskell’s charges head-on near the conclusion of his October 31 letter to him. “I believe, Brother Haskell, that there is danger of our injuring Mother’s work by claiming for it more than she claims for it, more than Father ever claimed for it, more than [Elders] Andrews, Waggoner, or Smith . . . ever claimed for it. I cannot see consistency in our putting forth a claim of verbal inspiration when Mother does not make any such claim, and I certainly think we will make a great mistake if we lay aside historical research and endeavor to settle historical questions by the use of Mother’s books as an authority when she herself does not wish them to be used in any such way.”⁶

I have devoted considerable space to W. C. White’s October 31 letter to Haskell for several reasons. It not only raises important issues, but more significantly, it has a handwritten postscript that is of the utmost importance. That postscript reads: “I approve of the remarks made in this letter.” It was signed “Ellen G. White.”

The unseen postscript

Haskell, unfortunately, never saw Mrs. White’s postscript. As a result, he continued his crusade against her son and his purportedly higher critical view of inspiration. On November 21 Haskell wrote to W. C. White, stating that if the principles of inspiration he suggested in his October 31 letter were advocated, “then you take the pith out of *Great Controversy*,” since that book provided a lot of historical and chronological detail. Haskell went on for several more pages to espouse his views on verbalism and inerrancy. To Haskell there could be no correction of the historical details in an inspired document, because “a prophet is the only gift placed in the church whose testimony is recognized as God’s voice. . . . The Lord has promised to be with [the prophet’s] mouth. . . . All reasoning, all questioning, should be laid [to] one side when God speaks. . . . When the prophet speaks God controls the tongue.” Thus a prophet’s words are “the words of God.” As a result, there are no valid reasons for changing historical dates and facts in Ellen White’s writings.⁷

Haskell’s assault on what he believed to be only W. C. White’s (and not his mother’s) theory of inspiration brought forth a forceful rejoinder from White on January 1, 1913. “When that [October 31] letter was written,” he told Haskell, “I placed it in Mother’s hand as I had many other such letters. I handed it to her without comment, with the hope that if there was anything in it that was wrong or misleading, she would call my attention to it. The next day I asked for the letter that I might mail it, and I asked if she had read it. She said yes, she had read it, and she was glad I had written to you just as I had.”⁸

It was around that time that Ellen White must have affixed her postscript to her son’s October 31 letter that affirmed her approval. Apparently W. C. White never saw the copy with the postscript, or else he would have forwarded it to Haskell and brought closure

to their disagreement. As it was, all he could send Haskell was a report of her oral response. But that was not enough for Haskell, who did not fully trust W. C. White's word on the topic, as evidenced by his November 21 letter in which he had implied in a roundabout way that White was able to manipulate his mother's writings because of her age.

Who is causing the shaking?

The upshot of this correspondence and conflict was that Haskell did not accept White's remarks regarding his mother's approval of his more open views on inspiration. Haskell's doubt of W. C. White is reflected in a letter he wrote to him on January 8, 1913. "I also know," penned Haskell, "there is a view of your mother's work, and her writings, among some of our leading brethren . . . that is laying a foundation for a tremendous shaking on the Testimonies."⁹ The tenor of the letter implies that W. C. White's views on Mrs. White's inspiration would contribute significantly to last-day delusion in the church.

White's sensitivity to Haskell's implications is evident in a letter he wrote a week later and revised on February 7. He was sorry that Haskell considered his views on inspiration to be "incorrect and dangerous." White quoted Haskell's January 1 statement that there was a view of Mrs. White's work taken by some of the denomination's leaders that was "laying a foundation for a tremendous shaking on the Testimonies" and turned it on its head. From White's perspective, Haskell was the culprit. White wrote, "Some have expressed to me the opinion that the extreme and extravagant and arbitrary positions taken by a few men, including yourself, are doing more to bring the shaking over the Testimonies than any other one element in the work."

In the same paragraph that includes the above charge against Haskell, White also noted the nature of his extremes. As White saw it, a focal point of the difficulty was that "a few men insist upon pressing on the people and teaching them the theory of verbal inspiration, which theory Mother does not stand for, which the General Conference does not stand for, which my father never stood for."¹⁰

On February 15 a rather disgruntled Haskell wrote to W. C. White that he would lay down his "special burden on the subject"

since he was apparently causing division.¹¹

A lesson still unlearned

But Haskell hadn't learned much from the experience. In September 1919 he wrote the following to a conference president: "Do I believe that Sister White's writings are verbally inspired as much as the Bible? Yes; I do, and can show it by a line of argument the same as the New Testament is inspired, providing you believe that Sister White was a prophetess."

Haskell then went on to give seven reasons why he believed "in the verbal inspiration of Sister White's writings." According to Haskell, "Satan has worked and is working with all signs and lying wonders, and deceivableness and unrighteousness to deceive if possible the very elect" in the area of verbal inspiration.¹²

Such reasonings, as set forth by Haskell on inerrancy and verbalism, have not died out in Adventism.¹³ They are alive and well in spite of Ellen White's clear statements found in such places as the opening sections of *Selected Messages*, book 1, and the resolution of the 1883 General Conference session. Rigidity on the topic of inspiration in the past has set many up for disappointment and crisis. Beyond that, overwrought arguments on inspiration still continue to do harm by spinning theories that cannot bear the weight of evidence.

Perhaps one reason for the continuing

problem is that too many Adventists still don't take Ellen White's convictions seriously, even when they are presented in such places as the overlooked postscript to her son's October 31, 1912, letter. We need to remember that no church has ever arrived at truth by overlooking evidence. ■

¹ "General Conference Proceedings," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 27, 1883; see also Jerry Allen Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship Between the Prophet and Her Son* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1993), pp. 122-129.

² Gilbert Murray Valentine, "William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1982), pp. 389-410, 423-426.

³ S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, May 30, 1910.

⁴ S. N. Haskell to J. N. Loughborough, Oct. 19, 1912; S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, Oct. 23, 1912.

⁵ W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Oct. 31, 1912; cf. Nov. 4, 1912.

⁶ W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Oct. 31, 1912.

⁷ S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, Nov. 21, 1912.

⁸ W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Jan. 1, 1913.

⁹ S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, Jan. 8, 1913.

¹⁰ W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Feb. 7, 1913; cf. Jan. 15, 1913.

¹¹ S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, Feb. 15, 1913.

¹² S. N. Haskell to a conference president, Sept. 23, 1919.

¹³ See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Berean Books, 1996).

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GIVING WITH JOY

Several years ago I read detailed Global Mission strategy documents that included descriptions of projects to be initiated. The finance page had a general reference to “faith” and the “cattle on a thousand hills.” It provided small comfort to a skeptical conference treasurer.



Victor Pilmoor is the treasurer of the South England Conference in the United Kingdom.

The kind of governance attributed at its root to the wisdom of Jethro has served us well for many years. It has enabled Seventh-day Adventists to project the gospel throughout the world and build institutions that address local needs. However, this strength is presently counterbalanced by growing overheads that inhibit deeper penetration. Critics within the church feel that the remoteness of our system lacks the accountability and feedback that it once had when we were a small body. These tensions create competition within the church for resources, which in turn poses a threat to further ordered growth. We need to recognize weaknesses and threats in the system while acting on identified opportunities. This recognition and action must include and emphasize such foundational principles as the joy of salvation applied to a culture of graciousness and accountability.

Emphasize the positive

The generation of Adventists born since World War II and their offspring do not support the church with the same enthusiasm and commitment common in their forebears. This may be a result of diminished vision, but the change parallels a shift away from perceived legalism to an experiential

emphasis in which obedience is a response to the joy of salvation. There are many who engage in the law, liberty, license debate. At the same time there are few who are willing to explore the risks of revisiting the imperative language of Malachi 3:10. Yet in most Seventh-day Adventist churches tithing envelopes perpetually remind members of their need for commitment and responsibility, while they emphasize the cost of mission and spell out formulated percentages to guide the giving in the local church.

We need to ask ourselves some hard questions. How do we communicate the tithing principle to children? Are adults that different from children? What prompts people to give gifts to one another, and what are people actually doing when they give each other gifts? Do we actually enjoy a repetitive routine in giving, or can it become monotonous? Do we project technical stewardship dogma to the exclusion of genuine joy?

When we ask such questions, loaded as they may be, some challenging and interesting opportunities become clear. For example, when we understand that in giving “it is the thought that counts,” and we encapsulate our regard for the recipient of our gift in the way we package and present our

V I C T O R P I L M O O R

gift, there is a fundamental change in us and in the spirit in which we give. Should it be much different when we bring God our offering?

In the South England Conference we have produced a variety of colorful tithe envelopes with messages that emphasize the joys and blessings that God has promised in connection with giving. This is an experiment to determine whether we can enhance the experience of joy through giving.

Although the jury is still out, one small example seems to characterize the change we are beginning to see. We have a member who sends her tithe directly to the conference. Usually the tithe has been accompanied by a letter describing and explaining her ailments. We have responded with thanks, sympathy, and encouragement. Recently the woman sent in a substantial donation enclosed in an envelope designed for children. This time her covering letter was filled with cheer. We think that our positive approach to her was helpful. Members may not contribute more, but they may contribute in a more joyful spirit.

Identify the blessing intended

Our stewardship materials have always been specific with respect to the meaning and calculation of the tithe, and have detailed how welcome a second tithe would be. We are less specific when it comes to the consequential blessing! The really sustainable blessing is in the *overall community that we build as the body of Christ*. A community that is rich in opportunity and personal experience, that rewards each member with trust, acceptance, and support, from which they become experientially and even materially prosperous, is the blessing that God intends.

Widen accountability

"I give my tithe to the Lord. How He uses it is not my problem" characterizes the trust placed in church leaders by many of the senior faithful. This mystique is not shared by a younger contemporary generation who demand serious accountability. Many today tend to respond through direct giving approaches, funding foundations and projects that operate with the marketing skill of a major corporation. We can respond with authoritarian policies, but they avail us little. The church at every

level needs to recognize the value, opportunity, and example available in willing accountability. This is inherently a part of stewardship. It builds trust. Trust builds relationship, and relationships are the building blocks of community.

During the past three years our conference has embraced the practice of more open governance. Our budgets, financial statements, projections, and performance data are readily available to all in a timely and understandable fashion. Funding decisions have been inclusive where possible.

Several years ago I scrawled a few words of encouragement and thanks on a compliment slip to a member who had returned tithe. She wrote back thanking me for my few words and noted that this was the first time in 40 years that her church had expressed thanks for her contribution.

Many members have expressed pride in their conference in contrast to the suspicions they once held. It has changed the nature of management from governance by stealth to governance through open debate. One cannot claim without question that tithe has increased as a direct consequence, but it has nevertheless increased.

Cultivate a theology of gratitude

Several years ago I scrawled a few words of encouragement and thanks on a compliment slip to a member who had returned tithe. She wrote back thanking me for my few words and noted that this was the first time

in 40 years that her church had expressed personal thanks for her contribution.

The Old Testament concept of sacrifice is often associated with sin, penance, or the support of the Levitical system. The idea that the priests should respond with thanks does not seem obvious, but it is certainly consistent with wise, gracious, and godly leadership.

Whatever our theology, we live in a society that emphasizes customer intimacy. Along with this, consumers expect to be served with excellence. Whatever their personal spiritual experience, our members will compare the attention they receive from commercial enterprises with the care and responsiveness offered by the church community and its corporate body.

In our conference we are in the process of determining how we can express genuine and personal thanks to our members. Corporate statements in the conference paper lack the personal touch. Brief flyers mailed out lack credibility. One idea we are contemplating is from time to time enclosing thank-you cards with offering receipts.

Clarify the focus of stewardship

For many of our members stewardship has become synonymous with faithfulness simply in tithe. Stewardship directors have tried to broaden the perspective to include time and talents. Others have tried to establish Christocentric authenticity. The perspectives have all been valid, but few have captured the imagination of ministers or members.

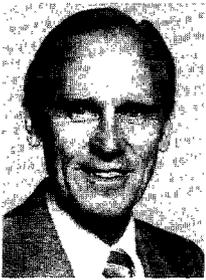
Since its inception the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been dependent on the largesse of North American members. Much of their generosity stems from a culturally entrenched puritanical work ethic and concept of stewardship, which they probably take for granted. Much of the rest of the church, though experiencing rapid growth, is by contrast existing in cultures where debt, poverty, and unemployment are endemic. Francis Fukuyama in his book *Trust: Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, comments on how the "radius of trust" varies from one culture to another. Interestingly, his thesis demonstrates the correlation between people's ability to trust and their social prosperity.

Much of stewardship has to do with the

Continued on page 28

WHERE IS THE STOREHOUSE?

When it comes to the returning of tithe, is the storehouse the local conference or the local church? Some believe the storehouse is the local church. The world church considers the local conference/mission as the storehouse.



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Which is biblical? Unfortunately, the Bible does not provide a clear answer. A review of ancient Israel's usage of the storehouse principle can help us ascertain what latter-day Israel's practice ought to be.

The storehouse in the Old Testament

The earliest reference regarding the remittance of tithe is that of Abraham returning tithe to the high priest Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20). In this case Abraham considered Melchizedek to be the storehouse.

Before crossing the Jordan River, the Israelites were instructed by the Lord to return all tithes to Him (Lev. 27:30, 32) and He would "give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting" (Num. 18:21, NIV). The Levites also were instructed to tithe (verse 28).

After the conquest of Canaan, the Levites, given the fact that they were to "have no allotment in their land," nor "any share" (Num. 18:20)* lived in scattered areas, usually near one of the 48 specially designated cities (Num. 35:6). Soon after the crossing of the Jordan the Israelites pitched the tabernacle at Gilgal, then later at Shechem, Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeon. All male Israelites were enjoined to come and worship at

least three times annually (Ex. 23:17) and were instructed to bring their offerings with them for "no one shall appear . . . empty-handed" before the Lord (verse 15). Only at the place designated by the Lord could sacrifices be offered (Deut. 12:11).

Those who view the local church as the storehouse may cite Deuteronomy 14:22-29 as support. This is seen by Jewish scholars as the "second tithe."¹ Ellen White concurs with this interpretation. Just as there were many ceremonial sabbaths but only one holy weekly Sabbath, so also there were other tithes along with the sacred tithe used only for Levitical support.²

Period of the monarchy

Early in his reign David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6). His son Solomon constructed a beautiful temple in Jerusalem that became a permanent place for the storehouse (1 Kings 6). With the passing of time the practice of returning tithes and offerings to one of the nearest 48 designated cities was discontinued. It appears that all Israelites returned the required tithes and offerings directly to the Temple storehouse.

Note the practice in vogue during Hezekiah's reign. "He commanded the

people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, so that they might devote themselves to the law of the Lord. As soon as the word spread, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. *The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah* also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the tithe of the dedicated things that had been consecrated to the Lord their God, and laid them in heaps. In the third month they began to pile up the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month. When Hezekiah and the officials came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord and his people Israel. Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps. The chief priest Azariah, who was of the house of Zadok, answered him, 'Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and have plenty to spare; for the Lord has blessed his people, so that we have this great supply left over.' Then Hezekiah commanded them to prepare store-chambers in the house of the Lord; and they prepared them. Faithfully they brought in the contributions, the tithes and the dedicated things" (2 Chron. 31:4-12).

This passage suggests that after the division of the 12 tribes, the 48 specially designated cities with the Levites living near them, no longer functioned as the cities had during the period of the judges. Now with different conditions in the cities, it was more expedient to return the tithes and offerings directly to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Post-Babylonian captivity

After the Babylonian captivity, under Nehemiah's reformatory leadership, he re-introduced the tithing and remittance systems as practiced earlier. "And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse" (Neh. 10:38, 39).³ "On that day men were appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the first fruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the law for the priests and for the Levites from the

fields belonging to the towns; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered" (Neh. 12:44).

Later, between Nehemiah's two terms as governor, the people lapsed into apostasy and stopped returning the tithe. Upon his return, Nehemiah remonstrated with both leaders and people for neglecting the house of God (Neh. 13:11). They repented and reinstated the tithing system (verse 12). It was during this time that God, through the prophet Malachi, called on His people to reform in both corporate and individual lifestyles. "Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, 'How are we robbing you?' In your tithes and offerings"

Now with
*different conditions in the
 cities, it was more expedient
 to return the tithe and
 offerings directly to the
 temple in Jerusalem.*

(Mal. 3:8). Then follows God's command and promise: "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (verse 10). Notice that the words "storehouse" and "my house" refer to the same location.

Where was the storehouse? Clearly it was the Temple in Jerusalem.

The thrust of Malachi's words and the people's understanding of them was clear. Both understood the word "storehouse" to refer to the sanctuary, the Temple in Jerusalem. There may be some validity in the argument that the remittance locally of tithe to the Levites took place in small villages and towns at certain times in the past. But at the time of Nehemiah and Malachi, it was unequivocally understood that Malachi

was referring to the Temple in Jerusalem as the storehouse.

New Testament practice

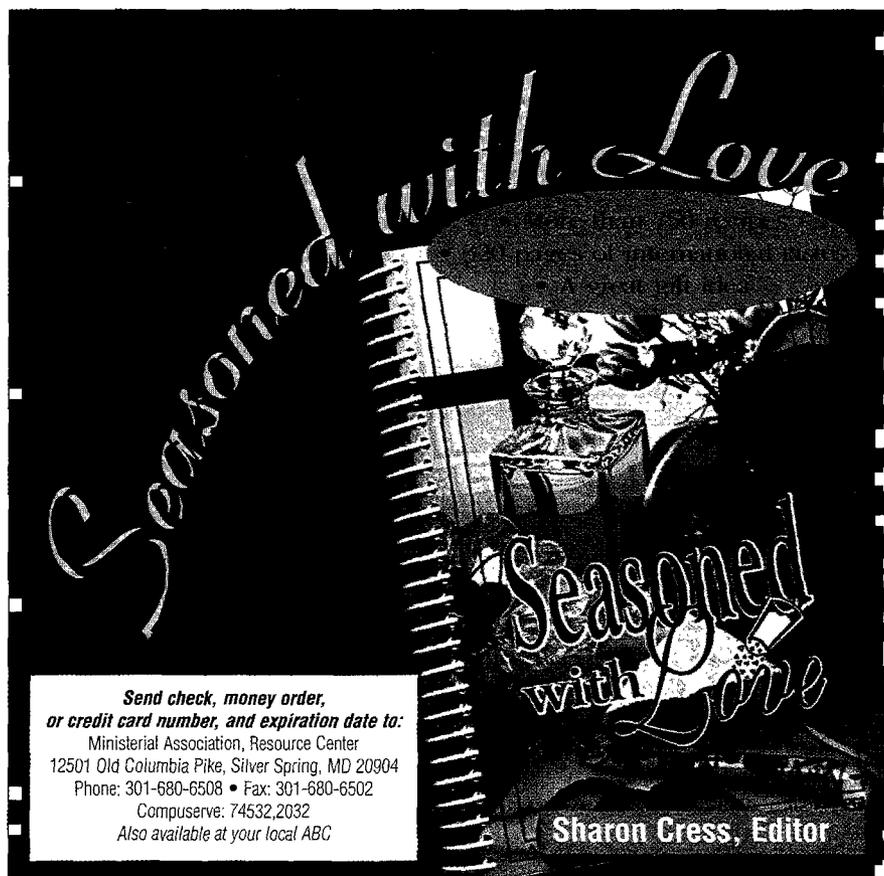
Only 11 verses in the New Testament refer to tithe. Not one of them gives any information regarding the storehouse. Thus we are unable to ascertain how early Christian believers practiced the "storehouse" principle. The New Testament does tell us that Paul collected funds from some churches for the poor believers in Jerusalem suffering from famine (2 Cor. 8:19). Apart from a few instances about offerings there is no information on collecting the tithe. Hence we are left to rely on the Old Testament for understanding the meaning of "storehouse" and its usage.

Denominational usage

Two years before the organization of the General Conference, a small group of leaders and believers convened in Battle Creek, April 26-29, 1861, to prepare for the incorporation of the publishing association. Prior to this meeting many members felt that the time had come to consider denominational organization as well. (There were many who opposed formal organization of the church.) Thus during the publishing conference it was voted that the nine ministers present write an address for the *Review and Herald* on that subject.

The outcome was a carefully prepared conference address entitled "Organization," signed by J. H. Waggoner, Joseph Bates, James White, J. B. Frisbie, J. N. Loughborough, M.E. Cornell, E. W. Shortridge, Moses Hull, and John Byington. It set forth the basic principles that have guided the denomination ever since. The writers proposed (1) a more thorough organization of local churches; (2) proper organization of "state or district conferences," which would grant ministerial credentials; and (3) the holding of "general conferences" that would be "fully entitled to the name" as representing the will of the churches. The article appeared in the June 11, 1861, *Review and Herald*.

The local church would appoint elders and deacons. At the state level, the conference would authorize the licenses of ministers to preach, pay the ministers, hold title of church properties, and *receive the tithe*. The general conference was to be a convening of



evangelistic endeavors. The local churches, having no legal status, delegated to the local conference the responsibility of employing individual ministers. At present newly organized local churches are accepted into "the sisterhood of churches" in the local conference based on these same conditions. This is done at regularly called constituency meetings.

Ellen White's understanding

What was Mrs. White's understanding of "storehouse"? Very little can be found in her writings about the "storehouse" principle, simply because it was not an issue. However, note what she says: "If our churches will take their stand upon the Lord's word and be faithful paying their tithe into His treasury, more laborers will be encouraged to take up ministerial work."⁵ The context clearly suggests that by "treasury" she meant the local conference.

Mention should be made of a time when Dr. Kellogg was returning to the local conference all the sanitarium workers' tithe and was contemplating discontinuing this practice. Mrs. White was greatly distressed at this. "For him to separate the tithe from the treasury," she wrote, "would be a necessity I greatly dread."⁶

Advantages of the conference storehouse

To suggest that the local church become the storehouse is possible. But at what cost? It would seriously disrupt the organizational and governance structure of the denomination, as we now know it. It would, in all probability, destroy one of the most remarkable systems of church financing witnessed in the past century and a half. The world mission program, as it now exists, would cease to function.

We are grateful our Lord led early Adventist leaders to establish the present system of church finance. By adopting the concept of the local conference as the storehouse, a small band of believers laid the necessary foundational financial support for the miraculous development of our church into one of the most remarkable world missionary movements in modern times. It is based on the biblical principle of returning an honest tithe and designating the local conference as the storehouse. Ellen White never disagreed with this pro-

delegates of all state conferences and reflect the will and thinking of all the local churches.

By October 1861 the first conference of the future Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized—the Michigan Conference. One of the first items of business was to arrange a fixed salary for the ministers of the Michigan Conference. It also issued letters of credentials that were renewed annually. Funding came from the members via the churches composing the new conference. This resolution in essence had the practical effect of making the conference the storehouse.

Two years later, in 1863, the General Conference was formally organized. At the same meeting a model constitution for state conferences was prepared and recommended to the delegates for all state conferences. Article III of the model constitution said that funds were to be raised by the Systematic Benevolence plan and other gifts, and reported regularly to the conference treasurer. This article informs us that our pioneers intended that the source of funding for the local conference should be the members of constitu-

ent churches of the state conference. Thus the tithe and other offerings would form the base for conference finances. This fund was to be used for the support of evangelistic/ministerial work.

The General Conference work was at first financed by irregular appropriations from the state conferences. In 1878 the General Conference Committee recommended that conferences pay a tithe on their income to the General Conference. Later, when union conferences were organized in 1901, the conferences paid a tithe of their income to the unions, which in turn paid tithe to the General Conference.⁴

It must be noted that local churches did not employ and pay the ministers. Nor did they grant licenses and credentials. It was the local conference that assumed these responsibilities. Today local churches are not legal entities, but the local conference association is. Churches join together to form a conference/association that serves their needs as a legally recognized body to hire and supervise the ministry, to pay the ministers' salaries, and to collect tithe and offerings from the churches to fund

cedure, a practice paralleling nearly 50 years of her ministry. Mrs. White upheld the principle of designating the local conference as the storehouse. If it had been morally wrong, she would certainly have had much to say to right that wrong. But this is not the case.

Conclusion

Our discussion leads to the following conclusions:

1. Scripture teaches that tithe is to be returned to the storehouse.
2. Tithe remittance practices always involved either the tabernacle storehouse or the Temple storehouse in Jerusalem.
3. In the Old Testament the location of the storehouse was not always permanent, because the tabernacle storehouse moved from place to place until it was located permanently in Jerusalem.
4. In the place of the Temple storehouse in Jerusalem, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general assembly decides the location of the storehouse.

5. Actions taken by our founders to designate the local conference as the storehouse were within the will of God. No inspired message came from Mrs. White to contradict this action. She in fact wrote that church members should obey the voice of the church because Christ has delegated to His church the right of decision.⁷

6. There is no prohibition in Scripture to designate either the local conference or the local church as the storehouse, and from the inception of the organized church, the local conference has been designated the storehouse. ■

*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture passages in this article are from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹ See "Tithe in Rabbinical Literature," *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

² See Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 530. Deuteronomy 14:28 indicates there was even a "third tithe."

³ These verses give the impression that the only tithe brought to Jerusalem was the Leviti-

cal tithe and that the rest was stored in the local villages. However, Nehemiah 12:44 is not as clear as we would like; the meaning is not certain. "The portions required by the law for the priests and for the Levites" were brought to the Temple. These portions included the tithe, as suggested in verse 47: "All Israel gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers. They set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the descendants of Aaron." All these tithes were stored in the temple. Perhaps Nehemiah 10:38 is simply saying the Levites brought their own tithe of the tithes to the temple, and the people brought theirs to the local storage places in the villages. The other passages indicate that all tithe went to Jerusalem for storage.

⁴ Information in the preceding six paragraphs is from "Organization, Development of, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church" and "Tithe," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1996), vol 11, pp. 258-270, 778-780.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 249.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol 7, p. 366.

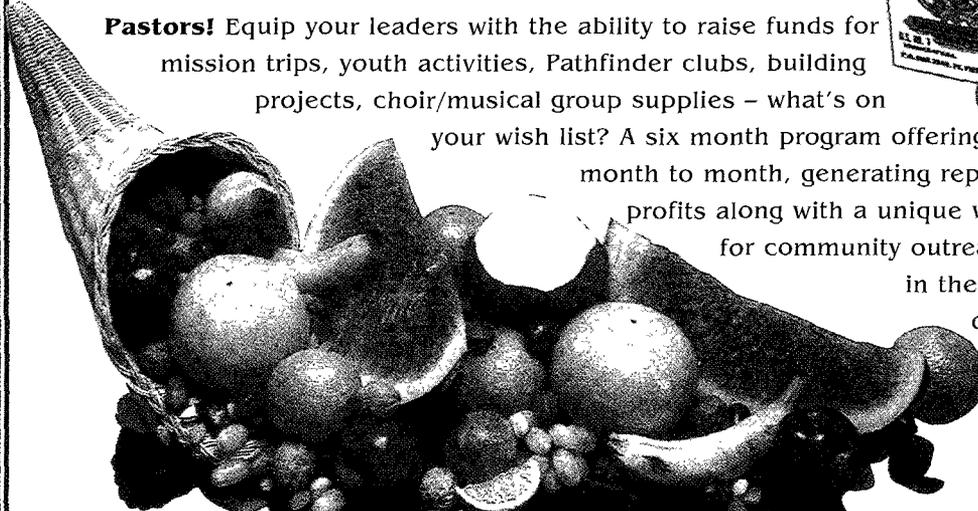
⁷ See "The Unity of the Church," *Bible Echo*, Sept. 1888.

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JOURNEYING THROUGH THE CRISIS OF LONELINESS

Loneliness “is the most desolate word in all human language. It is capable of hurling the heaviest weights the heart can endure. It plays no favorites, ignores all rules of courtesy, knows neither border nor barrier, yields no mercy, refuses all bargains, and holds the clock in utter contempt.



Hyveth Williams is senior pastor of Campus Hill church, Loma Linda, California.

It cannot be bribed; it will not be left behind. Crowds only make it worse, activity simply drives it deeper. Silent and destructive as a flooding river in the night, it leaves its slimy banks, seeps into our dwelling, and rises to a crest of despair. Tears fall from our eyes as groans fall from our lips—but loneliness, that uninvited guest of the soul, arrives at dusk and stays till dinner.” *

Who among us have not had an affair with this seductive siren of solitaire?

For many years I felt like the lady love of loneliness whose long visits left me in despair and suicidal. Not even the golden rays of the Son of righteousness that shone into my life and dramatically changed me were able to seep into the dark emotional wounds and consuming anguish caused by an ever-present sense of loneliness. It haunted every moment of the first few years of my ministry, especially when I lived in denial,

pretending that pastors are not plagued by this intruder. It was difficult to deal with these feelings in a denomination in which a majority of the pastors are men who seem to be happily married with their carefully groomed 2.5 children. These feelings were exacerbated when I was isolated by my peers who protested against women in ministry or were uncomfortable with a woman of color breaking into the traditions of a White male-dominated organization.

One is the loneliest number

The primary meaning I am giving to the word “loneliness” is a lack of companionship that results from being single or friendless. In the beginning God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” and although He has called me to the pastoral ministry as a single person, I must confess I have finally admitted He is right and that

H Y V E T H W I L L I A M S

one is definitely a lonely number, especially as a pastor. I have, however, learned to function as an amputee. I use that metaphor after learning that when one loses a limb, the brain often forgets, and insists on normal functions from that part of the body. Hence an amputated arm may still try to reach for and pick up objects.

As a divorcée whose ex-husband is deceased, I am intimately acquainted with loneliness. While journeying through the crises of loneliness, I placed undue stress on myself by pretending to be whole when I was really suffering from the realities of being a single parent and pastor who was alone and sometimes lonely. There were times I wished I could be real while counseling people through their pain when my heart was overcome by similar fears, or express my desire for a companion with whom I could share joys and sorrows without seeming desperate. At times I would go to pastoral meetings longing for a sense of belonging, collegiality, and approbation only to have no one attempt to hold a meaningful conversation with me. I soon became accustomed to eating alone and living in my head.

It would not be fair to suggest that these were my first or only encounters with loneliness. I've always been alone and for most of my life, until God healed my brokenness, suffered the shame of being abandoned by all the men in my life. First, my father left me to be raised by a series of strong women. I had no male role models from whom to draw understanding of true companionship. Second, childhood memories were marred by recollections of sexual violations by relatives. Only the impact of Christ in my life put an end to the cycle of mental and emotional shame that was my legacy. As a result I was unable to trust, and those partners who continued the abuse or friends who betrayed and left calluses of loneliness that nothing seemed able to shake.

Fig leaves of work and success

As a nonbeliever I sought comfort from drugs, alcohol, and promiscuity. This created a vicious circle of shame, low self-esteem, and a deep sense of loneliness that not even marriage or other human relationships satisfied. As a sanguine/choleric I needed at-

ention, but also had to be in charge of relationships. I hated being alone, but often rejected the attempts made by others to get close to me. In spite of the outward happiness that accentuated my life, I was very paranoid in relationships. I welcomed Christianity and the promise of salvation from all the pain of the past. I was sure that I would be immediately cured of that old empty feeling, but to my dismay, it seemed to intensify as my relationship with God increased. I thought since I had committed my life to God, feelings so strongly associ-

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ated with sin would disappear. They did not. As time passed, I felt more insecure about sharing them with anyone, fearing rejection. The vicious cycle of shame and loneliness was overwhelming. I thought I was the only person in ministry who felt this way, not realizing that many others had learned to cloak and disguise their issues just as I was doing. The fear of discovery caused me to isolate myself in a cocoon of pretentious piety that sometimes even I believed was authentic. I became guilt-ridden and fearful that others might discover this weakness. I felt that my only recourse was to hide behind the fig leaves of work and success in ministry. I was like a drug addict in attitude and actions. I neglected my son, whom I had raised as a single parent, by rationalizing

that my accomplishments would be good for both of us. In the end I drove him from the God whom I professed to love so much. Fortunately, that relationship has been restored, but I can't help wondering if this may not be a significant factor in the alienation that pastor's children experience.

Most of the time I could cope with my loneliness. Spring was the exception. I lived on the east coast of the United States where there were several months of dreary winter when people sheltered themselves indoors, and spring was a time of bountiful beauty that I welcomed with a sweet, yet sickening sense of being, but not belonging. Seeing people with their mates joining the birds and bees in the grand ritual celebration of spring while I was always and still alone sometimes choked the breath out of my body and left me numb to the vibrancy of life around me. I really don't know how I survived those seasons. That's why I treasure God's intervention that curtailed the loneliness.

Secrets are the source of shame and suffering

A few months after I became pastor at the Boston Temple, our church had a renovation and rededication of the sanctuary attended by more than 700 participants. I was exhausted from the work, but exhilarated by the success of the project when something happened to throw me over the edge of despair.

I had invited the popular New England group, Epic Brass, to present a worship in music. Their leader suggested that at the end of a certain movement of the Bach piece being performed, there would be a noticeable pause at which time I would say the benediction and dismiss the congregation. I was exhausted, but more so, because I'm not a musician, I was secretly afraid of embarrassing myself before an audience of which most of the people were either graduates or students at the New England Conservatory of Music. Fifteen minutes into the presentation I heard a pause, jumped up to the platform, prayed, and dismissed the audience. Although the leader of the group was compassionate when he pointed out my error, I was devastated. I was sure that my mem-

bers would reject me. I went home and curled up in bed, numbed to the core. All the shame of my past, all those well-guarded secrets, haunted me. I became ill, yet no physician could find the cause of my increasingly failing health.

Two weeks later, feeling isolated from God and people, I left for a silent retreat. As I sat down on one of the huge rocks jutting above the beach with the sound of water crashing against it like the waves of loneliness breaking over my heart, I wanted to die. Thoughts of suicide were like the longed-for sweet nothings of love and acceptance that never came. I cried out to God, accusing Him of not caring enough for me, not providing me with a mate, not helping me through the isolation, not protecting me from embarrassment or healing the history of abuse and its evil ramifications. I cried until there were no tears, no voice left to shout in anger. I lay on the cold stone for hours, feeling as if I had melted into it. Although my health became immediately better, my heart still felt as though it was being pierced by sharp shards of pain as my old companion, loneliness, seemed even more reluctant to leave.

Then one day I discovered that God had indeed healed me, and the little child inside clamoring for attention and reconciliation was integrated into my chronological maturity. From that day I have not had the usual despair of loneliness or keen sense of being disengaged from my world, my friends, and especially from my God. I began to truly love myself, God, and neighbors, as Jesus urged in Matthew 22:37-39. I stopped looking for someone or something to make me happy and found fulfillment in my own life, accomplishments, and relationship with God. I finally accepted myself just as I am and stopped the comparison with others.

There'll be no loneliness in the new earth

The popular interpretation of Matthew 22:23-32, that there would be no marriage in heaven, has always concerned me. For some whose marriages are difficult, such a promise may be a welcome respite from the cycle of emotional estrangement, but for those of us who have committed ourselves to a life of celibacy for the kingdom of God

(cf. Matt. 19:11, 12), whether because of the death or divorce of a spouse, this is indeed a hard saying.

Relief came when, on closer examination, I discovered the subject under discussion was not marriage but the resurrection, in which the Sadducees did not believe. In their attempts to trap Jesus, they used an illustration of a marriage custom that was popular in their time. Jesus, who does not answer what He isn't asked, pointed out that they had no understanding of what would happen "in the resurrection," not events or

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honest with myself and
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activities related to the afterlife in heaven. He did not discuss what would happen in heaven because (a) that was not what the Sadducees asked Him and (b) it would have been pointless to speak about what would happen in heaven to a group who did not even believe in the resurrection, which precedes the "in heaven" experience.

The reference to being "like angels of God in heaven" has led some to extrapolate that since angels are not married, this is what Jesus meant. Scriptural evidence attests that angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner restored to Christ (cf. Luke 15:7). In the same way, they will also joyfully reunite families "in the resurrection."

How I've overcome loneliness

First, I have dedicated myself to a devotional life that is not part of my pastoral responsibility. I took Isaiah 54:5 literally and let God be my husband. I entered an incred-

ible level of intimacy with God, sharing all joys and concerns, even talking with Him about the food I ate and clothes I wore. Nothing was or is too small or great for me to discuss with Him. I not only seek and value His opinion, I listen to His voice.

Second, when I am feeling particularly lonely, I try to think of someone who is also lonely, especially a colleague in ministry, and get in touch with that person. I make sure that it is not a "misery loves company" kind of contact by avoiding conversations that are melancholy. I try to find things of mutual interest from which we can learn and laugh—two of the cheapest and best medicines for the blues.

Third, I avoid denial or sublimation of feelings of loneliness. Keeping the secret of loneliness from others is not healthy. And pretending to be well adjusted when one isn't, especially for pastors, can be very destructive. The lives and careers of many lonely pastors who have been destroyed by sexual impropriety attests to this conclusion. I am painfully honest with myself and God, who knows exactly where I am and what's happening in my life. When the enemy attempts to overwhelm me with loneliness, I write God very explicit letters about my feelings. Almost always, before I am even finished, I experience praise and thanksgiving.

Fourth, I have discovered that every pastor needs a pastor. I found a partner in faith, a colleague in ministry, who is also single and with whom I could be authentic. She was willing and able to tell me the truth about myself without embarrassing or judging me. Even though it is a long-distance relationship and most of our conversations are by telephone and e-mail, we developed a strategy of accountability that has been a rich blessing.

Finally, I take very seriously the injunction to cast all my anxieties on Christ, for He truly cares for me (1 Peter 5:7). I also remember that Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." We are never alone when His perfect presence and love casts out all fear and the folly of loneliness. ■

* Charles R. Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1983), p. 156.

Continuing education exercise

Questions for reflection:

A vibrant, authentic relationship with God is the best way out of loneliness. Reflect on the following questions and see how you fare.

1. When am I the loneliest, and what is it that triggers this emotion?
2. Do I have a trusted pastor or peer to whom I can honestly relate these feelings?
3. Does loneliness cause me to participate in unusual actions or behavior?
4. Do I feel abandoned by God and/or isolate myself from people?
5. What resources do I have or choose when loneliness overwhelms me?

Suggested reading:

Chambers, Oswald. *Not Knowing Where*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1957. An insightful exposition of Genesis and a study of the patriarchs' reactions to claims of companionship and fellowship with God. A spiritual classic that deals with the cost of friendship with God.

Deere, Jack. *Surprised by the Voice of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996. A practical, entertaining book that deals with the biblical reality that God still speaks to people in our modern world. Shows how to develop a relationship that will enable one to hear God's voice.

Evans, W. Glen. *Don't Quit 'Til You Taste the Honey*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993. A "feel good" devotional that addresses life's overwhelming concerns and complaints by urging endurance and trust in God's abundant resources. Focuses on spiritual realities in God's Word as a means of overcoming loneliness and other crises in life.

Williams, Hyveth. *Will I Ever Learn?* Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1996. A personal story of journey through life's crises and God's incredible miracles that not only ended the terror of these crises but also catapulted the author into ministry.

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PASTOR PERSECUTORS

I am angry with people in the church who destroy pastors. This magazine is typically read by clergy, and I am aware that I am “preaching to the choir.”

G. Lloyd Rediger is a pastoral counselor, author, speaker, and consultant specializing in clergy leadership issues. He lives in Roseville, Minnesota.

But I must say some things anyway, for they may add a bit of courage or clarity to the lives of troubled pastors, or at least assure them that they are not alone.

I am thinking of the cruel pastime in which a pastor is targeted for destruction, and the congregation is seriously damaged by the fallout. The perpetrators go free, of course, often to hurt again, and often convinced that they are doing the right thing.

When I encounter such people, I am reminded of biblical passages in which religious people destroy or terrorize spiritual leaders. Even Jesus was not exempt. In one sense we should not be surprised, therefore, when we as clergy are terrorized, for it took them only three years to get Jesus. What hurts the most, of course, is that these people purport to be Christians. And often they are persons in whom we have invested significant amounts of professional and personal time and energy.

My purpose in writing on this subject is to clarify for pastors and denominational executives the fact of, the methods used by, and the remedy for pastor persecutors in the church.

The reality of pastor persecutors

Nearly any experienced pastor and denominational executive has encountered these persecutors. We tend to deny, excuse, or pamper them in the church. But they are

very real and very toxic. I have encountered them in every denomination, and in many congregations over the years. But because we believe such persons should not exist in the church, and that we should be kind and forgiving to everyone, we fail to admit or understand the tactics, the motivation, the devastating toll they take on the energy and resources of the church.

Pastor persecutors (PPs) typically have intimidating power because they are willing to violate the rules of decorum. This is powerful at a subconscious level, for we sense that such persons are willing to escalate the fight and use tactics we forbid ourselves to use. In fact, most of us clergy do not even know how to defend ourselves, much less do we have the necessary resources and networks for the kind of showdowns persecution tends to bring.

PPs are masters of disguise. They can present themselves as pious, active church members who are “only doing this for the good of the church.” Naive and gentle (“peace at all costs”) parishioners may be deceived by such camouflage. And they typically advocate for the PPs by urging the pastor and church board to be patient, make allowances, or not to misjudge such folks. PPs can convince many that they are raising legitimate issues. For those who might do battle with them, PPs use bluster, threats, and terrorism to appear as unstop-

G . L L O Y D R E D I G E R

pable giants. PPs even have allies of opportunity, i.e., parishioners who do not advocate the cause PPs are espousing, but who wish to punish the pastor for their own hidden reasons.

PPs are evil. There, I said it! There are clinical names, of course, but in our theological categories, they are evil. This means they are not just sinners, in the normal inadvertent or mistaken sense. They do evil intentionally, and willingly pursue its destructive means and ends. Even repentance and restraint on their part are suspect, for it is typically a tactic only. Being around and having to associate with such persons tempt healthy spiritual leaders to pronounce curses ("Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees"), as Someone we all know did more than once while on this earth.

Identifying PPs and their effects

From a clinical perspective, PPs are likely to have personality disorders (paranoid, antisocial, borderline, histrionic, narcissistic, and even passive-aggressive behaviors). Or they may be previous or present victims of abuse. They may have volatile or addictive personalities. They may have inadequate socialization, arrested adolescence, and violent role models in their history. And they may have developed a perverse, voyeuristic, and vindictive taste for the suffering of their targeted victims.

In more ordinary terminology, PPs have learned the power of throwing "giantisms" to get their way. They know how to be bullies. They know how to distract, confuse, and seduce. And they have little sensitivity to the suffering of those outside their circle of cohorts.

It took me some time to realize the dimensions and variations of PPs' tactics. In general terms, they can either wound or kill by direct attacks, by getting others to do their work for them, or by inducing their victims to self-destruct. The first two are self-explanatory. But it is this third generic form of victimization that may go undetected.

The tactic of inducing a victim to self-destruct is not uncommon. It is not uncommon in business, politics, and other professions to harass a person in subtle and obvious ways until their stress produces irrational and destructive behavior. They may wound or destroy themselves. They may de-

stroy a scapegoat. Or they may do something bizarre, unethical, or criminal so that legal authorities must punish them. And it is not uncommon for the victim of a pastor persecutor to develop behavior and attitudes that lead to alienation of family and friends, divorce, and loss of clergy credentials.

I could cite many examples of PPs in action. One that raises my ire every time I hear or remember his name is a former pastor who was once a shining star in his denomination. He seemed to have everything going for him, until he became pastor of a medium-sized, thriving, and progressive church. In the congregation were several university professors and a

I *t is not uncommon for the victim of a pastor persecutor to develop behavior and attitudes that lead to alienation of family and friends, divorce, and loss of clergy credentials.*

seminary professor who resented this pastor's charisma and success. They combined to sabotage his leadership. Then when his confidence began to falter, and his pastoral competence waned under their attacks, they began to accuse him of mental disorders. His wife divorced him. He finally left the ministry, and has since been unable to hold anything but menial jobs. He now subsists in an inner city, hardly able to cope or even to recognize old friends, and the PPs continue in that church.

Cardiovascular disorders, cancer, arthritis, gastrointestinal disorders, and respiratory problems used to be rather rare among clergy. And clergy used to generate the best mental health and longevity statistics of any

profession. Not anymore. I hear of and work with highly stressed, paranoid, cynical, and dysfunctional clergy all the time now, with growing numbers. Many of these maladies are traceable to PPs and their work. The costs to the church are enormous, in lost clergy, health costs, divided congregations, loss of ministry resources, and in debilitated pastors unable to function at much more than a survival level. Can anyone stop these PPs?

The extended damage

One of the causes of the downturn in mainline Protestant denominations is the wounded pastor syndrome. When a pastor is bleeding and desperately trying to survive, it is apparent that he or she will have little energy available for the creative pastoring that church growth requires. But since the pastor is still visible and the traditional services continue, most people will not realize what is occurring. This condition resembles a pet dog with worms. It still looks like a dog, so no one thinks to question the loss of energy and the debilitation of mission. And hardly anyone goes to the pastor with the kind of understanding, strength, and support she or he needs.

I had lunch with a number of pastors recently at a conference I was leading on another topic. It was notable that they talked almost continually of church situations in which the pastor was under attack. Their comments ranged from "There but for the grace of God go I" to "Poor guy, I wish I could help him!"

More than one denominational executive has told me lately that as they travel across their district or the nation, they find attacks on clergy to be endemic. They indicate a helplessness to do much about it. For even in strong executive denominations, top leaders have little authority to disarm PPs. They fear offending powerful lay leaders, no matter how destructive they are. Being part of a quasi-political system, they realize that their power is derivative. And most denominational executives do not have an *inclination toward* the power tactics needed to eliminate PPs from a congregation. The current prevalence of lawsuits is certainly no encouragement for any denominational leader to risk offending hostile-aggressive persons.

It would be helpful if seminaries could

prepare pastors for the real jungle of the local church. Academe is not always notable for realism, however. It is becoming increasingly obvious that pastors need survival training. They certainly should be trained in conflict management. Lip service to this need is not adequate.

Recently I consulted with an organization that is establishing a leadership training process outside of seminaries. This organization purports "to train pastors in evangelism, church growth, and community-based pastoring." When I asked the director what kind of training pastors were offered in building their own support base, and in survival tactics, he looked at me, as if he was completely baffled. He said, "If a pastor is a dynamic leader, there will be no such problems." If he hadn't been so sure of his institute's success, I could have told him of a desperate pastor I had talked with the previous week who had graduated from his program, and of at least two other graduates whom I had heard were under attack by PPs.

The context

The etiology of the pastoral persecutor phenomenon is not mysterious, for we have always had a few evil people in the church. But contemporary society is especially compatible for pastoral persecutors. There

is a general distrust of authority figures of any kind. There is biblical and theological illiteracy in the pews. This means parishioners do not understand God's purposes, and the dynamics of spiritual leadership. There is a general sense of entitlement growing in the church, in which church members feel entitled to comfort, power, and privilege. If a pastor does not please them, they feel free to criticize and punish. There is a growing business mentality in the church that says that if the CEO (pastor) does not produce, he or she should simply be fired. And there is mobility among parishioners, which means they feel little loyalty to the "peace and unity" of the church. For they will soon move on, without having to deal with the consequences of their irresponsible behavior. As has been mentioned, we are not training pastors to handle conflict, nor support themselves in survival situations.

All churches and pastors are not suffering, of course. And all critics of pastoral leadership are not PPs. Some pastors are incompetent, and some "shoot themselves in the foot," but none deserves the torturing tactics of the classic PPs.

It is not only the victimized pastor who suffers, of course. We have noted the subtle but significant damage to congregations and denominations. We should certainly note the damage to clergy spouses, families, and intimate friends when PPs attack. Such victims may have even fewer survival resources unless they have their own careers and support networks.

Identifying a problem is useful. But offering possible solutions and prevention techniques is also necessary. Even though persecuting the pastor is such a distasteful, denied subject, some healing insights will be useful—at least to clergy who know the reality of this treacherous role vulnerability.

A generic case model

The first overt sign of the persecuting process began at a church board meeting. A member said, "A lot of people are complaining to me about the pastor. They're saying he doesn't call enough; he can't be reached when they want to talk to him; he's not friendly enough."

The board asked who the people were, but the complainant declined to say. They

asked for specific examples. He would not be specific. The board said they couldn't take action unless they knew the specific complaints. The complainant replied that they had to take action because these were important members who might leave the church.

Before the next board meeting a letter filled with innuendoes against the pastor was mailed to the congregation. At the meeting the board and the pastor were in a near panic. The complainant said he had talked to the conference president, who said these were serious charges that needed to be investigated.

A new investigative team reported that there seemed to be a lot of people unhappy with the pastor. The board voted to have a delegation meet with him.

At the next meeting the pastor was absent. After six months of this harassment, he was in the hospital. The board voted to send a delegation to the president. At the following meeting, the delegation recommended removal of the pastor.

The pastor currently is scheduled for heart bypass surgery. Rumor says his wife is seeking personal counseling.

The remedies

The first remedial insight is the one to which this article is dedicated, namely, the recognition of the existence of PPs. Such people exist and continue their devastation in that shadowy dimension of institutional religion, behind the prominence of pulpit and pew. As I consult with victimized clergy, and even savvy denominational executives, it is hard for them to admit the presence and damage of these people. It is much easier to blame pastors, for an unwritten pastoral expectation is that successful pastors should not have unhappy parishioners. There are incompetent pastors, of course, but there are PPs also.

The second insight is that the motivations and tactics of PPs are of a different order or magnitude than ordinary critics or nagging detractors. They are much more sinister. And this is what makes them difficult to deal with. For though religion and clergy are not strangers to evil, we have forgotten that sometimes there is a need to excise such depravity. The problem is that PPs do not

Continued on page 30

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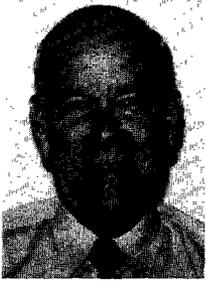


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Charlie,¹ a credentialed minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, lost his right to function as a pastor because of a moral lapse. He is still a Seventh-day Adventist and demonstrates no animosity toward the church or those who found it necessary to remove his credentials. He freely acknowledges that the church administration had a responsibility to do what it did.

Nevertheless, what saddens this ex-minister, his family, and those near him is that no one directly connected with the case and consequent decision to remove his credentials has had any further personal contact with him.

"I haven't been ministered to," says Charlie, "in prayer or by the opening of the Word."

The high cost

Adultery is never a private sin, and pastoral infidelity has even more far-reaching effects. These include not only the pastor's calling and the church, but also the pastor's spouse and family, the other party in the episode and their family, and even some who are not church attenders.

Adultery is a sin that the Bible takes seriously. The Bible says that becoming "one flesh" with anyone other than one's spouse is a sin against the person's own body (1 Cor. 6:18). It's likely that any sincere minister of the gospel who falls can feel nothing but sorrow, humiliation, and devastation. Some believe that such a person should receive a double penalty for unfaithfulness.

If only they could witness the affected person, spouse, and children during their time of agony! If only they could see the grief that reduces a once-effective pastor to tears for days and weeks! This is the picture of one who recognizes that one's ministry

is gone and that one's life will never again be the same.

It is also devastating for the pastor's spouse. The life is changed. The dreams are dashed. The costs are high for the marriage, children, congregation, and even some who do not belong to the church.

The current procedure

Knowing the best way to handle a pastor in such circumstances is never easy for administrators, work colleagues, and others affected. Usually some steps are taken to minimize the hurt for the church, the congregation, the pastor, and the family.

The pastor after a moral crisis

ROGER R. NIXON

Presently our church follows a procedure that usually includes an investigation of the case, calling for the minister's resignation, negotiation of a financial severance package, assistance in relocating, pastoral care for the congregation, and ministry to the person who has been involved with the pastor, and the affected families.

Different views

Scripture does not clearly forbid or approve the restoration of a fallen minister to gospel ministry. Possibly this is why there is such a divergence of views on the issue among churches. Many reason that a person who betrays such a sacred trust has automatically lost the right to minister. They conclude that the ministry of a pastor found guilty of adultery is forever finished.

Another group holds that the Bible provides no such specific prohibition and that the only unpardonable sin is that of rejecting the Holy Spirit. They contend that

the Bible cites several cases of people who fell into adultery, and yet God forgave them and used them mightily. Hence giving a second chance to the morally fallen minister is biblical.

Then there are others who argue that the circumstances of each case should be carefully investigated. They consider that certain "falls" require an appropriate recovery period and that each case should be prayerfully considered to determine whether the individual should be restored to ministry or not. For example: What is the minister's attitude? What was the timing of his/her repentance? How long did the affair last? How many people were involved?

Scriptural qualifications

The qualifications for pastors are clearly stated in Titus and 1 and 2 Timothy. The pastor should be a good example, serious in teaching, unworldly, temperate, gentle, a good manager of the family, above reproach, the spouse of one, a person of integrity, possessing a good reputation with the community at large.

Believers in restoration could well argue that God hates all sin (not only adultery). If God hates the sin of pride, and if ministers are puffed up with pride, should they not be disqualified just as much as the adulterous pastor?

Tim LaHaye raises the question: "If our Lord were to say to every minister who forbids restoration to a fallen colleague after due discipline 'He that is without sin cast the first stone,' who would be left to oppose it?"²

Fallen people God used

The list of those with few shortcomings in the Bible is not long: Enoch, Isaiah, Daniel, and Joseph are among the more notable. But what of characters like Peter, John, Jonah, David, Samson, Moses, Abraham, and so on? Though they were guilty of many sins, God accepted them and used them. That does not mean that we are to justify adultery, fornication, murder, disobedience, or denying the Lord. The

point is that God forgives the repentant sinner.

Some of the most productive ministry of David came after his his repentance for sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. It was after this tragic experience that David wrote some of his most moving psalms. The latter period of his life saw the consolidation of his kingdom and the preparation for the building of the Temple.

Restoring the fallen

Two points should be made:

1. As a denomination we need a well-laid policy or process to help rebuild the lives of erring ministers, their spouses, and their families. Some have seen themselves as having been dealt with kindly and fairly. But others are disillusioned, distressed, and in some instances have shipwrecked their faith.

We need a well-laid policy or process to help rebuild the lives of erring ministers, their spouses, and their families.

2. Our church must establish a process wherein our position on discipline is maintained. But that discipline should, as far as possible, have a positive effect on the pastors' spiritual and moral life, perhaps to the point where, in some cases, they would be equipped once again for the ministry.

Without exception fallen pastors need forgiveness and spiritual rehabilitation. Galatians 6:1 reminds us that Christian believers and the church are responsible for the restoration process. God forgives sinners, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Forgiveness is an instantaneous experience, but spiritual restoration is a process; it takes time. In practical terms it should start by helping the fallen pastors to rebuild their spiritual life, their marriage,

and their families. It should also include their fellowship in the church family. Ultimately, depending on the circumstances of the case, it may well extend to restoration to pastoral ministry.

One church invited a "restored pastor" to be their minister. He was totally honest about his past. They responded, "If you're a broken person, then we've got a place for you, because we're a congregation of broken people."

Tim LaHaye recommends a small, carefully selected "restoration committee."³ Committee members would need to be persons of integrity. They need to be objective, compassionate, and in no way antagonistic to the concept of restoration or to the pastor. They should be spiritually mature and qualified to:

1. Assess the genuineness of the pastor's repentance, confession, and recommitment to God.
2. Help rebuild the fallen pastor's spiritual life, marriage, and family.
3. Help the congregation to work through their hurt, disillusionment, disappointment, and anger.
4. Assess the pastor's progress and hold the pastor accountable.
5. Consider related concerns such as finding alternative work and the possible need to relocate.
6. Offer an ongoing, strictly confidential counseling and redemptive ministry.
7. Determine if and when the pastor might be able to resume pastoral responsibilities.

These suggestions are in no way complete. But we need to consider seriously the issue of restoring a "fallen" minister. The process suggested in this viewpoint article is fraught with some risks and failures. But I believe that the risks are well worth taking. ■

¹ Not his real name.

² Tim LaHaye. *If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1990), p. 109.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 169.

Roger R. Nixon is a pastor living in New South Wales, Australia.



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In the Spirit of Christ continued from page 4

presents, and show him by the Scriptures if he is in error. When you do this without unkind feelings, you will do only that which is your duty and the duty of every minister of Jesus Christ.⁴

Here a profoundly significant "duty" is identified for us in the midst of what we so commonly experience in our world and in our church. It is resoundingly true that we are surrounded by issues that need correction and thus deserve the full impact of our Christian courage. But God grant me the wisdom to discern what is indeed substantive and what is not. And when I step out to correct, let me do it in "the spirit of Christ," "a kindly spirit," "text by text," and maybe even with tears in my voice.⁵ ■

¹ Milton Raymond Hook, *Flames Over Battle Creek* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1977), p. 62.

² *Ibid.*
³ Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity* (William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1986), pp. 19, 20.

⁴ Ellen G. White, G. I. Butler, Oct. 14, 1888, in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 1, p. 98.

⁵ ———, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 12.

Giving with joy

continued from page 19

service we offer to, and our relationship within, our communities. It flows from our relationship with Christ and extends outward to fulfill our purpose in society. Our spiritual orientation determines the way we go about making a living. Having made a living, we must give recognition to the Lord who gives us the strength and enterprise from which the blessings flow. This recognition must in turn lead us to embrace an altruistic concept of stewardship that includes service, the development of trust and trustworthiness, and personal accountability that contributes to the well-

being of all people. Stewardship has the potential to stand alongside health and education as a life-enriching service improving both the social fabric and faith of our members.

Adopt a culture of graciousness

Critics may view this approach as an attempt to customerize our members with sweet talk. I would be the first to reject such disingenuous graciousness. Our members contribute altruistically and expect nothing in return. But the church cannot become presumptuous about member loyalty. Those of us who are on the receiving end of member faithfulness need to become stewards of a *culture of graciousness*.

Many of our strategic initiatives have been inspired by the recognition of need and a desire to address that need in a dynamic manner. We have great orators who have the ability to rally the faithful to support entrepreneurial methods associated with calls for new offerings. Additional commitment is fine, but not as a substitute for core stewardship and trust-inspired loyalty. ■

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Perhaps the assertion that I truly enjoy raising money sounds strange. However, the fact is, I find real joy when inviting others to

give generously to a program or project in which I believe.

Early in my ministry I had the privilege of baptizing an individual who soon thereafter donated \$250,000 to the local conference in joyous celebration of her newfound faith. The joy she found in giving, as well as the impact of her generosity when it came to outreach possibilities, led me to adopt the personal goal of ending every year of my ministry having raised more money for God's cause than the church had invested in supporting me. In short, I want to work for the church for free by raising sufficient funds to cover my own salary and expenses plus provide additional funds to expand Christ's kingdom.

My objective of bringing more money into the church than I receive has taken several avenues of emphasis. First, in conducting public evangelistic meetings, I managed and spent large sums of money. However, I soon learned that such soul-winning endeavors do not cost the church. Instead they are a strong investment that brings great financial returns. In fact, we once did a tracking study that demonstrated that within 14 months of their accession, new converts return all the money invested in winning them to the church. Anything that they give beyond that return is pure financial profit to God's cause.

This understanding led me to preach stewardship carefully in every series of public meetings that I conducted and to expect all the evangelists I trained or managed to do likewise. It is only reasonable to help people understand the expectations of heaven as well as the blessings of financial partnership with God right at the beginning of their walk

with Jesus. In my personal study Bible I carry photocopies of two weekly sequential paychecks received by a man who was attending my evangelistic meetings in Ocala, Florida. The first check was his regular pay, and the second was the very next check he earned after determining to honor the Lord's Sabbath and the Lord's 10 percent tithe. The second paycheck was more than double the previous payment for the same amount of work. He proved God's promise very quickly!

Second, I enjoy preaching and teaching stewardship as a pastor. What a joy to encourage my members toward faithful-

I Enjoy Raising Money

JAMES A. CRESS

ness and to see them grow spiritually as they experiment with God's challenge to "test" His generosity through their own giving.

If I have a family in my congregation who does not return tithe or support the church, I make a personal pastoral visit to encourage them to experiment with "growing into faithfulness" by beginning immediately at whatever percentage level they believe they can give and then increasing that amount by just one percent per month until they are experiencing a faithful relationship in the light of God's directions.

Lest you think this is heresy, notice that God honors experiments of faith: "Real experience is a variety of careful experiments made with the mind freed from prejudice and uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits."¹ That is what I want for my members—real experience! Notice how it comes: by careful experiments.

M. Scott Peck says, "Learning can be passive or experiential. Experiential learning is more demanding but infinitely more effective. As with other things, the rules of communication and community are best learned experientially."² I believe it is also true for the rules of God's kingdom.

Third, I enjoy challenging those individuals who are capable of giving large donations to sponsor special projects beyond their regular giving. It is a privilege to expand their faith by expanding their opportunities to support mission ventures that would not be accomplished without their generosity. I never apologize for asking someone to give more than they could imagine possible, and I have observed more than one individual join me in praying their business or personal finances into greater success in order to meet their very generous contributions. Such donors consistently thank me for raising their awareness of the potential for their generosity.

Finally, I enjoy providing opportunities for those who cannot give extraordinarily large amounts to large projects. I do this by asking such individuals to give smaller amounts on a monthly basis. By just such a plan we support the PREACH (Project for Reaching Every Active Clergy at Home) program, which sponsors this magazine as a professional courtesy to clergy of all denominations.

This proves the biblical principle of giving even beyond what a person thinks they can afford. "For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift" (2 Cor. 8:3, 4, NKJV).

So joy for me, joy for the donor, and joy for the expanded mission of the church all result from the privilege of encouraging others to give. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3, p. 69.

² M. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum*, p. 84.

Pastor persecutors

continued from page 24

stop with winning a single victory over a pastor. It is only a matter of time before another attack is fomented. PPs do not stop when thwarted. They camouflage their methods and goals through denial, piety, distractions, seduction, and unlikely alliances. Theirs is a lifelong goal. When they get rid of one pastor, they will as certainly wait for an opportunity to persecute the next one, even if they had a part in bringing him or her to the pulpit.

The *third* insight about PPs is how difficult and rare it is to find successful ways of thwarting or eliminating them on a permanent basis. As I've already mentioned, the denial process in the church is so strong that neither traditional theology nor policies offer effective relief. But there are several strategies that offer some possibility of success:

1. Have patience. If one learns survival tactics, outliving PPs may be possible. Forty

years in the wilderness eliminates some of them.

2. Raise consciousness. Educating laity and clergy to the pastor persecutor phenomenon is valuable for both the short term and long term. This is sophisticated education, however; denial and pastor persecutor vengeance will try to sabotage it.

3. Teach survival. Clergy and their intimates must be provided with self-preservation skills. Few lay leaders, colleagues, or denominational executives will come to their aid, ready to stay the course with tenacious PPs.

4. Give theology and policy some teeth, in order that when PPs are identified, they may be eliminated.

5. Engage knowledgeable consultants to bring in outside skills needed in this struggle for which the church is poorly prepared. Such professionals can advise and devise the necessary interventions. I have been encouraging experienced pastoral counsels (AAPC-certified) to bring their special skills to the church for such ministries.

6. "Go by the book." Follow your denomination's policy and protocols as closely as possible. This not only lessens legal liability, but also sets precedence and gives all involved parties clearly defined perimeters to operate within.

7. All of the above!

This is a negative column, in that it deals with an unwanted subject and with admitted anger. I pray, however, that its effect will be positive, on behalf of embattled clergy who serve God's church. ■

Editorial note: Although we see a distinct need for publishing this insightful article, we are nevertheless concerned that in doing so, we are not adding to the kind of negativity identified in the article. We trust that our readers will use the article prayerfully and judiciously, while finding constructive ways of dealing with the destructive elements they may find in their congregations.

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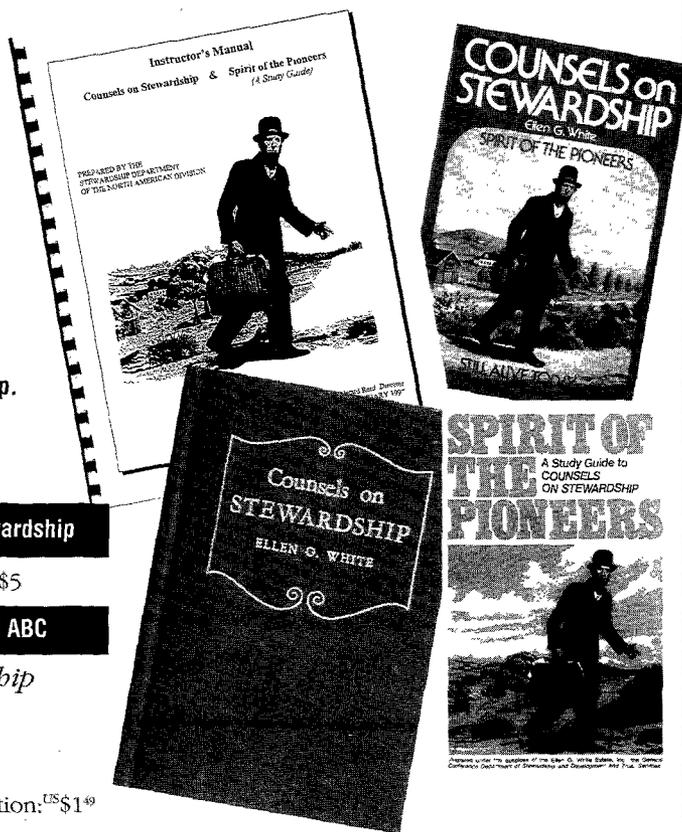
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Muslim workshops planned

Last April a group met with Cyril Miller, NAD vice president for evangelism, and formed the Muslim-Adventist Relations Committee for North America. John McGhee, who has had considerable experience in working with Muslims, was asked to direct the Muslim work in North America. Islam is the fastest-growing religion in North America with more than five million Muslims; more than Episcopalians and Presbyterians combined.

Cooperating with Global Mission, the Committee will sponsor a Chai Kanah Convention near New York City from September 12-16, 1997. Under the direction of Jerald Whitehouse, Ph.D., General Conference Director of Muslim-Adventist Relations, and John McGhee, Ph.D., participants will learn how to form Chai Kanah or small study groups where "seekers of Allah" can study the Koran with the Bible, discovering the truths of the Gospel and the Three Angels' Messages. Interested persons should contact Richard Marker in the Greater New York Conference.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Art of Theological Reflection, by Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer. New York: Crossroad, 1994. 145 pages. Softcover. \$14.95.

One of the pastor's crucial roles as spiritual guide to the congregation is to

help people make sense of their lives. But how often have pastors been frustrated by the inability of good Christian people to meaningfully connect legitimate Biblical insight to the experience of this process! Doctrine is often learned as information and not in the light of answers to universal human questions. Theological reflection can help to reclaim the realities of Scripture and place them in dialogue with daily experience.

As the authors describe in their introduction, this book "helps us access the Christian tradition as a reliable source of guidance as we search to discover the meaning of what God is doing now in our individual and corporate lives" (p. viii). This volume carefully lays out the process for theological reflection, with examples of how it works, both for individual and group process. This slim volume will help pastors, educators, and other Christian leaders who are serious about the implications of the faith for daily living.—*Andy McRae, associate pastor, Sligo church, Takoma Park, Maryland.*

The Jesus I Never Knew, by Philip Yancey (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1995).

For years my heart was kept aloof from the Nazarene lest He get too close and discover the truth: that I did not measure up to His holy standard. But then came the moment when my eyes opened to His unconditional love. Now enters Yancey. He presents Jesus from a contemporary perspective, so fresh and alive that I can see Him walking the streets of my own community. I see Him as a revolutionary challenging the values and systems of my society. I see Him as a strong Man with great love and compassion.

Yancey has written of Jesus in a way that can speak to those hearts which may have grown weary of hearing the story. Pastors could use it to warm their own souls or to share with seekers.—*Steve Willsey, associate pastor, Spencerville church, Silver Spring, Maryland.*

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