

# Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

January 1999



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BRINGING LIGHT TO LIFE

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### May 1998 issue

I was elated to see Tim Crosby's article ("The Bible: Inspiration and Authority"), which recognizes the spiritual as a union of the human and the divine. Every spiritual subject has the human portion and divine portion and any time either are out of balance, the spirituality is destroyed. Those who wanted to destroy Jesus made Him all human. They knew His parents and his brothers and sisters. After He was gone, those that wanted to destroy Him made Him all divine. He did not have a human body, and John called those the anti-Christ.

The same is true with the Scripture. The same is true with Ellen White. There are those who would like to make everything that she wrote divine, which destroys it. And there are those who would like to make it all human, destroying it as effectively.—Jay Sloop, M.D., Yakima, Washington.

### July 1998 issue

● A five-star issue in every respect, and that is not normal for any magazine. This is not flattery but your editorial should be available in some other way for our ministers and ministerial students. Aristotle's three proofs (logos, pathos, ethos) were reflected in your treatment. Loveless and Paulien were superb within their space limitations. I have never seen a better presentation on marriage and commitment, probably because Dick was one of our bright lights when I was president of Atlantic Union College.—Herbert Douglass, Weimar, California.

● Thank you for Dick Tibbit's timely and well-written article entitled "Marriage: Keeping Promises and Building Commitments." I think it will help many.—Rev. Eric Hoheisel, Oaklyn, New Jersey.

● Congratulations to Rolando Rizzo for his article "The Case Against Drinking." In the very week in which I faced a major challenge in discussing abstinence with thoughtful Adventist young adults, along comes Rizzo with an admirable biblical hermeneutic, a courageous determination to move beyond a rigid biblicalism, and impressive insights into modern western sociology. Rizzo illustrates the way forward for committed, Bible-honoring Adventist theologians as they grapple with many contemporary, contentious issues.—Lyell Heise, Trans-Tasman Union Conference, Australia.

● Rolando Rizzo writes that in biblical times distillation was "less developed." My encyclopedia tells me that distillation was *not developed at all* until 1300 A.D. This is not a minor point. The Bible teaches that we should abstain from "strong drink" yet it was acceptable to have, buy, sell, and make offerings of strong drink. To the original listeners, this meant they were to dilute their strong drink with two to four parts water so the mixture would not be red and bubbling in the cup (Prov. 23:31). Thus the Bible forbids the drinking of any drink that has more than two percent alcohol. They were not to drink for the purpose of obtaining a euphoric effect but to make their water potable. This is the great blessing that was in wine.

I can scientifically support with a 1995 study in the *British Medical Journal* that God's purpose in wanting diluted, fermented wine to be used by his people in Bible times was that it would prevent dysentery:

1. This is why Paul told Timothy to not drink plain water (1 Tim. 5:23). Timothy should put a little wine in the water so he did not get "travelers vomiting and diarrhea" when he went to

visit distant congregations. Just like we should not drink plain water when we travel to third-world countries, so Timothy should not drink the water of some of the distant congregations he visited. His gastro-intestinal tract had not developed immunity to the bacteria in their wells. Poor Tim was getting sick in the middle of his sermons! (My exegesis of this text is unique among the commentaries I have consulted.)

2. This is why Jesus wanted water in the vessels before He turned them into wine.

3. This is why the Samaritan put wine in the wounds of the injured man, to act as an antiseptic (Luke 10:24).

4. This mixture of wine and water was referred to in Revelation 14:10. God's wrath will be poured out without mixture or dilution with water.

I believe this is the first pillar in the abstinence versus temperance debate and needs to be clearly established.—Elizabeth Iskander, M.D., La Canada, California.

● While Rolando Rizzo does uphold the belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church against the use of alcohol, he seems to indicate that the reasons for doing so are sociological or something we can reason out ourselves, rather than a clear teaching of scripture.

Over the years, as I have attended evangelistic meetings and studied the Bible myself, I have been pleased to belong to an organization which takes the Bible as its creed and clearly states that if we are teaching something that is not in the Bible, then one should look for truth somewhere else.

I do not believe that it is upholding Seventh-day Adventist belief, or Bible belief, to say that we have a good argument for believing what we believe,

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### 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.



When I did my doctoral work in the early 1980s, the matter of local church organization and management was at the head of the list of

what was in vogue in the world of ministerial education. There is little question that such an emphasis was and still is needed among us. Pastors needed then and now to design and administer effective local structures. The people who filled many of our churches in the eighties and beyond have had higher expectations than ever for the way their pastors and, for that matter, corporate church administrators, design and run the managerial machinery of the church. It seems to me that without actually saying so, we have almost come to the place where we expect that a well-designed structure *per se* will somehow “fix” the church. One could certainly gain that impression when listening in on some of our committee discussions and business sessions!

Along with the organizational or administrative design concerns, Seventh-day Adventists have always been deeply concerned with the matter of accuracy in our conceptions and expressions of theology and doctrine. This is by all means an important concentration. The concern for doctrinal accuracy, deeply established as it has always been in the Adventist psyche, has received special attention in recent years as postmodernism and pluralism have arrived to exert their influence.

A third concentration in recent times in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a demographic one. Many have concentrated on fashioning local churches that focus on carefully specified sectors of the surrounding society. Aside from this, we have developed a very necessary global consciousness through which we attempt to meet the needs of the myriad cultural, national, linguistic, ethnic, and tribal

## What makes the difference?

W I L L E V A

groups and subgroups that now make up a truly world denomination.

Structural design, doctrine, and demographics—are three important aspects that have preoccupied our thinking as a church. These are, of course, honorable concerns that properly balanced can make significant differences to who we are and how we do our ministry. Yet when I look at the church I love, I sometimes feel that not much has happened to make the kind of difference you and I would like to see in the directions the church is taking or not taking. Is there something more?

I recently read what I would consider a 20-year-old contemporary Christian classic entitled, *Celebration of Discipline*, by Richard Foster. Although this book is well-known and I had glanced through it in the past, as I picked it up this time, *Celebration of Discipline* came home to me with particular power. As I read I was struck above all with the fact that it is not so much in the area of doctrinal purity that we are lacking. It is not so much a newly designed church structure that we need locally or corporately, or a more specific application of demographic dynamics, but a deeper quality of discipleship. I have come to believe anew that God is calling us now to this discipleship. We are being drawn by God to simply fulfill the great disciplines of the Christian way as Jesus called his disciples to do it. This, of course, is in itself not a new thought, but somehow as I read Foster’s book, the reality of it struck me with an unprecedented potency and conviction.

With freshness and admirable holistic insight Foster treats twelve great “disciplines” of Christian training and seasoning: meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission,

service, confession, worship, guidance and celebration. Some of these are looked at in terms of the life of the individual and others in the light of the corporate fellowship of the church. Either way, they are definitively critical to our life and to our ministry and to the churches we serve.

When Foster begins his first chapter with the words, “superficiality is the curse of our age,”<sup>1</sup> he is talking of spiritual superficiality. We may feel our superficialities lie in structural, theological, or professional arenas, and we may be partially correct. But in practicing the principles of discipleship mentioned above, we are placed in a practical position before God through which He can transform us and make us potent for Him. They are presented as keys to unlock spiritual power, depth, and maturity. Practicing these spiritual disciplines opens the way for God to move us to the place where He can work with us in ways He is otherwise unable to do. These are not legalistic duties, but like breathing and eating, they usher in life and being. I believe these are the critical ingredients we lack.

I am especially moved by Foster’s depth of practical insight into the disciplines of prayer (about which he recently wrote another groundbreaking book), simplicity, submission, guidance, and service, or more accurately, servanthood. What would happen if we made our ministers’ meetings times of carefully conceived corporate and personal soul-searching and genuine spiritual growth, rather than just the professional advancement sessions that they usually are? I am aware, I think, of how such an idea may grate the cogs of some of our politically correct thinking and how easily such meetings could come to nothing, especially if they were not entered into wholeheartedly. But what if we forged ahead anyway?

I pray that this simple plea for a deeper, more practical and authentic spiritual ministry will reach out and grasp our hearts. That getting into Foster’s kind

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# EVANGELISM: BRINGING LIGHT TO LIFE

**A** minister's primary work is evangelism. Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke 5:10).



*Edward Earl Cleveland, D.D., is a retired ministerial association secretary of the General Conference and a world-renowned evangelist.*

Matthew, Mark, and Luke affirm the basic principle that growth of the kingdom of God is the high purpose of evangelism. How do we attain that growth?

The preacher is the basic component in the evangelistic process. "People-catching" is preacher-business, indeed the preacher's primary business. Preachers are never called to be corporate executives. Preachers are God-ordained soul winners. Anything that would immunize them from soul winning must be avoided. For 150 years now, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has emphasized the individual productivity of the pastor. The church's leadership has not failed to grasp the significance of that emphasis on evangelism.<sup>1</sup>

From my own 56 years of ministerial experience, I am led to confess to certain constants that are significant to success in evangelism:

1. The Holy Spirit is the only true soul winner.
2. The Holy Scriptures constitute the "sword of the Spirit."
3. Consecrated Bible instructors contribute more to the success of a campaign than is usually acknowledged.
4. Enlisting the support of church

members in bringing friends to the services is an absolute essential.

5. There is no substitute for an "in the flesh preacher" to reap the harvest.

6. Training, deployment, and year-round motivational supervision of lay soul winning is the "missing link" in the present evangelistic thrusts. Until this burden is assumed by church administration and actively promoted at that level, we will continue to experience spasmodic spurts of lay evangelistic activity—"here a little and there a little."

Having said this, let me share some conceptual principles that have fueled my evangelistic zeal.

## **Expect great things**

*I expect the Holy Spirit to attend my efforts.* "If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

In preparing for a campaign, there are certain personal things I attend to. I enter into two weeks of prayerful concentration. This is the willingness factor in the foregoing statement. This involves fasting,

prayer, and an honest assessment of my inadequacy to make war with demons. Without this spiritual preparation, hell itself will celebrate our feeble efforts and poor results. "The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the proclamation of the truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give."<sup>3</sup>

*I expect results—large results.* I always carry with me the conviction that my God-given sermon will be effective. This confidence in the spirit-filled message leads naturally into the call to discipleship. On any occasion, when the church is packed, I ask the occupants on the front row center pew to clear it for the anticipated harvest. I continue the appeal as long as repentant souls are responding. The comfort level of the saints cannot be a factor here. The "patience of the saints" must not decide the length of the appeal.

*I expect numerical abundance.* Some ministers are afraid of numbers, large numbers. The disciples of Christ were not. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (5:14). "And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (6:7). "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily" (16:5).

Indeed, we have every reason to be expectant. Expectant faith grows with exercise. The problem lies in the minister's personal grasp of the promises of God. Personally, I clutch them to my bosom as my own. I pray for power to *move men and women*. This is, and has been, the supreme passion of my life from childhood.

Baptism of large numbers of well-instructed converts is no accident. Their transition and retention is a pastor-membership responsibility. Small baptisms have a small apostasy rate. This also means a small growth rate. It is a fact that everything about small is small. While we must not despise the day of small things, let us not make small the ideal! The prophets have predicted large things for these latter days. Let us rise up and claim them.

### Commit to total effort

"Some who engage in missionary service are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. They lack push. They have not those traits of character that give power to do something—the spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. Those who would win success must be courageous and hopeful. They should cultivate not only the passive but the active virtues."<sup>4</sup>

Back in 1951, I was holding a meeting in Orlando, Florida. On the opening night, the auditorium was filled with one old man and 499 empty chairs. To make matters

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worse, the chairs were new. Bright lights shining down on gleaming empty chairs could be psychologically depressing. But I remembered Ellen White's words: "Some say strike where the iron is hot; I say make the iron hot by striking." I also operate on the theory that "to him that hath, it shall be given. To him that hath not and preacheth not with enthusiasm, even that which he hath shall be taken away." And so, that night, I gave the old man the full treatment. We were soon joined by 14 other venturesome souls. Right or wrong, those 15 attendees left the tent proclaiming, "never man spoke like this man!" They were soon joined by hundreds. The Holy Spirit honored my faith with 108 baptisms in that campaign.

My staff was expected to commit to total effort. There was no room on the staff for halfhearted timid souls. And what I ex-

pected of them, I demanded of myself. And God blessed. For it is written, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). I have found this to be literally true.

In one campaign, I preached 22 weeks, six nights a week, and every Sabbath for 12 weeks. It is true that God daily replenishes the energies of those who work to expand them in His cause. This is true to this day. At age 77, the "good news" still thrills my soul and others to whom I preach.

### Find satisfaction in sharing

Being a Seventh-day Adventist preacher is earth's highest privilege. I say this 56 years into the experience. In reading this article, you are privy to the thoughts of a satisfied minister. It has nothing to do with promotions received or denied. Compliments and criticisms have neither inflated nor deflated my attitude toward ministry. It is the minister's solemn duty to safeguard the inner sanctum of the soul against corruption. If the pastor is successful in this, "duty will be privilege and service a pleasure." Master this principle, and like the Duracell battery, you will go on and on and on.

When I finished Oakwood College, I did not receive any district appointments in the organized ministry. But I did not succumb to self-pity. Knowing myself to be called to the gospel ministry, I knew my destiny. And so, like Paul, I obtained jobs—but lost them for my Sabbath keeping. This went on for a year, even as I waited anxiously for that phone call inviting me to the ministry. One year later it came. Having learned to endure hardness like a good soldier through self-supporting ministry, I was overjoyed at receiving the good news that as of June 1, 1942, I was a part of the Seventh-day Adventist clergy worldwide.

Sharing with others that which benefits oneself gives preaching an added dimension and the preacher a sense of mission. Communicating to needy humanity that which enriches and lengthens life here, and guarantees life hereafter, is the essence of gospel ministry. The very idea engenders enthusiasm. The results and the process yield ultimate satisfaction.

But it is not the end product that

matters most. The obvious changes seen in the lives of those to whom we minister is reward enough. New hope sparkles in the eyes of the new believer. Radically changed habit patterns tell their own story. The population of the kingdom of God is the supreme purpose of preaching. This alone satiates the ministerial hunger. The hunter stalks the quarry in the dense thickets, takes dead aim, fires, and the hunted becomes the treasured prize of the hunter. The Christian minister is God's hunter. The Bible is the rifle. The pastor stalks human game, firing repeatedly sin, killing ammunition into the soul until that soul becomes a treasured trophy of the King of kings. This is ultimate satisfaction.

This concept leads naturally into making appeals. An appeal is a specific call for response. Many ministers, masters of persuasion, are reluctant to call for visible evidence that souls are converted during or prior to the sermon presentation. This is unfortunate. Unknown converts are deprived of the necessary follow-up that renders them effective in worship and service. The minister who fails to appeal for discipleship may become an accomplished pulpiteer but will be lacking in the area most needed; namely, souls added to the church daily. The population of the kingdom of God is the legitimate end product of preaching. Sermons that leave conviction short of conversion fall short of the end objective of this heaven-ordained exercise.

#### Let God make the appeal

The sermon appeal expresses three profound facts: God is *willing*; God is *able*, and God is *available*.

Golgotha demonstrates the willingness of God to save the sinner. That the God who created the human would go to the cross to accomplish His redemptive purposes is love unutterable. It is the supreme expression of divine concern for the sinner's salvation.

That Christ would "empty Himself" for the sinner's redemption is itself persuasive. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by

the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:12). This assurance must be preached to sinners or their hearts will remain unbroken.

Listeners must also hear of a God who is infinitely capable. Listeners know their weakness. They need to know that God can break every habit and forgive any sin; that "earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal"; that the power of God can deliver from the "lowest hell"; that "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isa. 59:1); and that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Such a message builds confidence and encourages listeners to cast themselves upon the mercy of God.

Listeners must also know of the availability of God. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. . . . Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:11-13). This statement of divine availability is conclusive. We need only to preach it, and the hearts of men and women who are starving for this word will be moved.

But some ministers fear this moment of truth. This fear can only be overcome by making *appeals*. Proficiency is developed by the doing. It also helps if ministers have faith in the *substance* and *power* of their message. The God who empowers the messenger will empower the appeal. Of course there are times when no one responds. This should cause no embarrassment, since the preacher does not represent himself. He speaks for *Another*.

The appeal for discipleship may address three classes of listeners: (1) an appeal to those who were once faithful Christians but who have fallen away; (2) Christians who believe what you teach but have not yet made the decision to join; and (3) non-Christians who for the first time hear the good news of the gospel. Each one of these classes presents a wealth of potential response, waiting to be invited.

#### Continue to obey the call

God-called preachers will evangelize to their utmost potential. Denominations may hire, but God alone calls. God's call comes in three ways: original conviction,

association, and direct confrontation. Samuel is an example of the first, Elisha is an example of the second, and Paul is an example of the third.

Each of these three men came to ministry by a different route. But all had a common anchor. The call of God dominated the landscape of their minds, eclipsing all competing professions, and they bowed readily to the yoke of the Almighty and went henceforth to the task assigned, that of catching people and enlarging the kingdom of God. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White told A. G. Daniells, when he was president of the General Conference, that running an evangelistic campaign would be therapeutic. While president of the General Conference, James White was an active soul winner. Neal Wilson ran several evangelistic campaigns while president. W. R. Beach kept a steady flow of people into the church through Bible studies. R. H. Pierson often broke away to do this work. And the sight of Robert Folkenberg preaching in Spanish to thousands of Cuban converts warms the blood. If these busy preachers were not too busy to "catch men," what about us?

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1911), 50.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>4</sup> ———, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), 290.



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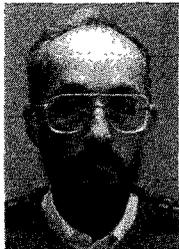
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# SEVEN STEPS TO RESTORING YOUR CHURCH

**C**hristian ministry is challenged to be on the cutting edge. Right now the cutting edge is going where no one has gone before.



*Stephen L. Bishop is senior pastor of the multinational, interdenominational Union Church of Bogota, Colombia.*

Planting new churches has become the emphasis in ministry and evangelism. The hidden implication of this approach is that God is not at work in old established, sick, or struggling churches, and that therefore it is time for such churches simply to concentrate on planting new congregations.

I disagree. The challenge in ministry is not only church planting but *church restoring*. Church planting is the “wave” of the present, but when the wave has passed, we may well see many churches lying in the lee, hardly growing and filled with people in need. What they will need is a dynamic ministry that will value their positive characteristics and minister to their special needs. I suggest the following seven characteristics of a “restoration pastor.”

*Be certain of your call.* This is true for all pastors, but the frustrations may be greater, and the temptation to “pack it in” are stronger in a restorative pastorate than in a new work. New work brings with it a fresh dynamic; in restoration that dy-

namic will not be so obvious, and the pastor who doubts the call may fail not only in that church but possibly in his or her entire ministry.

*Be patient.* New churches, like young seedlings, will exhibit changes—growth or withering—quickly. An established church is like a mature tree; positive or negative change will be slower. What may become a trend within weeks in a new church may not be noticeable in an established church, except in year-to-year review. The pastor would be wise to keep statistical records, for this may be the only way growth trends will be observable, particularly in the earlier years of a restorative process. A restoration pastor will probably be dealing, especially at first, with established Christians. This can be very positive, as there may well be a solid core of mature believers. However, it also means that any negative traits will probably be difficult to eradicate, except over a long period of time. For these reasons, patience is an important pastoral characteristic.

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STEPHEN L. BISHOP

*Have a sense of history.* Every church has its own history, and pastors need to know that history. Adlai Stevenson once remarked, "We can chart our future clearly and wisely only when we know the path which has led to the present." A sense of history will lead to a critical evaluation of both successes and failures in the church's past.

The restoration pastor can use this sense of history to understand the church's present condition, how it got there, what to avoid, and what could be valuable in the future. The pastor must *never* forget that he or she is not the first pastor, nor the last, but one in a noble lineage that has been called to serve that church. Rejoice in its history and use it to chart the future.

*Believe in your church.* Others may look at the church negatively, but the pastor cannot afford to do that. The pastor must believe in the congregation. He or she must look for signs of growth that others

may not see. Whatever the community or other believers may feel, the restoration pastor knows that God is at work. Every person in the congregation is precious and is one for whom Christ died. The church in restoration is part of His precious body, and He longs to instill in that body revival and renewal.

*Know God's vision for your church.* Too often restorable churches fail because they attempt to imitate "successful" churches around them. No church can be all things to all people. A restoration pastor will seek God's vision for what the church can become. He or she will seek for ways to make that church the unique, vibrant organism that God wishes it to be. We are called to be imitators of Christ and no one else.

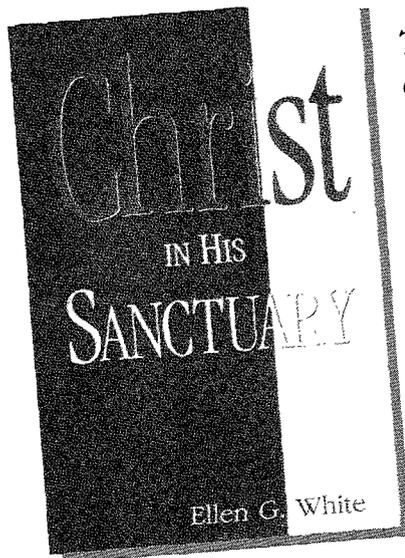
*Advance with cautious boldness.* To "make haste slowly" should be the prime method of advance. Established churches often have been hurt, and in some cases boldness will only intensify the hurt and

confusion. It is important to be innovative but also to move ahead only at the pace the church can follow.

*Be prepared to close the doors.* Some churches are not restorable. Some have reached their end and need to be quietly laid to rest, their members carefully integrated into other fellowships. A restoration pastor needs to know that his or her ministry might find itself engaged in the task of closing a church. We may know that when God closes one door, He opens another.

It is good that church planters go forth and plant! However, let us never assume that all God's blessings are to fall on new work. If this were so, He would never have spent so much time trying to restore Israel. Christ would never have sought out Simon Peter and restored him to fellowship, nor would Barnabas have encouraged John Mark. Every pastor may rejoice in his or her special place of ministry. Go forth and restore with confidence! ■

# CHRIST IN HIS SANCTUARY



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# STEPS to ACTION

*What to Do If Your Church Member Has a Sabbath Workplace Problem*

1

Call your local conference or union PARL director IMMEDIATELY.

2

Let your member know that the PARL Department of their church is ready to help.

3

If a member tells you of a Sabbath employment problem, document the following:

- Member's name, address, and phone number.
- Employer's name, address, and phone number.
- Name of person who has authority to resolve the problem for the employer.
- The nature of the problem and whether it is reoccurring or a single incident.
- Whether the member belongs to a union and if the union is supportive of our position.
- The nature of the job, the shift worked, and if the member has any suggestions of how accommodation can be achieved.
- Schedule a time when the PARL director can talk to the member.

4

Don't make promises to your church member that cannot be fulfilled.

5

Counsel your member to maintain an attitude of compliance with and respect for authority as far as possible, without violating his or her conscience.

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*Presented by the North American Division Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department and Liberty Magazine.*

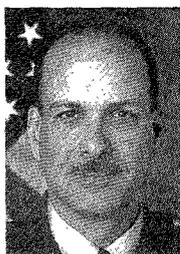
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# ETHICS AND ETHICAL CULTURE IN THE CHURCH

*An interview with Jonathan McGraw*



*Jonathan McGraw is a U.S. Army chaplain and director of the leadership branch of the U.S. Army Engineers' School.*



*Richard Stenbakken, Ed.D., is director of chaplaincy services at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.*

**Richard Stenbakken:** Jonathan, tell us about yourself.

**Jonathan McGraw:** I pastored in the Potomac Conference for seven years. While I was pastoring in Rockville, Maryland, I chose to go into the army as a chaplain. First, I served at Fort Bragg and then in Germany for three years. The army selected me to go to Yale University for a master's program in ethics. Prior to that, I started work on an MBA through Boston University, and the army asked me to do that as well. At present I'm at Fort Nutterwood at the army engineer school, teaching ethics and leadership.

**RS:** So you're trained in theology, business, and ethics. How do you combine the three? Some would say, "Look, I have religion, or I'm a Christian. Isn't that enough ethical underpinning? Why would someone in theology need ethics?"

**JM:** I minister to the whole military organization. I provide pastoral care, whether counseling or preaching. I also feel an obligation to minister to the system itself. That's how people are taken care of, that's how decisions are made, and that's how we do the mission that's given to us in the military. I think it's the same in any organization. An organization—no matter how good its inten-

tion or its spiritual base—needs to ask the question "Are we doing the right thing *this* time?" rather than assuming because we're a part of this organization we always do the right thing. Here's where theology, ethics, and organization make a nice mix.

**RS:** Give me a simple definition of "ethics."

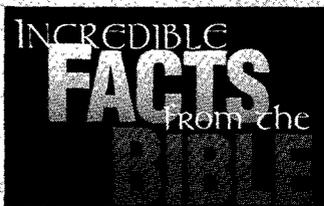
**JM:** Ethics is determining how to do the right thing the right way. Given that simple definition, and given the fact that even spiritual and religious organizations have to make decisions every day, it is obvious how ethics can impact church organizations. Religious organizations interact with people, and they need to create an environment where people can work and worship, affirm their spiritual roots, and take an overall spiritual overview that will help them make decisions based on Christian ethics and purpose.

**RS:** While Scripture gives some very clear dos and don'ts, it doesn't cover everything. There are problems and issues that demand that we develop some matrix or understanding that will guide us in making decisions responsibly.

**JM:** That's right, especially in a church organization, where we have to deal with

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JONATHAN MCGRAW AND  
RICHARD O. STENBAKKEN



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people from different backgrounds, educational levels, cultural upbringing, and theological perspectives. The issue becomes more difficult where there isn't a clear "Thus saith the Lord." And here is where a thoughtful, biblically informed ethical structure can be helpful.

RS: Ethics, then, can help the church develop a baseline, a common ground, that will be acceptable to the diverse groups that make up the church?

JM: Yes, ethics provides a sense of right and wrong that impacts people across different backgrounds. A church organization is judged not only by its theology but also by its actions. So the community in which our church lives and functions will judge us on how we act, how we relate to people of varying backgrounds, how we relate to others (whether we exclude some and include others), and how sensitive we are to the needs of local community.

RS: Am I hearing you say, then, that the corporate ethical issue makes an impact on people both inside and outside the church?

JM: That's right. We often think of ethics as dealing with a dilemma: How should our church wrestle with this or that problem? But ethics also calls upon a leader or a pastor to ensure that the church carries out

two ethical responsibilities in a community: to function as a moral agent and act rightly and then to create the organization's ethical climate—the perception of what is right and wrong.

Let's consider an ethical dilemma where you have to decide between two right things. A congregation has recently built a large church. They've stretched themselves to meet the mortgage, and then suddenly a large benefactor disappears. The church is in a financial crisis. When they built the church, they got a loan from a local bank. Now they are in a moral dilemma: They have a legal right to default on their loan, but they don't want to default because of their obligation to pay. They can resolve the dilemma either by defaulting or by looking for resources to pay the mortgage. They decide on the latter course. That's acting as a moral agent in the community.

Here we are dealing with the perception of the members within the church body as to what is right and wrong, how they should and shouldn't act. In all of this they are creating a certain ethical climate. Consider the history of the church building project. Go back five years. Three building contractors had submitted bids. At its appointed meeting, the building committee invited each of these builders to make their presentations. The committee interviewed them separately and then closed the doors to consider the bids and arrive at a decision. About fifteen minutes

into the discussion, one of the members of the building committee suddenly said, "Hey, I'm a contractor. I can cut five percent off the lowest bid here."

Now, even to say such a thing is unethical. There is a tendency in the church to say, "If we can save the Lord's money, it's all right." No, it is not all right. The chairperson should simply say: "Mr. Jones, you should have given us a bid on this. It's too late now, and we've got to decide between those who made the presentations." Even though Mr. Jones may be offering to save the church some money, he's not helping the ethical climate of the church within the community. The community and the church members have a right to expect that the church makes its decisions on what is right and not on what is convenient.

RS: What it really means is telling the truth to myself as well as to those who follow me.

JM: Organizational ethics calls upon us to account for the decision-making processes that we're a part of.

RS: Now that you've introduced the word "accountability," all of a sudden the shoe is tight on my foot. How do ethics and accountability fit together?

JM: Accountability is a vital part of building an ethical organization. How can we develop a sense of right and wrong if we are not accountable? Where there is no accountability, wrong is free to have its way. Look at Christ's ministry and how He called His disciples to be accountable. When He called sinners to repent and when He talked of final judgment, He was certainly speaking of accountability. Accountability isn't always easy in an organization, but it needs to be a part of it.

RS: So accountability is not the same as "Gotcha!" and it's not the same as "If you step across this ethical line, you'll be in trouble."

JM: Not at all. Accountability is really about spiritual growth. It's helping me as a church pastor look at myself and see what my piece is in this particular problem or

situation. Accountability is to face that church building committee and say to myself: "I must speak up. I have something to contribute to resolve this dilemma. I have a responsibility." Accountability makes me check myself as well as check others.

**RS:** Now, let's go back to the church-building project. Here's a large donor in the church, a well-to-do person, who can make a donation that's equal to perhaps half of the building cost, and the donor comes to you as the pastor and says, "Pastor, I'd like to donate this large amount of money, and I've always wanted our church to have these huge stained-glass windows, and I have a design for these windows, and I'm willing to contribute this huge amount of money into the building project, and the church can be built around these beautiful windows that I've designed."

**JM:** Remember what we talked about earlier. The climate of an organization, the ethical climate, is how people perceive things that are done. Here you have a perception problem. You have someone wealthy, willing to donate a large sum, who clearly perceives that he or she has influence because of money. So what you need to do is to step back to a decision-making process—taking the matter to your building committee or your church board. By this you are building an ethical climate—a climate of perception of what's right or wrong and what might be perceived as right.

**RS:** So what do we do? Here's a major benefactor who's meeting an identified need of the new church and whose idea is "Let's have a beautiful church around windows that I'm going to pay for. These beautiful windows will provide a worshipful atmosphere."

**JM:** Well, the decision-making process that would help here has five steps. First, identify the ethical problem. This particular member is possibly influencing unduly the construction of the church. How do we deal with this? We have to come up with possible solutions. And that is the second step. Step three is the ethical implication of each of the solutions. Step four is selecting the best solution. Step five is to implement it.

Go back to step two. What are some of the possible solutions? The problem is the possibility that this donor may unduly influence the church-building project. The first possible solution is to accept the offer and give the donor the influence he or she seems to be seeking in the building project. The second is to reject the gift, saying, "This isn't right." The third is to talk to the donor about the implications, to discuss how this could be perceived, and to ask if he or she really wants to tie so much of the church building to the donation.

**RS:** So we come back to the accountability factor. As a leader, I'm accountable to both the donor and the congregation, and I need to build a bridge between the two.

**JM:** Yes, one way to build that bridge is through communications and discussion in the decision-making process. If we accept the donation with no clarification or discussion, the ethical climate we're building is that money rules. That leaves some very negative implications. If we reject the gift, we may be standing on high moral grounds for not accepting a donation from someone who's trying to control the decisions of the whole community, but we may have some negative feedback here too. Then there's a third alternative: open communication. Is the donor trying to manipulate things, or is

he or she just trying to improve the overall church facility and offer a way to make that possible for the whole congregation? Is the donor willing to offer the money and let the building committee make the final decision?

**RS:** So really, ethics comes down to building a climate of openness and defining boundaries of what we do or don't do.

**JM:** Right. For us as Christian leaders, that boundary is a kind of philosophy of ethics, and it takes us back to the Ten Commandments, or more explicitly, to the person of Christ. Take these ten and their synopsis into two as Jesus summarized them and lived them out (about loving God and our neighbor) and use those as the basis of an ethical decision. That's our biblical reference point, our ethical anchor and framework for the church.

**RS:** It also helps us discover that there's nothing in the ten or the two about stained-glass windows, but there is much about relationship, fellowship, and worship.

**JM:** All this points to the best solution in facing an ethical dilemma: to communicate, to clarify, and then, once the committee makes a decision, to implement it.

**RS:** Thank you, Chaplain McGraw. ■

## The Inaugural Paul J. Landa Memorial Lecture

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## Take no bag



**T**ake . . . no bag for your journey" (Matt. 10:9, 10, RSV).

After letters, a videotape, a conference call, came the invitation. The vestry of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, Oregon, had chosen me as a finalist for the position of rector. The appointment was some weeks away, and plans were made.

The week before, I made a courtesy phone call to the Episcopal bishop of Oregon, telling him of my plans. He said that he wanted to meet me at the airport for lunch before I was met by the church warden for the drive to Lebanon.

I had never met the bishop before and did not know whom to look for, but there

he was. He was taller than average, and there weren't that many purple shirts in the airport. Initial greeting concluded, he suggested an airport restaurant. My wife, Sandy, and I agreed, but first we had to claim our luggage.

When the bag appeared on the conveyor, I thought to myself, I sure don't want the bishop to pick up that bag. It weighs a ton.

I mentally rehearsed the conversation between Sandy and me when packing for this trip. Will I really need all this? It's only a two-day visit.

Of course you'll need this, and more besides. You are going for a position interview.

She won. I brought it all, and the more besides.

The bishop had the advantage. The bags moved on the carousel toward him

first. I tried to grab, but he was quicker. Anyway, he's the bishop. Who am I to cut him off?

He strained and struggled and paid no attention to my unconvincing plea to "Let me carry that, bishop." Up the escalator and to the restaurant, we were shown to a table where the load was finally deposited beside my chair.

All the way upstairs, what I construed were the bishop's thoughts, kept running through my head. "Don't call this guy. He can't carry his own weight." Or, "Who are you calling, a priest or a weightlifter?" Or, "Better check this one out. Judging by his luggage, he is pretty desperate to move in."

We had a delightful lunch, with the bishop saying that he wanted me in the diocese if there appeared to be a match between priest and congregation.

Thank you, bishop. Apparently you have forgotten about the bag.

He hadn't. A few weeks later, at the Celebration of New Ministry, the bishop in his sermon made reference to how much weight the church expects its clergy to carry. As an illustration, he pointed out that the new rector apparently thinks he has to carry an anvil with him on an interview.

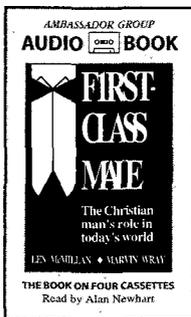
There was no anvil. Just extra shirts, pants, shoes. Enough stuff to feel like an anvil.

Would the vestry have called me to be their rector had I shown up for the interview in the same jeans, T-shirt, and running shoes that I wore when telephoned? Who is to know?

But could we not all lighten up? Could we take less for the journey? If I'm ever granted another interview, if my luggage can't be carried on and "stowed under the seat or in the overhead compartment," it won't get taken. Or maybe I'll take care to stand to the bishop's other side at the luggage carousel. ■

*Stephen Norcross is pastor of the St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, Oregon.*

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# WHY ADD A NEW SERVICE?

**I**n 15 years, Vineyard Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, has grown from six couples meeting in a living room to a congregation of 3,000 that holds seven weekly worship services in its 600-seat auditorium.



*Charles Arn, Ed.D., is president of Church Growth, Inc., in Monrovia, California, and the author of How to Start a New Service.*

Despite the fact that it has planted twelve new churches, it continues to grow, with 20 percent of its new members being recent converts.

Westminster Presbyterian Church in Duluth, Minnesota, was a declining church in an aging community. By 1992 worship attendance averaged 40 per Sunday, and the church had not reached anyone for Christ in over five years. "They wanted to grow but didn't know how," said Chuck Laird, who was called as senior pastor in 1993. Two years later Westminster added a new worship service to reach baby boomers. By the end of the year the church was averaging over 200 in combined attendance—the highest in its 33-year history. Says Laird: "I believe God would have this church approaching 1,000 within five years. But it will never happen with only two services."

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Carrollton, Texas, begins its weekly worship services like most other Lutheran churches—with a traditional, liturgical service. By the end of the week, however, the church has conducted three more services, each distinct in focus and style. Each service attracts people entirely different from the traditional Lutherans who attend on Sunday mornings. "Each time we added a worship hour," says

Rev. Steve Wagner, "our attendance increased by 21 percent. I am amazed at the power of the worship style to define the character of the congregation attending. Offering distinctive choices simply allows more people to identify with our church and hear our message—the gospel of Jesus Christ."

These churches represent hundreds of congregations across the United States. New phrases are entering our vocabulary: "alternative service," "contemporary service," "Saturday-night service," "multicongregational church," "seeker sensitive," "seeker targeted," or simply "second service" (or "third" or "eighth"). But the issue is the same: "Should we add another service? If so, when? And how?"

## Seven reasons for a new service

I was recently part of a comprehensive five-year study conducted by Church Growth, Inc. (Monrovia, California) analyzing churches that had added a new worship service. The outcome was a detailed strategy that greatly increases the probability of any church successfully beginning a new worship service.<sup>1</sup> One outcome of this study was the conclusion that approximately half of the 315,000 churches in the U.S. could

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CHARLES ARN

add a differently styled worship service to their weekly activities, and of those, eight of ten would experience a *measurable increase* in total attendance, total giving, and total conversions.

Following are seven reasons why your church should add a new worship service:

#### To reach the unchurched

Of all the reasons to begin a new service, this should be the most compelling. To reach non-Christians should be cause enough for the churches currently plateaued or declining. Why do new services increase the number of people a church reaches with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

A new service focuses your church's attention on the unchurched. Starting a new service has many similarities to starting a new church. Those who have been part of planting a new church know the strong sense of mission, group spirit, and excitement that comes with planning to reach new people. These dynamics also occur when a church becomes involved in starting a new service. Like a new church, a new service focuses on

people not presently involved in a church. Members must ask "who the new service is for," "why we are starting a new service," and "how these people are going to be reached." These questions—and the answers—lead a church beyond its own walls to those not presently active.

A new service helps you repackage your message. "In order to reach our communities with the unchanging truth and love of Jesus Christ," observes Rev. Arnell ArnTessoni, "we may be required to remove the cultural wrapping in which we have cloaked the good news. Frequently it is not the Word of God people are rejecting as irrelevant. It is the outdated clothing in which we have dressed our Lord."<sup>2</sup>

Certain forms and liturgies become almost "sacred" to those who have grown up with them. For many sincere and well-meaning folk there is only one "right" way to worship and only one "right" music to sing and play. Anything other than the familiar worship patterns will never seem "right."

Starting a new style of service will force your church to ask an important question:

"What are our *forms*, and what is our *essence*?" What are the *changeable* conventions by which we conduct church activities? And what are the *essential* ingredients that comprise our unchanging message?

A new service allows your members to invite their friends. Research shows that the primary way churches grow is through members inviting their friends and relatives.<sup>3</sup> However, most members of nongrowing churches do not invite anyone.<sup>4</sup> Why? Because they don't believe their friends or relatives would find the service interesting or relevant. When a church offers a new service that is relevant, appropriate, and well-presented, church members show a dramatic interest in inviting others.

#### To minister to more Christians

Eighty percent of the congregations that move from one worship experience to two find that their overall attendance jumps by at least 10 percent.<sup>5</sup> Whether the new service is for those who prefer contemporary music or parents who want to worship with their children in a family service, the more options

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you provide, the more people you will reach.

People today want choices. Businesses know that the more variety of products they offer, the more people will select one. One major soft-drink company offers nine choices of cola alone. Ford Motor Company offers seven lines of cars with a huge variety of color and interior options. The insight is crucial for churches in today's world of choices.

When people have a choice beyond the "take it or leave it" point. When they are able to choose when, what, how, or where they may meet. When their choices are increased, we greatly increase the chances of more people saying Yes to at least one of the options being offered.

### To reach new kinds of people

A new service will not only help you reach more non-Christians and minister to more Christians; it will help you, instead, reach different *kinds* of people from those you are presently reaching. Here's why. The worship service is the primary entrance for people to become involved in congregational life. Visitors decide to become active in a church based largely on their experience in and around the worship service. And, like it or not, your service is attractive to some people, while not attractive to others. "The simple truth is that worship cannot be culturally neutral," says James White.<sup>6</sup> No single service can be all things to all people. Consequently, it is most important to ask the question: "Who finds our present service attractive?"

Most church services appeal to one (and generally only one) of the following six groups. The accompanying grid can help you consider the people to whom your existing service is attractive. And, by default, it will identify those who do not find your service attractive.

To whom is our present service most attractive?

		SPIRITUAL	
		Christian	Seeker
GENERATIONAL	Baby Busters 18-30 years		
	Baby Boomers 30-49 years		
	Seniors 50+ years		

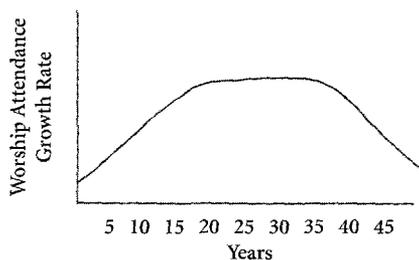
A mistake some churches make, in an effort to broaden the generational and/or spiritual range of people attracted to their existing service, is to *diversify* the music or liturgical style. In so doing most churches actually diminish the effectiveness of their present service among *every* people group, including their predominant one.

One style of service will *not* effectively reach or minister to a large number of persons in more than one of these six segments. If you desire to increase attendance in your *existing* service, then the best strategy is to find and focus on people in your community who are in the same category as those already comprising a majority of your present audience. But if you desire to reach *new* kinds of people in your community (from different "people groups" than are attending your present service), you will need a new service with a style focused on this group.

### To break out of your normal lifecycle

The lifecycle of a church is both normal and predictable.<sup>7</sup> It is a law that simply exists. And, like it or not, all churches—including yours—are subject to it. The lifecycle describes a local church's infancy, maturity, and death. The sobering fact is that at least 80 percent of the churches in America today are on the flat or back side of their lifecycles.<sup>8</sup>

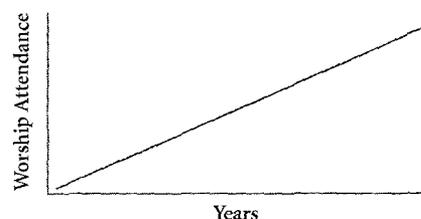
Graphically, a typical church lifecycle looks like this:



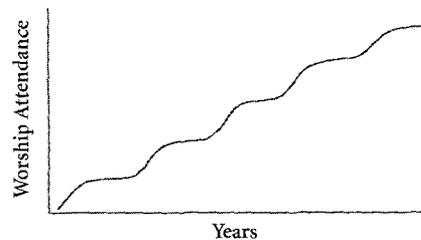
In the early stages of a church's life, there is a high sense of mission among all involved. The church is purpose-driven. Its motivation is outreach. And the result is growth. As the formative years give way to time, the church reaches a comfortable size and generally stops growing. An emerging pattern of institutionalization is reflected in the increasing number of committees and the decreasing degree of accomplishment. The final stage of the lifecycle—decline—

often begins around a church's fortieth or fiftieth birthday. Few, if any, members reflect the passion of the founders. Decline in worship attendance begins. And most people, including the staff, believe the church's best days are behind them.

But what about those churches that rise above this predictable lifecycle pattern and experience growth beyond the first twenty to thirty years? As we have studied and charted the growth of churches that "don't fit the mold," a fascinating pattern emerges. Rather than a constant or linear pattern of growth that one might expect,



growing churches that have broken out of their predictable lifecycle reflect a "stair step" pattern of growth.



Here's a key insight: Most churches that are growing at a time when they should be plateaued or declining have begun new lifecycles! Something has interrupted the church's normal pattern—I call it an "intervention event"—a new lifecycle has begun before the old lifecycle has pulled them into decline or death.

Here is a list of intervention events that may (but not always do) initiate a new lifecycle in a church:<sup>9</sup> change of pastors; a crisis; planting a church; closing and reopening a church; renewal of a pastor; renewal of laity; denominational involvement; outside consultant; relocation; a new service.

Of all the controllable intervention events that can begin a new lifecycle, the establishing of a new worship service is the most likely to do so. Or, more directly: The best way to begin a new lifecycle is to begin a new service.

## To allow for change while retaining the familiar

If you wish to attract new kinds of people to your worship service, you have essentially three options. Each option results in a fairly predictable outcome:

1. Completely redesign your present service.

Outcome: This approach will indeed reach new people and potentially be the beginning of a new lifecycle in a church. The cost may be a considerable loss of present members who become unhappy and leave.

2. Incorporate more variety into your existing service.

Outcome: This strategy aims at providing a service for a wider range of people to find something they like. A few old hymns mixed with contemporary praise songs plus a couple 1960s choruses should make everyone happy. But in the effort to provide a service where everyone finds something they like, you have created a service where everyone finds something they don't like.

With both options, the financial implications should not go overlooked. Those who will leave because of the change in style are frequently larger givers than those who will be attracted.

3. Add an additional service that offers a clear choice of styles.

Outcome: This option is based on an important principle of innovation: *Change through addition will be more successful than change through substitution.* If church members feel they are losing something of value (i.e., "their" service), even though it may be for a seemingly worthwhile cause, many will resist it believing that the benefit is not worth the cost. Through adding a new style service, without deleting your existing one, you double your outreach and ministry potential while allowing those members who prefer the present service to continue receiving their spiritual nourishment.

## To activate inactive members

In studying churches that have added a new style service, I have frequently observed a serendipitous benefit—a decrease in the percentage of inactive members. In a typical American church, approximately forty percent of the membership attend the weekly service. Reasons for inactivity vary.

But regardless of the cause, the people who stay away are nonverbally saying: The cost of attending is not worth the benefit. It is not uncommon, however, to see a new style service boost the member attendance percentages from a range of 40 percent to 60 plus.

Once a formerly active member stops attending church for longer than six months, it generally becomes too uncomfortable and

**S**tarting a new style of service will force your church to ask an important question: "What are our forms, and what is our essence?" What are the changeable conventions by which we conduct church activities? And what are the essential ingredients that comprise our unchanging message?

too embarrassing for that person to return. A new service, however, provides a perfect "excuse" for many inactives to give that church a second chance. While they won't usually return to the church they left, some inactives will return to something new. When sensitively invited, 15 to 20 percent of resident inactive members can be expected to try your new service.

## To help your denomination survive

Denominational church families that desire to be effective and vital in the twenty-first century must see a large percentage of their churches participating in one of two growth strategies: establishing new

churches and/or starting new services.

Church growth specialists consider that starting new congregations is the single most important activity for assuring the future of a denomination. Creation of new style services among existing churches is the second most important strategy. When a large number of churches in a denomination are starting new services to reach a new target audience, they are in effect accomplishing many of the same goals and realizing many of the benefits inherent in planting a new church.

## So, try a new service

Many church leaders read about the success stories or attend the seminars of churches that seem to have "figured it all out." How easy it seems for them and how difficult for us.

I won't be so presumptuous as to suggest that a new service in your church is the simple solution to all your problems. But I can tell you, with utmost certainty, there is opportunity in your church for new growth and outreach. As long as there are unreached people groups in your community, there is an opportunity for God's love to be shared with them. For many of these people, it may well be experienced through a new service, and a new service may be one of the best applications of Paul's great principle of becoming all things to all people in order to win some. ■

<sup>1</sup> See *How to Start a New Service* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Arnell Arn Tesson, *Lecture, Greenlake, Wisconsin, April 1993.*

<sup>3</sup> Win Arn and Charles Arn, *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 43.

<sup>4</sup> "Do You Know Your 'Potential Congregation?'" in *The Growth Report* (Monrovia, Calif.: Church Growth, Inc., September/October 1993), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Lyle Schaller, *44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 50.

<sup>6</sup> James White, *Opening the Front Door: Worship and Church Growth* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1992), 29.

<sup>7</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine Into Old Wineskins* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 161, 162.

<sup>8</sup> "Is Your Church in a Mid-Life Crisis?" *The Growth Report*, Number 7 (Monrovia, Calif.: Church Growth Inc., 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Charles Arn, "How Do You Begin a New Lifecycle?" in *The Growth Report* (Monrovia, Calif.: Church Growth, Inc., March/April 1994), 7.

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# W A FEW GOOD MEN

omen's ministry has been around for some time. Can men's ministry be far behind?



*Willie Oliver is director of family ministries for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.*

Today, the new phenomenon of men's ministry is catching on.

Traditionally, women have outnumbered men in local church membership and leadership, even though the corporate leadership is still disproportionately male. The majority of our pastors are male, but the infrastructure of church activities and ministry is staffed by women.

A combination of factors has influenced the preponderance of female leadership and involvement in local church ministries. For example, in the past, men were the traditional wage earners while women stayed home and looked after the family. They had more freedom than men did to take an active part in church activities. Then in the midtwentieth century, feminism became a dominant social movement, and women began to claim their rightful role in employment and leadership at all levels, including the church. The civil rights movement also had its impact on women's roles. The fight against racial segregation and social stratification did not fail to recognize that a just and equitable society would emerge only when all people, irrespective of color, gender, or ethnicity, would have their rightful and equal role in society.

The church did not escape the influence of the women's movement. Indeed, many women have felt empowered to exercise their leadership talents and come forward to be more active in the church in more influential ways than the ways traditionally open to them. Their ministry has

strengthened the church. One effect of this emerging role of women has been its impact on men. While the more egalitarian relationship between men and women in society has positively affected the relationship between genders in the home as well as in the church, the new trend has alarmed some men.

This is nothing new. A closer look at the issue of male-female relationships will clearly show that Bible authors raised similar questions back in the first century, before there ever was a modern women's movement.

## Mutuality between men and women

Paul spoke candidly on the issue: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. . . . In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. . . . For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. . . . Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 5:21, 25, 28, 31; 6:4, NIV).

Paul advocates mutuality in the relationship between husband and wife. He also indicates that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church. A loving husband is one who nurtures and cares for his wife by relating to her as a partner, rather than treating her like someone under his control. A loving husband will

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WILLIE OLIVER

properly provide for his wife (see 1 Tim. 5:8). The fact that a man's wife may work outside the home does not lessen the husband's God-given responsibility to support his wife and children.

Imagine the great potential for church growth and nurture around the world if we have vibrant participation of men and women, fathers and mothers, in the home and in the church. In a 1996 Gallup Poll on Fathering in America, 79.1 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "the most significant family or social problem facing America is the physical absence of the father from the home"; 90.9 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "it's important for children to live in a home with both their mother and father"; and 90.3 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "fathers make unique contributions to their children's lives."

Men's ministries is a ministry that has emerged precisely to support men in their roles as husbands, fathers, and committed Christians. Every time I participate in a men's ministries conference, I notice the impression it leaves on the men who attend. At the end of the weekend, men leave with a stronger commitment to God, a stronger dedication to their families, and higher dedication to share their faith with others.

Anything that has this kind of effect on men in the church is positive. Hence the new policy on men's ministry.

### Men's ministry

As part of the infrastructure of men's ministry, the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists sponsors a monthly electronic newsletter called *e-male*. This resource can be found on the Web page at [www.emale.org](http://www.emale.org). The Web page includes a number of features for the spiritual nurture of men, including a daily devotional. Men can not only access and read this devotional but can also share spiritual nuggets from their cultural and spiritual vantage point. They can also contribute to the newsletter. Those without access to a computer can contact their conference office for a hard copy of the monthly newsletter.

The mission of this ministry is to "galvanize the energy of men for God, family, and community." The vision statement proclaims, "Men who love and are committed to God,

their families and their communities."

Would men's ministry add to the burden of local pastors? No. In fact, the ministry has the potential to lessen the load of the pastor and serve as a facilitator of vibrant ministries in the local congregation.

### Starting in the local church

How do we start an effective men's ministry in the local church? Here are some steps.

1. *Start with a core group of men.* The core group is the heart of an effective men's ministry. Other men are not excluded from joining the core group. However, the core group provides a foundation of prayer, direction, and leadership for the entire men's ministry.

2. *Focus on relationships, not programs.* Plan on relationship-building types of events like men's conferences; men's special events (cookouts with an afternoon of softball, father-son campouts, father-daughter banquets); marriage and fathering seminars; witnessing-in-the-workplace seminars; men's church events (a monthly men's breakfast gathering); and men's small groups (prayer groups, Bible study groups).

3. *Have clear goals.* Take a profile of your men in order to find out who are the men you will be serving. The profile will identify interests and strengths among the men in the church. Be sure to have a core group of men. Someone other than the pastor needs to be directly responsible for the activities of the ministry. Develop a mission statement. Without a clearly defined purpose for this ministry, you will lose focus.

4. *For men only.* This does not mean that programming events with women and children are not vital to the health of families. But this does mean that certain needs of men can only be met when men gather with other men. Men also talk more freely on spiritual and emotional issues when they are just with men. An effective men's ministry will recognize this dynamic and structure the ministry so as to provide an environment where they can share their weaknesses, struggles, triumphs, and challenges with other men.

5. *Pastor-supported ministry.* According to surveys conducted across the United States, 91 percent of successful men's ministries trace their success, at least in part,

to the support and encouragement from a staff pastor. This ministry, however, is pastor-friendly. They honor the pastor's schedule and responsibilities by communicating plans and strategies and by asking for his or her input. When a pastor is actively supportive of men's ministries, the ministry has greater momentum and a stronger foundation. It more readily draws men together, especially if the pastor is a good teacher. A pastor's support and encouragement can greatly enhance the men in your church—especially if the pastor invests time and energy in a core group of lay leaders.

6. *Ministries with flexibility and variety.* Successful men's ministries offer a variety of entry points and opportunities for men to grow spiritually and to make relational commitments. These ministries honor and respect each man's spiritual journey, seeking ways to enhance his faith and commitment to God. Annual men's conferences and sporting events are great nonthreatening entry points for a man. However, these activities by themselves will not meet the relational needs of a man or consistently challenge him to an active faith.

When men's ministries offer enough variation to honor the different levels of spiritual maturity in all men, they effectively gather their men. Not all men will commit to prayer groups. Not all men will attend a sporting event. Not all men will commit to a small group. That's OK. Effective men's ministries are flexible, accepting men where they are and providing a variety of opportunities for men to convene.

7. *Avoid implementing too much too soon.* Men's ministries take time to grow. Often, motivated and excited pastors or laymen will develop a program without taking the necessary time to communicate the mission of the group to various levels of men's gatherings. Be careful not to force an elaborate program upon men, for which they are not yet ready. Take time to build a substantial, reliable foundation that can survive the growth and the challenges that come with that progress.

Embrace this ministry, and by the power of God watch the men who have been on the margin come into the mainstream of church life and add to your few good men. ■

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# GENERIC FUNERALS

**H**ello, David, this is Paul.” The voice belonged to a local funeral director. “Paul, how are you doing?”



*David Wesley Reid, D.Min., is senior pastor in the First Baptist Church, Reading, Massachusetts.*

“Just fine. Listen, I just had a call come in about a Mary Smith. She passed away early this morning at the Winchester Hospital. Because she had no church affiliation, the family asked if I could find a cleric to do a brief funeral service on Thursday morning. Are you available?”

“What time?”

“10:00 a.m.”

“I can do that. Tell me what you know about Mary. Also, I’d like the name and phone number of the person making the arrangements.”

How common this situation is. A man or woman dies without church affiliation, and the family calls the undertaker and asks if he can suggest a cleric. *Generic funerals* I call them, burials for men and women who die without a church home and for whom any clergy will do. Religion may not have been important in life, but it becomes so in death.

What’s the best way to handle these services? Having performed several hundred in my two and a half decades of ministry (they seem to be more frequent now than years ago), I think my successes and failures have taught me some valuable lessons worth sharing.

#### Get information

First, the pastor should ask the funeral director upfront for as much information as he can provide about the deceased and

his or her family. How old? Cause of death? Length of illness? Next of kin? Family dynamics? Was the deceased a dear old mother who lived a long and loving life? Was he an alcoholic who left behind a trail of bitterness? Was it a sudden death? A tragic death? Did it involve a protracted sickness? What was the reason for no church affiliation?

The answers to these questions and others will help surface the salient spiritual and emotional issues confronting the bereaved family. And knowing these issues, goes a long way toward helping the pastor “hit the nail on the head” when it comes to caring for the family before, during, and after the funeral itself.

Next, as soon as possible, the pastor ought to call the family of the deceased and arrange for a home visit. This may threaten a *generic family* if they’re carrying some unresolved baggage about clergy, religion, or church. Even so, the pastor should try to make his way into the home, for two reasons. One, a home visit says, “God loves you enough to enter into your personal hurting space,” an important message for the *generic family* to hear. And two, it may open the door to a deeper long-term pastoral relationship.

#### Feel their pain

While visiting with a grieving family, the pastor needs to go out of his way to empathize with their pain. More often than

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DAVID WESLEY REID

not, *generic funeral* families are cautious, even suspicious, about clergy. Who knows what led to their disassociation from church in the first place? Maybe they were hurt, offended, or "turned off" by some pastor or church member. If so, a pastoral visit that comes across as *pro forma* could prove disastrous to effective ministry.

Soon after seminary, while working as a state hospital chaplain, I presided over the funerals of many welfare patients. Most were *generic*, in the sense that I had no previous pastoral connection with the deceased or their families. It was a welcome learning experience but one that often left me muttering, "Boy, I blew that one."

Sensing my frustration, my supervisor called me into his office and said, "David, when you do a funeral, even if it's with people you don't know, for goodness sake, *feel*. The family may not remember what you say, but they'll always remember whether or not you felt."

His comment was an immense help. These days people often say to me, "Dr. Reid, thank you so much. You have no idea how

much comfort you gave us during our time of grief." Outwardly I respond with a smile, but inside I'm offering a few words of thanks to my former supervisor whose put me on the right track many years earlier.

#### Getting acquainted

It's important, too, when meeting with the family, that the pastor "get acquainted" with the deceased. Before meeting with a grieving family I prepare a mental list of questions. For example, if the deceased was an older woman, I may ask questions like: Was she a woman of faith? Where was she born? One of how many children? Are any of her siblings still living? Where was she raised? From what schools did she graduate? When did she get married? Did she work? How many children did she have? Grandchildren? Great grandchildren? What special interests did she enjoy? Any hobbies? What was her personality like? If there's one word that really captures her best, what would it be? What kind of funeral do you think she would have wanted?

Such questions, or their facsimiles, serve

two purposes: (1) they facilitate the grieving process by encouraging verbal catharsis; and (2) they build a knowledge base from which the pastor can construct a funeral that is warm and personal.

Another important lesson: The pastor should always walk the *generic funeral family* through the funeral service beforehand. Anxiety runs high in most funerals, but in *generic funeral* situations, it can be inordinately so. Why? Because in addition to the anxiety engendered by the grief experience itself, *generic funeral families* often feel uncomfortable in the context of rituals that resemble church worship. The solution? Take the grieving family on a tour of the funeral service ahead of time. Spell out how long the service will last, what Bible passages will be read, the number of prayers that will be offered, the theme of the meditation, etc. This kind of preview reassures the family that the pastor's "real" agenda in taking on the funeral is not to force religion down their throat (a behind-the-scenes apprehension that many *generic families* harbor but rarely verbalize) but to bring all the resources of

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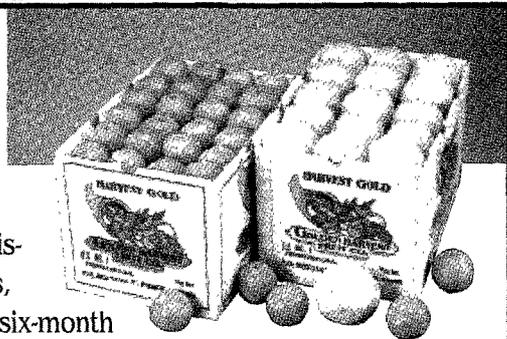
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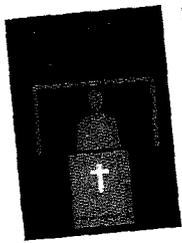
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Christian faith to bear on their pain, with the expectation that in the end it will help to heal their hurt.

The pastor should always make a brief appearance at the funeral home during pre-funeral visiting hours. My experience indicated that this often takes the family by surprise, but it goes a long way toward convincing them that the caring being offered is genuine. Such a favorable impression greatly increases the likelihood that the family will perceive the pastor, *and his message*, as credible.

"He didn't have to come to the funeral home, but he did. That really impressed me."

### The measure of a good funeral

The pastor must maintain the integrity of the *generic funeral* as a service of worship. *Generic funeral families* often live with a secular perspective on life, which influences what they expect from a funeral often just a good word spoken about their departed loved one, properly seasoned with a pinch of genuine Christian faith. In recent years I've noticed that this thinking has led to an increased number of occasions when family members and friends want to participate in the funeral service—a bit of saccharin poetry here, a bit of romanticized prose there—whatever, as

long as it affords the chance to say something nice about the deceased. At face value, there is no problem with this. But it is a problem if the motivation springs from a secular belief that a good eulogy alone is the measure of a good funeral.

It isn't. And it's the pastor's duty to help the family understand that it isn't. A good funeral isn't just a good word about the deceased, but first and foremost, the good news about faith. That is to say, the funeral is a service of worship. Above all else, the pastor is a good news messenger of God's unmitigated love, Christ's atoning death, the healing power of the Holy Spirit, the importance of eternal accountability, the hope of heaven, the assurance of divine mercy, and the blessing of a supportive community of faith. The pastor is the doctor of the soul, and the spiritual truths that he prescribes in the context of funeral worship are a significant part of what the *generic family* needs for their healing, even if they don't know it. The real challenge comes in finding a way to present these truths with clarity and conviction so that a secular-minded man or woman may find them healing.

To help this process, the pastor should develop a reservoir of funeral meditations to fit any funeral occasion and become so familiar with them that he or she can deliver them from memory.

Often *generic funeral* congregations look bored and disinterested during the funeral because they don't resonate with the message on a soul level. Their eyes flit, their feet shuffle, and they twist in their seats. Part of my solution to the problem is to know my funeral meditation "cold," so I can present it without the use of notes or manuscript. This greatly enhances eye contact, which in turn elicits a higher level of attentiveness. What also helps is that, as soon as the funeral service begins, you visually scout out those men or women in the *generic congregation* who seem most willing to make eye contact and to zero in on them. Hundreds of *generic funeral* situations have taught me that there are always "seekers" present.

### One final lesson

A postfuneral contact with the family is always in order. I like to telephone the *generic family* once or twice within a week

after the funeral to ask how they're faring and to extend an open-ended invitation for my services at any time. Most often I never hear from the family again, but it's helpful to know that I've done everything I can to love and serve them in the name of Jesus. Once that's been done, I continue to serve them through prayer, trusting that in the end their well-being rests in the hands of a merciful and beneficent God, whose intimate involvement with even the least on this earth is beyond question.

More than anything else, I believe it's the pastor's privilege and duty in working with grieving *generic families* to have his personal investment in their lives serve as a signpost, pointing to a God whose character is unquestioned, whose love is unbounded, and whose lordship over life is not limited to this earthly time and space. In the end, if the seeds of these truths are sown in the heart of a hurting soul, even one who has never known Him, then the day may come when they blossom into an eternally rich and rewarding relationship with the Divine. Clearly, that would make any pastor feel that the time he or she invested in the *generic family* during their season of grief was well-spent. ■

## What makes the difference?

*continued from p. 4*

of approach to ministry will convict us and move us nearer to the kind of forward thrust in our ministry that we dream of and to which God directs us. It could make the difference.

If there is anyone who would like a copy of Foster's book and is unable to obtain it, I have a limited number of copies available and would be glad to send them free to those who are first to request them. To order a copy, please use the email, fax, and regular mail addresses given on page 2 of any *Ministry*. Please date your fax or regular mail so that I can be as fair as possible in distributing the books according to the dates of the request arrivals. ■

<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline, the Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper and Collins Pub., Inc.), 1.

## Letters

continued from page 3

even though it is not directly stated in the Bible. It seems to me that now, more than ever before, it is time to get back to simply taking the Bible at its word.

Biblical evidence overwhelmingly suggests not using alcohol—at least 75 Bible verses against the use of alcohol to the four or five that may be construed to be in favor.—David L. Glenn, pastor, Warren, Michigan.

### September 1998 issue

● In his article, Errol Webster significantly stated, “What many do not realize is that for both Protestants and Catholics, salvation is by grace alone. Catholics believe that the ‘whole of justification is the work of God’s grace.’” What, then, is the difference?

Honest evangelization by Protestants and Catholics needs to make this difference clear so people can understand what version of the gospel they are subscribing to. Pastor Webster concludes the article by acknowledging “However, subtle these differences, might appear on the surface, they lead to radically different conclusions about salvation, and even after 400 years the gap still exists.”

Shall Protestant and Catholics evangelize the world, claiming these “radically different conclusions about salvation” are equally the mind of Christ? Or shall there be appeal to which version each person is more comfortable with in preparation to appear before the tribunal of Christ? Is the imputed righteousness of the Protestant and the imparted righteousness of the Catholic equally compatible with covenant? The Scripture does not present covenant as forensic relationship, but as family bond relationship. When Paul directs the Galatians “God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of His Son which cries out ‘Abba,’” can Paul possibly mean forensic relationship, an imputed righteousness, or does it mean imparted righteousness?

As the 400-year gap remains, may the continuing encounter between Protestant and Catholic Christians be marked by care to accurately state each other’s belief, as Pastor Webster’s article is

a step in that direction.—Robert Buholzer, Palmyra, Wisconsin.

● I found it sad that Webster, in seeking to define the basis and meaning of justification, quotes extensively from Protestant scholars but offers not a single Bible text. In so doing, he becomes guilty of a most basic error—relying on church tradition rather than Scripture as the basis of one’s theology.

The belief that Spirit-empowered transformation is both a prerequisite for justification and part of the means of our salvation is based on clear biblical teaching. Scripture declares: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Prov. 28:13). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:7). Paul himself wrote: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13).

Elsewhere Paul clarifies further his belief in salvation by sanctification and inward grace: “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thess. 2:13). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). Here we see a clear contrast, stated elsewhere in Paul’s writings (Rom. 2:13-24), between works which we have done (which cannot save) and what the Spirit accomplishes in and through believers (which does save).

The difference between the Bible teaching of salvation by inward grace and the Catholic position is the Catholic belief that God’s grace—both forgiving and transforming—is mediated by the church through manmade requirements such as confession to the priests, pilgrimages, penance, and other unbiblical rituals. Ellen White (the only inspired commentator on Reformation history) is clear that these ceremonies and traditions had become a substitute for true obedience and that the issue between Luther and the papacy was

between these pointless rituals as the basis of pardon, versus true repentance and the forsaking of sin (see *The Great Controversy*, 128, 129). Neither Scripture nor Ellen White supports the strange teaching that one aspect of Jesus’ righteousness is superior to another.—Kevin D. Paulson, Redlands, California.

### Join now!

continued from page 27

association. If so, ask to be introduced to the members. See that your fellow pastors receive a complimentary subscription to *Ministry*. It is likely that ministers who are already receiving it are already your friends.

Your fellow pastors will have opportunity to know you and your congregation firsthand rather than from third parties, and you will learn much more than you will teach as you come together in mutual fellowship.

A few years ago, David Newman, Rex Edwards, and I hosted the pastors of our surrounding community to a luncheon at the General Conference. We wondered if it might seem artificial since our colleagues were all pastors or chaplains and we were all three bureaucrats at church headquarters. Such concerns quickly evaporated. Following a good meal, we enjoyed comparing challenges and identifying common opportunities for ministering to our community and unique situations about which we shared and received good counsel.

Of course, you will enjoy inviting your colleagues to a special event such as the satellite professional-growth seminar, but much beyond that, you will enjoy spiritual and professional growth to enhance your own ministry. ■

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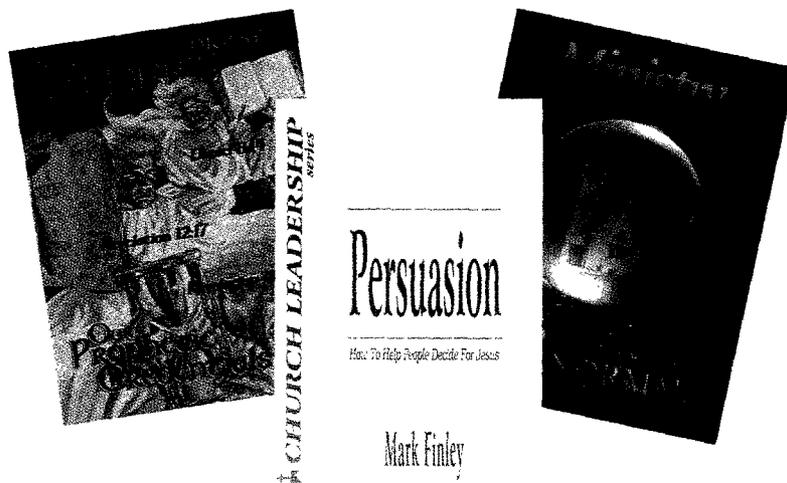
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**T**he letter made my day! A colleague whose ministry I've observed for over fifteen years recently submitted the names of 100 fellow pastors

to receive a complimentary subscription to *Ministry*.

He wrote, "I have been in this community for ten years and have developed a good relationship with nearly all these pastors. I believe that *Ministry* magazine and the professional growth seminars is a marvelous way to continue building bridges!"

Over twenty years ago, when Bob Spangler and Roland Hegstad visioned the idea of *Ministry* going to clergy of all denominations, even their bold dreams did not encompass the eventual, simultaneous satellite down linking of high-quality continuing education to 7,000 attendees in 530 different locations (March 1998).

Rather, they saw the benefit of fellow pastors coming together in fellowship to learn from each other, to pray together, and to seek beneficial answers to the mutual challenges we all share.

Recently, I asked Roland Hegstad, our two *Ministry* editors Will Eva and Julia Norcott, and Nikolaus Satelmajer, coordinator for professional growth, "Why should a pastor become involved in his or her local ministerial association?"

A variety of responses came back that I will share with you, especially as we look forward to the next satellite event, April 20, 1999.

#### Why join your ministerial association?

- To enjoy fellowship with others who seek fellowship with God
- To learn their, and share my, concepts of God and ministry
- To seek their prayers for me and to share my prayers for them
- To keep up-to-date on the concerns of colleagues in ministry regarding commu-

## Join now!

JAMES A. CRESS

nity moral issues and to compare and critique attitudes and actions regarding legislation, whether local, state, or national

- To achieve a "fellowship of hearts" in which Scriptural truths held in common may be mutually enjoyed; personal needs shared in confidence, and friendships nurtured

- To gain greater appreciation for my own denomination as other pastors share the challenges they face and the way of doing things in their organizations

- To learn that our traditional approach is not the only way to solve all pastoral challenges and that, regardless of denomination, we each share mutual burdens

- To compare systems such as conference management of pastoral placement and remuneration versus the sometimes awkward necessity for a pastor to negotiate salaries and benefits directly with the congregation

- To learn together that none of us has all the answers and most of us even lack all the questions

#### But our beliefs differ

Writing about practical ways to avoid burnout (November 1998), Nazarene pastor, J. Grant Swank, Jr., said, "Fellowship with clergy of other denominations. These persons cannot harm you ecclesiastically, because they are not of your official circle. There is no political string they can pull to undo you."

Nik Satelmajer said, "The first local ministerial alliance to which I belonged was one of the most diverse groups in which I have ever participated. We represented a very broad spectrum of theology and church organization. Yet that group was one of the most profitable, with a strong sense of fellowship. We respected each other and each other's faiths even though we often vigorously

discussed our differences."

Roland Hegstad elaborates on his "fellowship of hearts" concept in which beliefs distinctive to Adventists or another faith may be prayerfully explored. He says, "Professional preparation, ministerial experience, and sensitivity in cultivating human relationships will determine the degree to which one is learner or teacher."

In noting the benefit of a confidant, Swank encourages, "Be realistic about your vocation. Do not try to put a happy face on everything or everyone. Express your feelings to a trusted friend, but be careful. Know for certain that the individual can be trusted. It is often best to find such a confidant outside the system." What better place to enjoy such fellowship than with another pastor.

#### The time factor

Pastors are busy. Most pastors are too busy. Doesn't participation in a local ministerial association waste too much valuable time?

Most ministerial associations meet once a month, usually over lunch. The time together, beyond the actual mealtime, is usually an hour or less. On those occasions when I found it difficult to attend, it was usually because I did not plan my schedule.

But there are long-range benefits beyond the immediate fellowship with other pastors. For example, when a special event comes along or a community issue arises, as pastors we have already established common bonds of unity in purpose to seek and follow God's will. At such times, we can appropriately unite together in continuing-education opportunities, prophetic warning regarding moral issues such as alcoholism, pornography, or abuse and violence, or jointly share our mutual faith in a community Thanksgiving service.

#### How to get started

To borrow the Nike motto, "just do it!" If you are moving to a new community, determine whether your predecessor has been a member of the local ministerial

*continued on page 25*

**Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives.** Nancy Vyhmeister, ed. (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1998). Paperback, \$11.95.

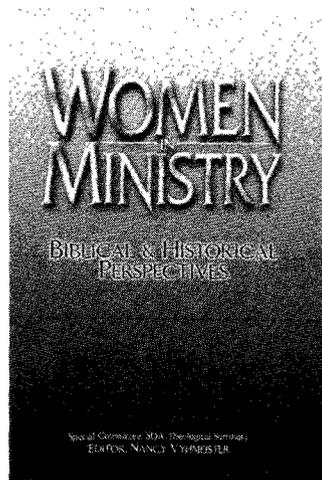
In the summer of 1973, a committee of 14 Adventist women and 13 men met at Camp Mohaven in Ohio to talk about the role of women in ministry. The committee concluded that there was no biblical or theological reason not to ordain women in ministry, and it recommended the implementation of a pilot program that would lead to the ordination of women in two years.

The intervening two and a half decades have seen more study, more meetings, more proposals, more discussion at conference constituency meetings, annual councils, and General Conference sessions, but no fully authorized ordination of women in ministry.

After the 1995 General Conference vote against according the North American Division authority to ordain women pastors, the question still remained: "Can a woman legitimately be ordained to ministry?" At a meeting with the seminary faculty, NAD church leaders encouraged the Seminary to come up with biblical and theological answers to the question.

The Seminary faculty accepted the challenge, and, in good Adventist fashion, appointed a committee. Chaired by Nancy Vyhmeister, professor of world mission and editor of the journal *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, the members of the committee were two faculty members from each department, representing a variety of academic disciplines and theological approaches, plus two students.

The result of the committee's work is a 439-page book, *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Vyhmeister and published last October by Andrews University Press. Most of the essays were written by members of the committee, including the students, but there are also contributions by other



present and former members of the Andrews faculty.

*Women in Ministry* consists of 20 chapters, which are organized in five sections, plus a prologue and an epilogue.

Part One is "Ministry in the Bible" and includes essays on the priesthood of all believers, the reasons why there weren't women priests in ancient Israel, the shapes of ministry in early Christianity, and the symbolism of laying on of hands in ordination.

Part Two is "Ordination in Early Christianity and Adventism" and includes essays on the ordination of ministers among early Christians and early Adventists, Ellen White's view of ordination, and a contemporary Adventist theological interpretation of ordination.

Part Three is "Women in Ministry and Leadership" and includes a survey of women in Scripture, a summary of Ellen White's view of women in ministry, and reports of Adventist women in ministry in the nineteenth century and in the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Part Four is "Perceived Impediments to Women in Ministry" and includes studies of headship, submission and equality in Scripture and in the writings of Ellen White, examinations of the New Testament instruction (in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy) that women should be silent in worship, and a study of Ellen White's objection to Adventist participa-

tion in the Women's Rights Movement. For many readers this may well be the most valuable part of the book.

Part Five is a small miscellany of items under the rubric "Other Considerations": a comparison of nineteenth-century pro-slavery arguments and twentieth-century antiordination arguments; a consideration of the implications of the character of God for the role and status of women; and an application of principles of cross-cultural mission to the issue of ordaining women in ministry.

The thrust of the book is evident throughout and explicitly stated in the epilogue: "Our conclusion is that ordination and women can go together, that 'women in pastoral leadership' is not an oxymoron, but a manifestation of God's grace in the church" (436). The tone is serious (as befits the subject), and often scholarly (as befits the authors), but it is certainly not pedantic. The content is readily accessible by the general reader. Documentation is plentiful but not obtrusive, and scholarly debates are located in the endnotes, where they belong.

The tone is irenic. Although the book has a clear and consistent point of view, it is never shrill or abrasive. Very rarely are Adventist opponents addressed by name. Far from claiming to be the last word on the subject, it explicitly invites further conversation. "We view our work as a contribution to an ongoing dialog" (436).

As a whole, the book has some of the weaknesses and the strengths typical of collections of essays by various authors. The essays vary in style and depth; they are not all brilliant; the authors have not all done their homework equally well. But each essay has its own contribution to make to the ongoing discussion. There is some overlapping in content; but this sometimes gives the reader the benefit of a second opinion on a particular issue. Furthermore, while there is obvious benefit in reading the whole book, each of the essays is completely intelligible by itself.

Because the authors read and as a group discussed each other's work, and because they each revised their own essays accordingly, they sing in harmony. At the same time, they do not always sing in unison. Sometimes the claim is the modest one that there is no reason not to ordain women in ministry, and sometimes the claim is the more robust one that there is good reason to ordain them.

Although identifying the "best" of the 20 essays is something like choosing the "best" flavor of ice cream, I would nominate one of the shortest, "Shapes of Ministry in the New Testament and the Early Church," by Robert Johnston. A model of careful scholarship and effective writing, it claims that both the charismatic ministry of apostles and the appointive ministry of deacons included women. In arguing that the name Junia in Romans 16:7 was indeed a feminine rather than masculine name, Johnston corrects the errors of other scholars.

Another example of careful and thorough scholarship is the longest essay in the collection, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," by Richard Davidson. While insisting that "headship without subordination" is God's prescription for marriage after the Fall, Davidson argues that the notion of "headship" in Scripture is restricted to marriage and "can no more be broadened to refer to men-women relationships in general than can the sexual desire of the wife [in Gen. 3:16c] be broadened to mean the sexual desire of all women for all men" (269). So the idea of male headship in the family cannot be used "to prohibit women from taking positions of leadership, including headship positions over men" (284).

In "Women Priests in Israel: A Case for Their Absence," Jacques Doukhan proposes that the historical reason usually cited—namely, the prominent involvement of women priests in ritual prostitution in the contemporary pagan religions—should be supplemented by another, theological reason—namely, the incompatibility of the priest's role in killing animals for sacrifice

with the woman's role as the bearer of life and promise.

In "A Theological Understanding of Ordination," Russell Staples includes a summary four-point argument for ordaining women: (1) The basis of ministry is the action of God in an "inner call," which the church cannot afford to ignore, much less deny; (2) since the difference between clergy and laity is one of role and function rather than status, "what serious impediment can there be to the ordination of women?" (150); (3) the silence of Scripture regarding the ordination of women is an invitation "to careful study, prayer for guidance, and the use of sanctified reason" (151); and (4) the ordination of women will contribute to the fulfillment of the church's mission.

"The Ordination of Women in Light of the Character of God," by Roger Dudley, provides an additional and broader theological argument. For some readers this will be the best argument of all; for others it will seem less compelling because it is less specific.

"Ellen White and Women's Rights," by Alicia Worley, includes a curious and little-known tidbit of editorial activity. Ellen White originally wrote to "those who feel called out to join the Woman's Rights Movement," objecting to the aggressive and worldly spirit that seemed to characterize it. However, when this appeared in *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:421, the reference to the specific endeavor known as "the Woman's Rights Movement" had been generalized to "the movement in favor of woman's rights." Perhaps the anonymous editor thought his changes made Ellen White's meaning clearer, but evidently her objection was to the ethos of a particular organization, not to the advocacy of gender justice.

"A Power That Exceeds That of Men: Ellen G. White on Women in Ministry," by Jerry Moon, not only brings together many well-known statements but also enlarges the collection to an impressive size with unmistakable power. In view of her insistence that women be

financially supported at the same level as men, combined with her comprehensive view of the ministerial vocations open to women (preaching, teaching, pastoral care, evangelism, chaplaincy, counseling, church administration) it is difficult to imagine Ellen White not urging, once the issue was raised, that women in ministry be ordained for the same reasons that men are ordained.

"Culture and Biblical Understanding in a World Church," by Jon Dybdahl, is a patient lesson in the cross-cultural understanding of theology. This is a lesson that everyone in the conversation about the ordination of women needs to learn. It is easy enough for us to recognize the cultural conditioning of our opponents' views; it is less easy for us to recognize the cultural conditioning of our own.

"The Distance and the Difference: Reflections on Issues of Slavery and Women's Ordination in Adventism," by Walter Douglas, is a comparison of proslavery arguments and antiordination arguments. The fact that antiordination arguments parallel proslavery arguments in many ways does not prove that the former are as wrong-headed as the latter; but it does raise some interesting questions that the opponents of the ordination of women need to address.

Although the book does not give us the last word, it gives us some very important words. It is eminently worth reading.

The "bottom line" is that this is a good book—important and useful. Although it will not satisfy partisans on either side, it is essential reading for any Adventist who wants to participate in the ongoing discussion. And although the information is not all new and the ideas are not entirely original—that would be too much to expect on a subject that has already been discussed so long and passionately—*Women in Ministry* brings together a wealth of material and deserves to be taken seriously.—Fritz Guy, Ph.D., is a professor of theological studies at La Sierra University, Riverside, California. ■

# Ministerial Association Update

Recent changes in the Ministerial Association staff have us simultaneously saying farewell and welcome.

**Retirement:** After 41 years of denominational service, almost 18 of them as part of the Ministerial Association staff, Rex Edwards, who has served as coordinator of continuing education, is retiring from our team.



Rex is best known for the professional-growth seminars for pastors, the Tape of the Month Club, and his unflagging work in developing practical continuing-education courses. His latest project has produced half of a proposed 60 instructional videos on various aspects of pastoral ministry.

All who have worked with Rex admire his organizational abilities and his prodigious output of quality work in minimal time. We wish Rex well in his new role. Budget cuts do not permit us to replace Rex and, perhaps, he would be the first to admit that he could never be replaced!

**Welcome:** Following the two-year transition of Walter L. Pearson, our associate for Evangelism and Church Growth, to Breath of Life telecast, Dr. Peter J. Prime was elected to this assignment at the 1998 Annual Council session. His specific job includes developing resource materials in evangelism, church growth, assimilation of new members, training leaders, conducting field schools of evangelism, and directing specific projects.



Peter, who has most recently served as president of the Caribbean Union, Trinidad, comes to the Ministerial Association with a strong practical and

educational background. He has served as a pastor, evangelist, departmental director, conference and union president, ministerial secretary, and instructor of other pastors in large field schools of evangelism throughout the Inter-American Division. Peter is also qualified in family ministries.

Peter has earned the following degrees: B.Th. (West Indies College), M.A. in history and biblical languages (Andrews University), D.Min. (Fuller Theological Seminary). His dissertation was titled "A Relational Model of Humanization and its Application as a Therapeutic Model in Child Sexual Abuse." Peter has presented numerous workshops and seminars on family systems, church growth, evangelism, pastoral planning, and church development, as well as speaking to students and pastors on several continents.

When asked to define a concept of his new work, Peter says his vision for his assignment with the Ministerial Association will be the wholistic and optimum growth and development of all ministers and, by the same token, the church's total membership in the expeditious fulfillment of global mission, as well as the serious call to prepare for the second advent of our Lord.

Peter is married to Glenda Chin Aleong, Ph.D., who is a lecturer in science education at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. Her speciality is technology education. They have two children, Peter James Prime, II, who is a bank employee, and Jeanine Liesyl Prime, who is a Ph.D. candidate at Cornell University.

We eagerly anticipate the moment when immigration issues are settled and Peter and Glenda join us full time at the General Conference Ministerial Association, and we are particularly grateful for the smooth transition process and continuing close association that Walter and Sandra Pearson share with our staff.

**Promotion:** Also at the Annual Council session, Sharon Cress, who has

served in an appointed position as Coordinator of Shepherdess International, was elected as an Associate Ministerial Secretary for the General Conference.

Although this election is not precedent setting—we have previously had a woman, Louise Kleuser, serve as an Associate Ministerial Secretary—there are only about ten women who serve in elected



positions at the General Conference.

Although her job description remains essentially the same (ministering to pastoral spouses and families), Sharon

will also carry some expanded responsibilities in working with the various divisions of the world church.

Sharon has previously served the church as a Bible instructor, associate evangelist, co-founder and instructor in Soulwinning Workshops and Team Ministry seminars, and as associate pastor of the Marietta, Georgia, church before joining the Ministerial Association staff in November 1992.

Our staff is united in affirmation of Sharon's work on our team, and we are especially grateful for the guidance in this process, which we received from Matthew Bediako, our advisor from GC Presidential.

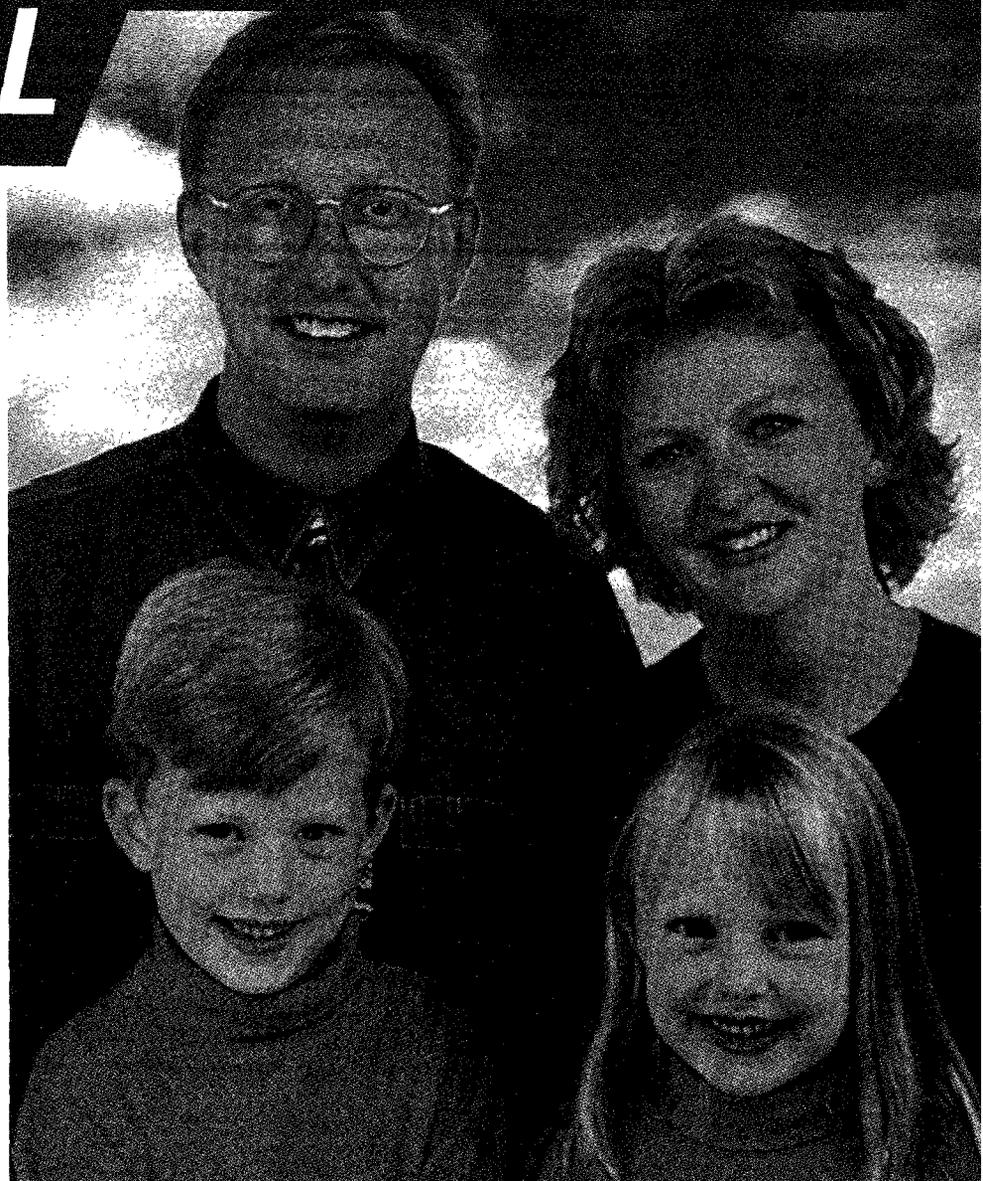
**Regularization:** Earlier this year, we also regularized the job description of Cathy Payne, who has served the Ministerial Association for almost two years as coordinator of Resource Development.

Cathy's tenure has been marked by extraordinary production of high-quality materials and increased distribution of resources among pastors, local church elders, and the general public. Some of her innovative



projects have included direct-mail packets, resources in general and inter-denominational book stores, and leadership in developing new practical resources.—James A. Cress

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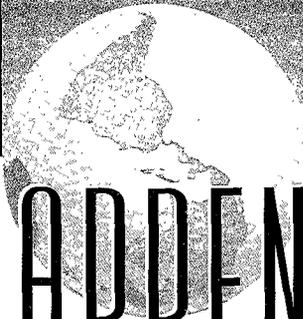
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