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BUT TO CONTINUE CHURCH IN A HISTORICAL [TRADITIONAL] FASHION THAT IS OUTDATED AND IRRELEVANT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

I read Jay Gallimore's article entitled "Can the Church be 'Relevant' and Thrive?" My first impression when I saw the title was Yes! Yes! Yes! I know it can and it should. But as I read the article, I began to hear excuses for failure and reasons to remain small and ineffective. What if God used one of us, to rise above mediocrity, and to reach "megachurch" status, would we lose our job? Would we be accused of being a heretic? What if one of the "megachurch" pastors accepted the Adventist message and joined our church? What would we do with him? Do we distrust him immediately because 7,000 people came to hear the message he preached and to worship together? I read the article a second time and more of the same feelings were aroused. I left *Ministry* on my desk for a month, praying and contemplating if I should state my opinion. I finally resigned myself, so here goes.

If we are not relevant, we have become relics. We will be no more effective than other well-known antiquated religious systems. Is that our goal? Are we only to survive as a church organization? What's wrong with a thriving church organization? What's wrong with being on the cutting edge and leading? What's wrong with taking risks for Jesus' sake? What did we join when we were baptized? I signed on to join an organization that is never satisfied until every human being has heard that Jesus is coming and soon. I signed

on with Luke 15 burning inside of me, that the search for the lost consists of an all out search party, that does whatever it takes to bring that which is missing back home. Our message is the hope of the world, it's not meant to be contained in a country club, where only members have privileges. It's meant for everyone, we have been too exclusive in our behavior and attitude, hidden under the garb of conservative. I love my church; it is the vehicle God chose to bring Jesus into my life. I will serve it until I die. But to continue church in a historical [traditional] fashion that is outdated and irrelevant is unacceptable. We have a "Cadillac" in our garage while we harness to a horse and buggy. Nobody can present Jesus like we can, but we aren't even trying! Excuses for failure, for floundering, for misguided strategies are an abomination to God. Change is the only constant we have, look in the mirror! We can change to be more effective, to bring the gospel to more people, to see more in the kingdom. Why wouldn't we? I don't understand . . .

—Dave Livermore, Longview, Washington.

Jay Gallimore's response: *When was Jesus a success? Was He only relevant when He fed 5,000? Or was He still relevant when He asked the Twelve if they were going to leave too? In Christianity Today (Feb. 5, 2001), Donald G. Bloesch, states clearly the temptation that con-*

fronts not only the Adventist Church but the Evangelical world as well. He says, "Yet numbers can deceive: church attendance in Germany rose dramatically in the years immediately following Hitler's rise to power. I believe that in the present cultural situation, it is more appropriate to speak of the evangelical debacle, a compromised church that rests no longer on the clear message of Scripture but on the carnal desire for a place in the sun." Thriving doesn't always mean a crowd or the lack of one. When we are faithful we thrive, whether anybody thinks so or not.

Jay Gallimore's thoughtful articles "Can the Church be Relevant and Survive?" and "Can the Church be Relevant and Thrive?" (April and June 2003) raise a more fundamental question: Can the Advent movement be irrelevant and accomplish its mission? If we are to be faithful to the unique mission we have been given, we must understand, connect with, and impact contemporary culture.

I cannot conceptualize a remnant that accomplishes its global mission by sitting on the sidelines, staying out of the mainstream, and deliberately avoiding engagement with any of the contemporary developments in the world. Adventist evangelists have always preached "with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other." We have allowed ourselves to become very

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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.

Keeping “abreast of truth”¹

The song is controversial, but it is in Christian hymnals across the land, especially those more “traditional” in their content. It’s controversial, but the orthodox sing it anyway, often; especially in its U.S. homeland.

Something, though, is incongruent about the hymn’s inclusion in these particular collections of churchly lyrics. Perhaps that’s because James Russell Lowell wrote “Once to Every Man and Nation” in 1845, and the acceptability that takes over something that’s traveled long through time, has a way of bewitchingly sweetening the kind of strong medicine that’s at the heart of this poem’s indisputable message.

Take the second verse, for instance:

Then [at the advent of some fresh unveiling of truth that God brings to life] to side with truth is noble,

*When we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
And ‘tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses,
While the coward stands aside,
Till the multitude make virtue
Of the faith they had denied.*

There are momentous times in which God initiates the bursting forth of new truth; even truth that seems contradictory to that which has come before it. To embrace just such truth while it is still considered “wretched” is by no means easy. One has to be truly noble and veritably courageous to do it.

For at first these new movements of truth seem contemptible to the majority. They seem dangerous, disunifying, and unsettling.

But with time, and passing through many hands, what at first was a living truth, direct from the heart of God, is subtly massaged into something popular and politically correct. As such it

WILLMORE D. EVA



loses its nourishing consistency and evolves into a pabulum that even the most cowardly can swallow. Indeed, it becomes “prosperous” to swallow it, not just financially, but socially, politically, and ecclesiastically.

In verse three Lowell says that, “New occasions teach new duties,” and “Time makes ancient good uncouth.” That is, new situations mentor us, even demanding that we fashion new approaches, new ideas, new paradigms; while the traditional, time-tested ways, even the old truths, become “uncouth.”

For those of us who are committed to one form or another of “conservatism,” this reality is hardest to accept. Most damaging is the fact that in rejecting it we tend to neglect and even to resist the critically important affiliated task of “climbing up new Calvaries ever.”²

But the poet doesn’t stop. Coming to what’s perhaps his most pointed challenge, Lowell calls the world and the church to take up a potent position: “They must upward still and onward, Who would keep abreast of truth.”

As a faith movement loses its divine elemental vision and evolves into an elaborately structured fraternity, that which once gripped its collective soul, plummeting it forward, becomes con-

servative, authoritarian, and creedal. It loses its vertical dimension. It lives to subtly champion the horizontal—itsself.

Above all it ceases to look beyond. It believes it has the truth, and there’s no more truth to be revealed. It ceases the upward toil. Perhaps most appalling of all, it comes to consider those who are climbing the “new Calvaries” and who are toiling upward, as dangerous as their spiritual ancestors did the One who actually took the greatest upward journey of all.

But are the words of the last verse of James Russell Lowell’s poem a further warning, a statement of fact, a sublime encouragement, or all of the above?

*Though the cause of evil prosper,
Yet ‘tis truth alone is strong;
Though her portion be the scaffold,
And upon the throne be wrong;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own.³*

The bottom line? Ministers, pastors, teachers, leaders, administrators—prophets and priests—in this great hymn, all of us are called by God to remain eternally vigilant, consistently humble, and perpetually in prayer. Vigilant not so much to the rumblings and ramblings of error, as to the cadences and rhythms of truth. Humble as we listen for the footsteps of God Himself walking, often in bewildering directions, amid His world and in His church; especially during this time of shift and eschatological showdown. ■

1 James Russell Lowell, “Once to Every Man and Nation,” in *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), 606. (Lyrics written in 1845.)

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

Marriage: twin of the Sabbath, but a day older

Elements of Seventh-day Adventist Faith, Belief #22: Marriage and the Family.

"Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6.)"

Marriage! The oldest of all human institutions—a twin of the Sabbath,¹ but a day older. It was the very first Friday when God said, 'Therefore a man shall leave father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh.' So dear is marriage to the heart of God that all

RON AND KAREN
FLOWERS



through Scripture human marriage is the symbol of choice for God's love for His people. All that God created on the sixth day was 'very good.' God has not changed His mind about that. Marriage is very good!"

These thoughts still linger in the homily notes, memories, and memorabilia from the high day when our son Jeff and our daughter-in-law Pam committed their lives to each other. Christian weddings give us opportunity to bring to life the truths we affirm and to gaze again on marriage and family from God's perspective. Such moments are important, for the times we live in are not the best for the institution of marriage. Maligned in the media, made a mockery by "stars," and challenged by so-called alternative sexual relationships in the social marketplace, marriage often seems to come up the loser.

Many adult children are frightened by commitment, sickened by the marital abuses they've witnessed, and seared by divorces that have altered their lives. Many others like our son and his wife still choose to make promises to love, honor, and cherish one another for as long as they live, no matter what life may bring.

With their promises, they join a braided cord of couples stretching back across time to Eden itself when the first man and the first woman surrendered themselves to marriage before God.

The spiritual significance of family relationships

Article 22 in the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, "Marriage and Family," reflects the importance Scripture places on human relationships. In the biblical understanding, life among humankind was meant to be an expression of the self-giving love and relational nature of God.

God is love (1 John 4:8) and God is manifested to us in Three Persons (cf. Matt. 3:16, 17; 1 John 5:7). The perfectly harmonious Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—exemplifies the essence of self-giving love that is manifested in the fellowship of persons in relationship. As creatures made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), the need for harmonious and loving relationships are integral to our very being.

Jesus elevated human relationships by assigning to them a moral significance alongside a relationship with God. "You shall love the Lord your God," He said, and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-40, NKJV). *Neighbor* is often taken to mean the individual with the closest street address, but the original word has a more intimate, homey sense. Your neighbor is "the person next to you." The way we live with others who eat, sleep, work, play, and worship beside us—our closest neighbors in marriage and family life—matters much to our God.

Centerpiece of the family

As the cornerstone is to a great edifice, so is marriage to the family. It is the social relationship at the foundation. Upon its integrity and strength, the quality of all family relationships rest. Says the psalmist, "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Ps. 127:1, NIV).

In Genesis 1 and 2, the divine Architect revealed His blueprint for mar-

riage. The plan calls for marriage to be a lifelong, covenant-based, exclusive union of mutual companionship between one man and one woman. Jesus affirmed this creation plan (Matt. 19:4-6) and it is of paramount importance that we rediscover and reaffirm God's design in our time. Profound in its simplicity, it really needs no updating, no retouching. It needs living!

Marriage is the only divinely ordained setting for sexual intimacy. The union of one male and one female is specifically intended in the divine blueprint. Such a complementary, committed union

and others who can help them.

More than any natural order or assigned primacy, the nature of the marriage relationship establishes it as the centerpiece of the family. The marital union is not secured by ties of blood, but by ties of promise.

Marriage as covenant

To use biblical language, marriage is a special human covenant—a mutually binding agreement with each other before God that includes promises, privileges, and obligations. “She is your partner, the wife of your marriage

maintained with constant vigilance. “Guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth” (Mal. 2:15, NIV).

“Marriage rests on principles of love, loyalty, exclusivity, trust, and support upheld by both partners in obedience to God (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 13; Eph. 5:21-29; 1 Thess. 4:1-7). When these principles are violated, the marriage is endangered. Scripture acknowledges that tragic circumstances can destroy marriage.”⁴

Divorce is the antithesis of covenant. In the expression “I hate divorce” (Mal. 2:16, NIV), we hear the profound sadness of the Creator as His creation is marred. In the discussion of marriage and divorce in Matthew, Jesus acknowledged that the provision for divorce had been given because human hearts were “hard,” adding wistfully, “It was not this way from the beginning” (Matt. 19:8, NIV).

Hardness is evidenced in the willful breach of covenant, as well as in the erosion of human relational capacities including the ability to apply the healing balm of grace to troubled marriage relationships as a result of sin. Jesus pointed to the tragic consequences of indiscriminate divorce and indicated that the circumstances for which divorce might be contemplated should be rare (Matt. 19:9).

The *Church Manual* expresses the Seventh-day Adventist view: “Scripture recognizes adultery and/or fornication (Matt. 5:32) as well as abandonment by an unbelieving partner (1 Cor. 7:10-15) as grounds for divorce.”⁵

When marriages struggle

Couples who marry embark upon a life experience together. Many today put almost exclusive emphasis on marital satisfaction. The downside of this heavy accent on marriage as an experience is that, with legal and social supports for marriage diminished in many places, the dissatisfied can and do leave marriage with greater ease than ever before. While we cannot support all their reasons or the seemingly casual way in which many exit marriage, we can affirm that an increased emphasis

IN GOD'S PLAN, MARRIED COUPLES ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PERPETUATION OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

reflects in a singular way the Godhead who dwells in a unity of love.² Scripture specifically denounces sexual intercourse between members of the same sex (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; cf. Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9). All are called to respect marriage by their adherence to God's plan for sexuality—with singles living celibately and the married living faithfully (cf. Exod. 20:14, 17; Prov. 5:1-20; Song of Sol. 2:16; 4:12; 6:3; Matt. 5:27, 28; 1 Cor. 6:15-19; Heb. 13:4).

The blessings of friendship and the fellowship of the church—the household of God—are available to all regardless of their married state. However, Scripture places a solid social and sexual demarcation between such friendship relations and marriage.³

The injunction to leave father and mother (Gen. 2:24) further recognizes the precedence marriage is given over other family relationships. “Leave” implies sufficient maturity on the part of the couple and obliges the older generation to release the younger to establish a new home. An important boundary is thus established around the couple, even as they continue to receive support, nurture, and counsel from family members

covenant” (Mal. 2:14, NIV; cf. Gen. 21:27-32; 31:44-53; 1 Sam. 18:3; 20:8, 16; 23:18). The foundational passage on marriage in Genesis 2 uses covenantal language: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23). Attachment, mutuality, and self-giving further describe this covenant. As the bride declares, “My beloved is mine, and I am his” (Song of Sol. 2:16, NKJV; cf. 6:3; 1 Cor. 7:3, 4).

While the eternal covenant of God is of a different order (cf. Isa. 55:3; Heb. 13:20), Scripture sometimes uses marital imagery to describe God's relationship with His people (cf. Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; 2 Cor. 11:2). Couples are thereby summoned to marriages of steadfast love, goodwill, fidelity, commitment, and permanence that reflect the relationship between Christ and His church (Ps. 89:28-34; Song of Sol. 8:6, 7; Isa. 54:5, 10; Jer. 32:40, 41; Hos. 2:19-23; 3:1-3; Rev. 21:2, 3). Scripture consistently calls for marriage to be between partners who share a common faith (2 Cor. 6:14-18; cf. Gen. 24:3; 28:1; Judges 14:3; Ezra 10:2, 10; Amos 3:3).

The marriage covenant is not, however, inherently indissoluble. It must be

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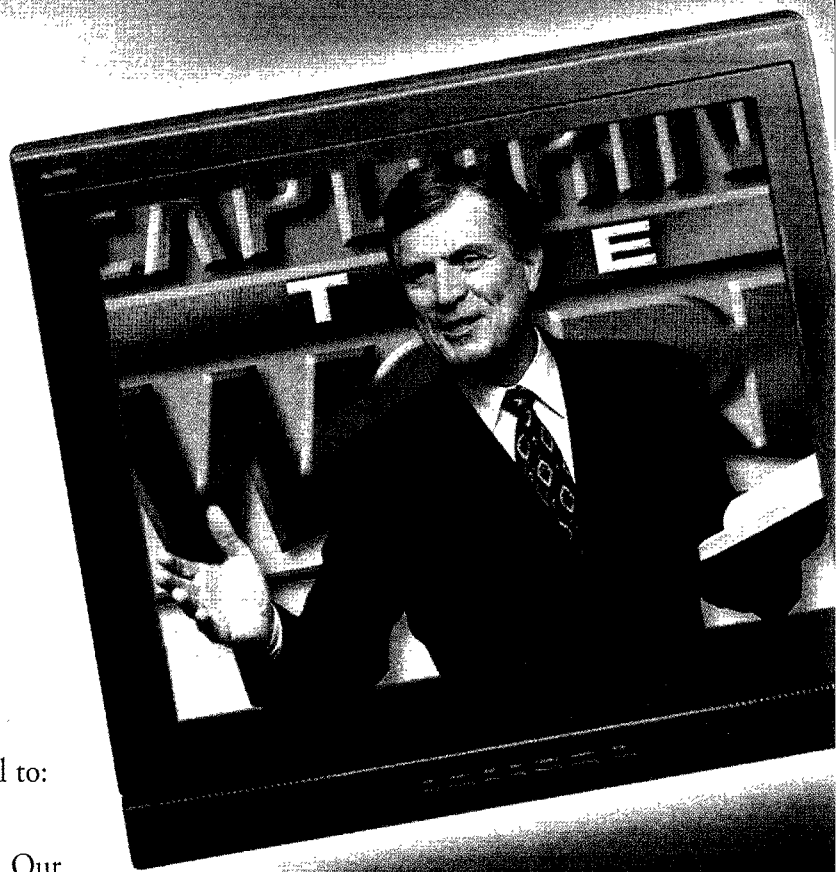
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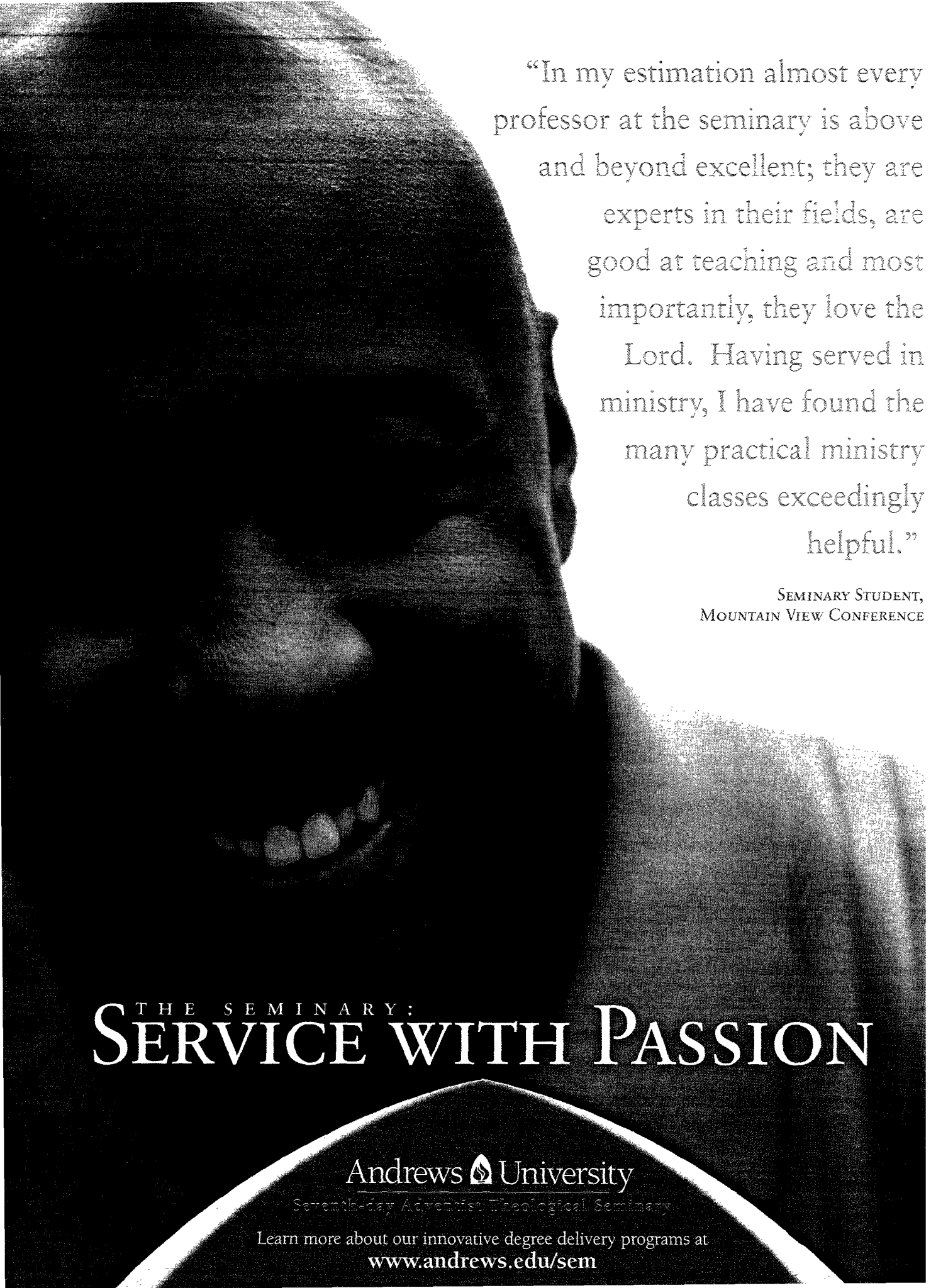
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on quality of life in marriage has also been a good thing.

Too often in the past the *state* of marital life has been downplayed for the sake of the *estate* of marriage. Many spouses and children have been trapped in abusive situations with no recourse. That unfortunate circumstance is changing. The *Church Manual* acknowledges that sometimes marriage relations deteriorate to the point that individuals, for personal protection and other stated reasons, need a change in marital status.⁶

Child sexual abuse is specifically cited as "just cause for separation or divorce."⁷ Increased attention on the experiential aspect of marriage has also engendered greater appreciation of scriptural themes about the joys of married love and faithfulness (Prov. 5:18-20; Song of Sol. 2:16; 4:9-5:1; Heb. 13:4), the possibilities of forgiveness and renewal in marriage (Jer. 3:1; Hos. 3:1-3; 11:8, 9; Luke 17:3, 4; Eph. 4:32), and the lofty principle of mutual submission which counteracts fallen human tendencies toward power and control (Eph. 5:21-33).

Couples need encouragement and support to honor their promises and enrich their experience: "Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church."⁸

The *Church Manual* speaks of specific ministries: "The church as a redemptive agency of Christ is to minister to its members in all of their needs and to nurture every one so that all may grow into a mature Christian experience. This is particularly true when members face lifelong decisions such as marriage and distressful experiences such as divorce.

"When a couple's marriage is in danger of breaking down, every effort should be made by the partners and those in the church or family who minister to them, to bring about their reconciliation in harmony with divine principles for restoring wounded relationships (Hos. 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; 13:4-7; Gal. 6:1).

"Resources are available through the local church or other church organizations which can be of assistance to members in the development of a strong Christian home. These resources include programs for: (1) premarital preparation, (2) marriage and family strengthening, and (3) the support of troubled families and divorced individuals."⁹

The family circle and its mission

In God's plan, married couples are entrusted with the responsibility for the perpetuation of the human family (Gen. 1:28). Scripture puts a high value on children as an inheritance from the Lord (Ps. 127:3). Children can be a source of great joy as parents delight in the wonder of new life and share in the original creation blessing. They can help parents to better understand God and to grow in compassion, caring, humility, and unselfishness.

Bearing children, however, is not to be a selfish act nor is it an obligation in order to please God, family, or society. Rather, it is a divinely bestowed privilege, a choice to be made responsibly, with the parents' ability to provide for children a primary consideration (cf. 1 Tim. 5:8).

The family is "the primary setting in

which values are learned and the capacity for close relationships with God and with other human beings is developed."¹⁰ Parents are disciples making disciples. Introducing children and youth to Jesus so they may also follow Him is the family's highest mission.

Looking to the heavenly Parent for guidance and strength, parents build strong connections with children as they attend to their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual needs, especially the need for love. They patiently seek to pass on a legacy of truth, modeling the Christian life in winsome ways and correcting their children with a redemptive rather than punitive spirit.

God feels the distress of parents whose children ignore counsel, behave in disappointing ways, and even discard home values (cf. Hos. 11:1, 2). As our heavenly Parent, He has bound Himself to all children through Christ¹¹ and will never let them go except by their own deliberate, persistent, and ultimate choice. Yet, He values human freedom. God will help earthly parents do the same—to take a long view of their children's salvation and keep the conduit of parental influence open through warm relationships.

While our work for Christ is to begin with the family,¹² the mission of the

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home extends beyond its members.¹³ Families where Jesus has transformed hearts and lives are beacons of light for the community, winsome witnessing centers that draw others to the Savior. In the quest to discover God's purpose for our homes, the various personalities, talents, gifts, and abilities of each family member are recognized as precious resources for the mission God has in mind for our unique family circle.

The gospel message and family reconciliation

The Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal statement on marriage and family closes with a reference to Malachi 4:5, 6 which points to increasing family closeness as one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. Malachi predicts a work of reconciliation and reconnecting in families, a turning of "the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers." This is to be accomplished by Elijah and is predicted to happen "before the coming of the great day of the LORD."

In the time of historic reform begun by the prophet Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 18:36-39), God had shown Himself to be a gracious Father whose heart was turned toward His errant children and who longed for them to respond by turning in faith to Him (cf. Isa. 44:22; Mal. 3:7). Elijah had prayed for God to give evidence that the work of reconciliation was His—"so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again" (1 Kings 18:37, NIV, emphasis supplied).

Jeremiah corroborates what Elijah understood; any turning we do is in response to God's grace. "Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return" (Lam. 5:21, NIV). On Carmel, the people had turned their hearts toward God as, in a mighty demonstration of grace, God's wrath against their sin had fallen on the sacrifice instead of them (1 Kings 18:39). Refreshing rains had ended the curse upon the earth (1 Kings 18:45).

The sacrifice on Carmel pointed to Jesus, in whom God reconciled the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). God

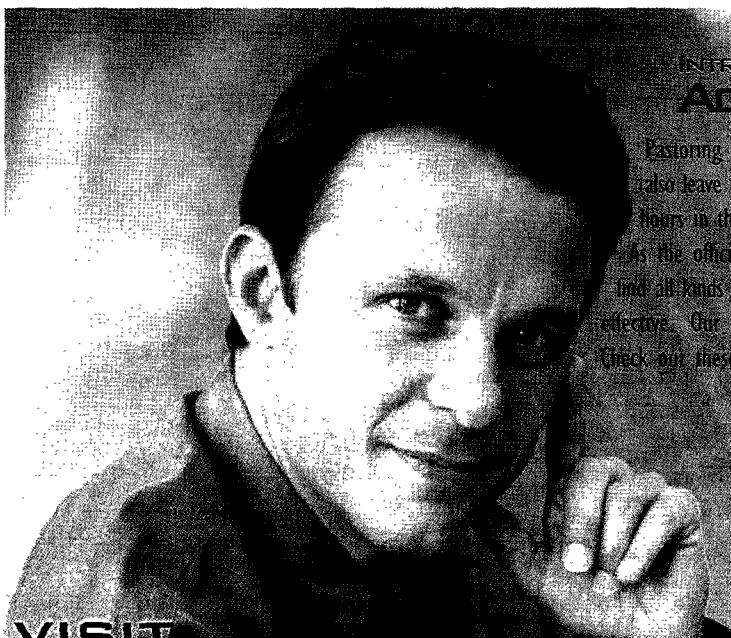
has once for all turned His Father heart toward His children and embraced them in Christ.

Included in the magnificent mystery of the Cross is the reality that Christ has brought estranged people together in His crucified body (Eph. 2:13, 14, 16-18). As God's messengers carry the gospel of grace to the world with renewed urgency, it is as though Elijah has reappeared, for the message is like his.

God's ambassadors plead with all to believe and accept the incredible good news of a Father who has already turned His heart toward them and longs for them to cease their hostility and unbelief and be reconciled to Him and to each other (2 Cor. 5:20).

The most significant arena in which this final gospel message must take hold is the home. Like all things created, marriage and family are entangled in the web of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. It is the purpose of the gospel to restore marriage and family to God's original design.¹⁴

continued on page 29




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Open letter from a struggling pastor

Editor's note: Recently the Ministry editorial office received this letter—the copy of an original addressed to a specific Seventh-day Adventist Conference administration. We hope that publishing it in Ministry will contribute to our awareness of the serious personal and corporate challenge it identifies.

Dear Conference President, Secretary, and Ministerial Director,

I need your help. I am a pastor in your conference, and I am addicted to pornography. In fact, as I write this, I just spent the past hour looking at pornographic Web sites. I feel ashamed and guilty, but I can't stop. I've tried many times, but to no avail. Ellen White's words, in *Steps to Christ*, ring very true to me, when she says, "Our resolutions are like ropes of sand." I need help.

You probably saw or heard about the recent issue of *Newsweek*, in which a prominent Adventist pastor came forward to talk about his struggle with this addiction (*Newsweek*, April 12, 2004, "Preachers and Porn"). As I read his story, I admired his courage, his willingness to do something about his problem after 20 years of addiction. I wished I had the same courage.

The article mentioned studies that show that 40 percent of pastors admit to having viewed pornographic Web sites. I imagine the number is actually considerably higher. This fact will tell you that this problem is not in somebody else's conference—it is right here in ours. I may pastor a large church, or a district. I may be an associate pastor, a youth pastor, or work in the conference office. Whatever my situation, there is no doubt that there are others just like me in our conference.

I need you to understand some things about me. I love Jesus with all my heart. My church sees me as a spiritual leader. I

ANONYMOUS

love my ministry. I get excited about evangelism, soul-winning, equipping my members for service. I love my family dearly. Nobody looking on from my church or my home would know that I have this problem. Yet I feel empty.

I know that the Spirit's power is lacking in my ministry because of my sin. I often see Him working, doing mighty things in my congregation in spite of me, but I often wonder what He could do if this big sin wasn't standing in the way. I have prayed over and over again that God would take this from me, that He would remove the desire, but He has not yet done so. I am thankful for His mercy and His grace, and I know that where sin abounds, grace does much more abound, but I'm tired of sinning. I want to be free from this.

How can you help?

1. *Recognize the problem.* Please don't pretend this addiction doesn't affect your pastors. It does. Talk about it. Address the issue with love, mercy, and compassion at our minister's meetings. Let me know that I am not alone in my struggle.

2. *Encourage your pastors to have an accountability partner.* It may be another pastor in the conference, it may be a pastor from another denomination. I need to have someone who will hold me accountable, but who is in no way

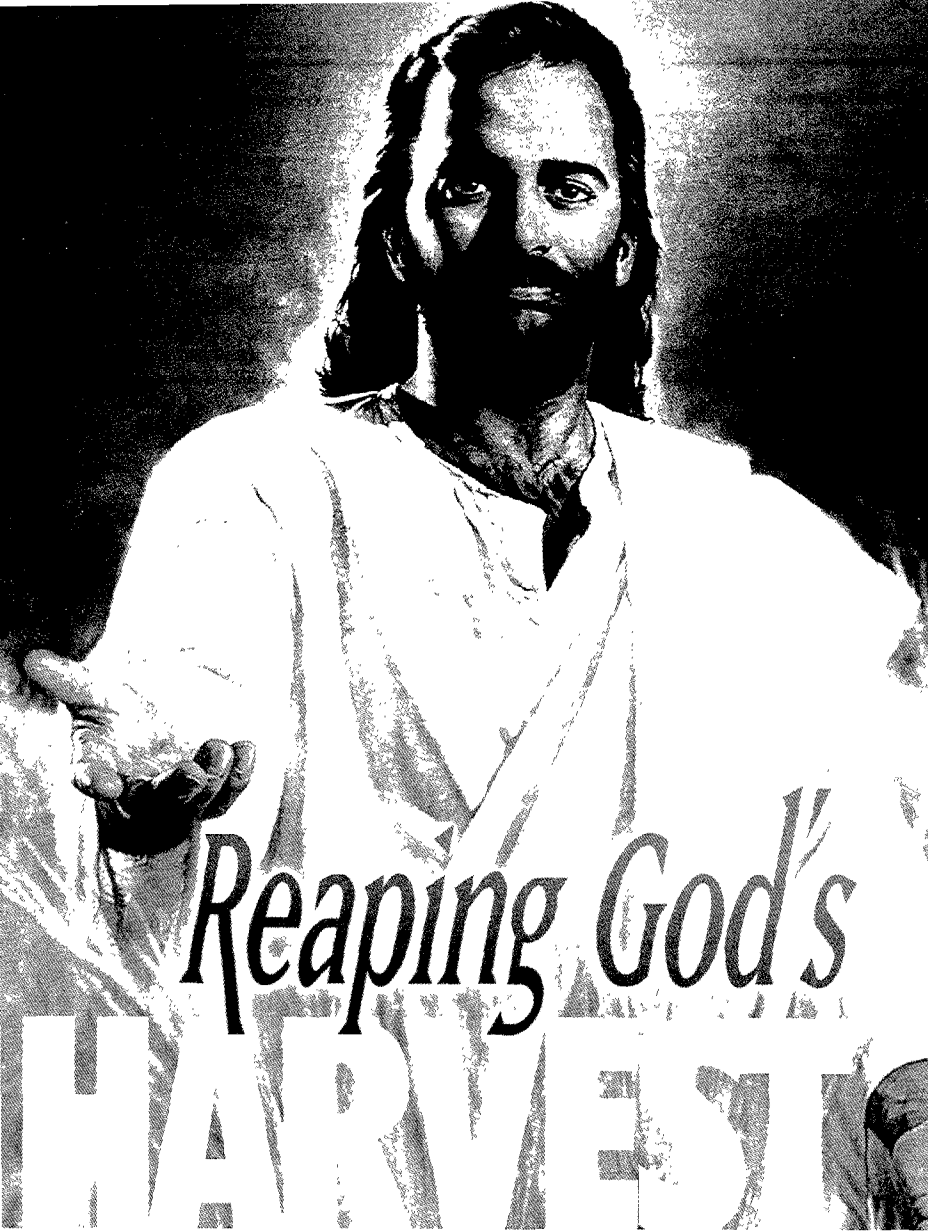
responsible for my employment. Some conferences have paid mileage for pastors to get together with an accountability partner once a month. I know that finances are tight for many conferences right now, but please consider this.

3. *Help me get free, anonymous help.* A conference on the [United States] West Coast has addressed this issue by making arrangements with Christian counselors throughout their territory to provide counseling to workers, at the conference's expense. Each pastor is given a certain number of certificates, each good for one session. The pastor simply makes an appointment, turns in that certificate, and the counselor sends the bill to the conference. Nobody ever knows who used the certificate, other than the counselor. I believe that many of us would try to get help if we knew where to turn. Please help us by providing some sort of resource along this line.

4. *Send out information about online ministries that deal with this.* The *Newsweek* article referenced a site called <trueintimacy.org>. There are others as well, such as Net Accountability. There are filtered ISPs available, such as <AdventPoint.com>. Find out what resources are available here in our area, or over the Internet, and let us know about them.

Thank you for taking this seriously. I want to be the pastor and leader God wants me to be. Right now I am not. By taking some of these steps, or others you may feel would be helpful, you will strengthen me in my ministry, and thereby strengthen the work of God's church here in our conference. I pray for you daily, that you may have wisdom, supplied by God's Spirit, to address all the issues you face daily, including this one.

I remain humbly yours,
An anonymous pastor ■



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**Leadership and Membership
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Integrated family life evangelism



Integrated Family Life Evangelism is one of the most innovative and effective evangelistic methods. It combines vital family issues with conceptually compatible Bible doctrines in a unified Christ-centered approach.

This article seeks to answer three questions. Why should we do Family Life Evangelism? How can we use this approach? What does a Family Life evangelistic presentation look like?

Why Family Life Evangelism?

First, it's *biblical*. All through the Bible, God uses parental love to illustrate His love. Abraham's love for his son Isaac and his readiness to sacrifice him is a small but forceful example of the love of our heavenly Father as seen on Calvary. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah even as God gave His Son on Mount Calvary.

The Psalms portrays God's love in tender words: "As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him" (Ps. 103:13).^{*} And the prophet adds, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast . . . ? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" (Isa. 49:15, NIV). The parable of the lost son and the loving father stands forever as a classic example of God's enduring love for His children.

The Bible also uses marital love to illustrate God's love. For example, that's the message of the whole book of Hosea. And the book of Ruth teaches us about the heavenly Kinsman redeeming the one He loves. Then there are the wedding parables of Jesus, and the apocalyptic images of the Bride, the wife of the Lamb; and there are countless other examples in the Bible.

Second, it's *practical*. While the regular evangelistic campaign emphasizes preparation for heaven, Family Life Evangelism has a twofold emphasis. It prepares people for heaven and pre-

GORDON AND WAVENEY MARTINBOROUGH



pare them to live happily on earth. It deals with the "nuts and bolts" of life: love vs. infatuation, compatibility, marital roles, communication, conflict resolution, sexuality, money management, singleness, parenting, and much more. Moreover it is focused: "Seven steps," "Five ways," "Four keys," "Six secrets." And it is not theoretical; it's practical. It does not only say "what to do," it emphasizes "how to do it."

Third, it's *multilateral*. These days, multitudes are joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, if we analyze the influx, we would see that most converts come from the less-prosperous sectors of society. Why aren't we attracting a significant number of persons from other socioeconomic classes? Why aren't we reaching people in the higher social, educational, and financial strata of society? One reason is that many people in these classes of society are not particularly interested in the Bible. But while that may be true, they are interested in issues of health and family life. Family Life Evangelism has the potential to reach such people because it satisfies their felt need of happy family life, and will lead them to sense their unfelt need for eternal life.

Fourth, it's *eschatological*. Seventh-day Adventists are people of "last things" with a special eschatological mission. We believe that in Eden, God created two eternal institutions—the

family and the Sabbath. We declare that God's seventh-day Sabbath has been trampled, and we believe that the life of the family has also been seriously depreciated. We proclaim that we are "repairer[s] of the breach" and "restorer[s] of paths" (Isa. 58:12, KJV). We are famous for restoring the Sabbath!

But are we as famous for restoring marriage and family? When people come to our evangelistic campaigns, do they expect that a significant part of our presentations will focus on family life? If we are to be faithful to the Edenic restoration, shouldn't we be restoring both the Sabbath and the family?

More than that: We affirm that we are commissioned to preach the Elijah message of Malachi 4:5, 6—turning "the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Doesn't that involve a family life revival?

Doing Family Life Evangelism

Even before we can involve ourselves in this type of evangelism, we must believe and accept that this kind of evangelism is part of God's master plan to reach the unreached. The prophet Hosea tells us God's sowing and reaping plan: "Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground . . . till He comes and rains righteousness on you" (Hos. 10:12). So we need plowing, sowing, reaping, and raining. How can we employ these concepts?

We plow or soften hearts by praying and caring. In Family Life Evangelism, church members are asked to compile a prayer list of relatives, friends, neighbors, work mates, or school mates whom they would like to see accept Jesus during the campaign. Then each intercessor joins one or more intercessors to form a "care cell."

This small group chooses a time and

place for their weekly meeting and they name a cell leader. The care cell meets weekly for study, prayer for prospects on prayer lists, and for Christian fellowship. In addition to praying, each intercessor looks for ways to intentionally show care for his or her prospects.

Sowing follows plowing. "The seed is the Word of God," which is packaged in attractive new Family Life lessons. Then comes reaping, using campaign sermons or seminars.

Reaping should be followed by conserving. In too many cases, when the campaign is over we think the work is done. To put it graphically, giving birth and then abandoning the baby is murder! Eight advanced lessons provide a valuable tool for the conservation of new believers.

At every stage of the divine plan, we need rain—the "early and latter rain" of God's Holy Spirit. We need to "ask the LORD for rain" (Zech. 10:1). Following God's master plan ensures success.

But how do we do Family Life Evangelism? We see three different ways.

Option 1 is the evangelistic campaign. This uses short plowing, normal sowing, and short reaping. *Plowing* lasts for one month and employs the "pray-care" plan stated above. *Sowing* lasts about two months using short, simple family life lessons. *Reaping* lasts about a month, and at this stage we provide two tools. One is the *Happy Family Evangelism Manual*, a comprehensive handbook of 10 units containing everything one needs for an evangelistic campaign: master sheet, 24 sermon outlines, 5 Sabbath services, Series AA lessons for preparation, Series C lessons

for conservation, weekly visitation guidelines, new nightly decision cards, half-night prayer service, and the Happy Family theme song. Accompanying the manual is the Happy Family CD containing 24 PowerPoint presentations with multiethnic graphics. All presentations are in English, Spanish, and French.

Option 2 is small-group evangelism. While the evangelistic campaign is still the traditional route, small-group evangelism is fast becoming a more effective methodology.

The small-group method uses long plowing, long sowing, and very short reaping. *Plowing* lasts about two months, using the "pray-care" procedures mentioned above. In addition to praying in the weekly cell meeting, each intercessor looks for ways to intentionally show care for his or her prospects. The groups practice "pray-care" visitation, using the "LAP" procedure: Look for areas of interest; Ask questions to ascertain needs; and Pray for those needs. This "pray-care" is spiritual "daycare," where hearts are softened by love.

The long sowing takes three to four months, and the dynamic of this process is the expansion of the care cell, which is converted into a "family fellowship." Each prospect is given lesson 1 with an invitation to the family fellowship. This cell, or this small-group meeting, becomes the center of operations.

What do we do in the weekly family fellowship? We study attractive small-group lessons. These are really 15 of the 24 sermons that have been simplified and redesigned for home use! Like the sermon, half of each lesson is on the family and the other half on Bible doctrine. In addition to study, the family fellowship focuses on prayer. Here we pray for each other, and even more, we teach prospects to pray.

Although study and prayer are vital, the most important element of the family fellowship is fellowship! Whether it be singing, drinks, cookies, or chit-chat, we create ways to build friendship, to show care, and experience Christian love.

After this long sowing, the harvest is ripening, and we are ready for a short reaping! The reaping campaign needs

just two weeks to present the sermons that were not covered in the group lessons. These are decision sermons.

Prospects from all the Fellowships are brought together for massive fellowship, and the preacher, using the identified decision sermons from the manual with the matching presentations from the CD, calls people to decision. A variety of baptismal services are scheduled during this reaping campaign.

When the short reaping is over, where should the new believers go? Back to the weekly care cells! For the next two months they study the conservation lessons (Series C). But they do more than study together. They pray together and fellowship together. Fellowship is the key! The greatest benefit of small-group evangelism is that it provides an effective conservation mechanism. The newborn is surrounded by a circle of friends who give spiritual support in a loving, caring environment.

Option 3 is the professional evangelistic seminars designed to reach persons in the upper levels of society—people who do not come to the tent or the church. This option needs very long plowing, long sowing, and short reaping.

If the gospel seed is sown on "stony ground," there will be no harvest! So we need to "break up" this "fallow ground." We do so by operating a six-month "pray-care" plan of praying, caring, and visiting.

We build strategic spiritual alliances with professionals and business persons in their "marketplace" and in their "ballpark"! We visit them formally and informally, ascertaining and satisfying their felt needs, praying with them and for them. This is plowing.

As in option 2, sowing is done in small groups called "Family Fellowship." Here we use lessons, specially designed for professionals, such as, "God loves business persons," or "God loves educators."

During the three months of sowing in the weekly fellowship, once each month we bring all the prospects of all the small groups for an appropriate Group Fellowship, such as a Prayer Breakfast, Gospel Concert, or Stress Management

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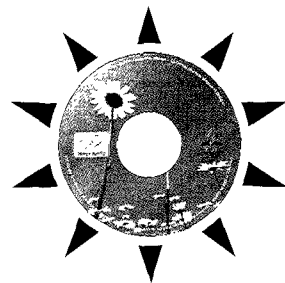


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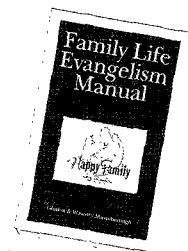
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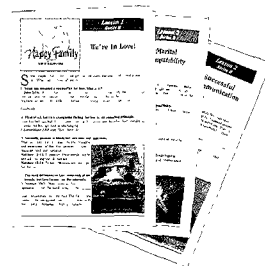
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Thoughts on the republished Questions on Doctrine

Herbert E. Douglass



Herbert E. Douglass, Th.D., is retired and lives in Lincoln Hills, California.

Editor's note: Last August Ministry published an article by Woodrow Whidden announcing and commenting upon Andrews University Press' republication of the book Questions on Doctrine. In the same issue Ministry declared itself on one side of the most divisive aspect of the book when, in the editorial, we affirmed the sinless human nature of Jesus, and attached a reprint of an insert that Ministry had published in 1970. Besides this, as part of our ongoing doctrinal series, expressing the Seventh-day Adventist faith in Christocentric terms, we published Roy Naden's article in our June 2003 issue.

As part of Ministry's coverage of these topics, we are pleased to publish the ascendant alternative Adventist view on the nature of Christ. Herbert Douglass, one who was intimately involved in the 1950s and 1960s struggles over Questions on Doctrine, agreed to express this alternative perspective.

For further study on this subject we recommend that our readers visit <biblicalresearch.gc.adventist.org>, click on the "Documents" button, and click on "What human nature did Jesus take? Fallen," and "What human nature did Jesus take? Unfallen." Also, don't miss BRI's recently presented comments on the republished Questions on Doctrine found on page 30 of this issue.

Late in 2003, Questions on Doctrine (QOD) was republished by the Andrews University Press with historical notes and a theological introduction by George R. Knight.

Originally published in 1957, this book, as Knight observes, "easily qualifies as the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history. A book published largely to help bring peace between Adventism and conservative Protestantism, its release brought prolonged alienation and separation to the Adventist factions that grew up around it."¹

Historical concerns

Knight's Introduction provides the background for the early conversations between Adventist spokesmen and Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, Walter Martin, and others of the Calvinistic wing of Evangelicalism. Some would say it was the Fundamentalist wing.

The mystery to many of us in Washington during the 1950s was T. E. Unruh's (president, East Pennsylvania Conference) letter to Barnhouse wherein he complimented Barnhouse's radio program on "righteousness by faith." This letter started the strange chain of events that led to the publishing of QOD.

Walter Martin, a young specialist in Christian cults, visited Washington in March 1955 to hear from Adventist leaders exactly what they believed regarding certain doctrines that Martin had said were cultic.

Knowing that Martin was in the process of preparing another book entitled, *The Rise of the Cults*, Leroy E. Froom, W. E. Read, and R. A. Anderson thought it best to head off a negative bombshell by responding with irenic deference; a lofty goal for any leader!²

Of course there were many topics that Martin and Barnhouse would concede as interesting and different but not necessarily cultic. The four items they finally left on the table and in contention were (1) that the atonement of Christ was not completed upon the cross; (2) that salvation is the result of grace plus the works of the law; (3) that the Lord Jesus was a created being, not from all eternity; and (4) that He partook of man's sinful fallen nature at the Incarnation.³

The associate editors of *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* had the privilege of watching QOD being processed, edited, rewritten, and rewritten again. Our Commentary office was on the same floor with Merwin Thurber, the seasoned Review and Herald Publishing Association book editor. Whenever he had a theological problem of whatever nature, he would come to our office for counsel. Week after week this would be the routine

as Thurber tried to edit the QOD manuscript.

Finally, Elder Froom said, "No more editing. We're going with what we have." At that point, the manuscript had been reduced significantly. The authors recognized, of course, that "no statement of Seventh-day Adventist belief can be considered official unless it is adopted by the General Conference in quadrennial session." But perception often overrules. You can imagine our astonishment when we began to see the galleys of the forthcoming book with comments such as this one on pages 8, 9: "The replies were prepared by a group of recognized leaders, in close counsel with Bible teachers, editors, and administrators. . . . These answers represent the position of our denomination in the area of church doctrine and prophetic interpretation. . . . Hence this volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

But as far as we and some others were concerned, these statements did not represent the reality surrounding the production of QOD. Many were troubled by the direction of the book and told the authors so.

Milton L. Andreasen, "the denomination's most influential theologian and theological writer in the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s, had been left out of the process in both the formulation of the answers and the critiquing of them, even though he had been generally viewed as an authority on several of the disputed points."⁴

This omission was not apparent until QOD was published. Be that as it may, what we did not expect was the crescendo of *Ministry* editorials and articles, and workers' meetings throughout North America from 1957 on. The new president of the General Conference, R. R. Figuhr, was impressed by the fact that Walter Martin had been headed off again from including Adventists in his next book on cults in America.

When it seemed to Andreasen that the QOD authors plus the General

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Conference president were not interested in recognizing his concerns, he wrote open letters to church members.

Theological concerns

Andreasen was primarily concerned with the "troublesome" issues: the "atonement" and "the human nature of Christ."⁵ In looking into these theological questions, we need to look more closely at the problem that L. E. Froom and R. A. Anderson faced.

Froom took a poll of Adventist leaders and discovered that "nearly all of them" felt that Christ had our sinful nature.⁶ Further, the recently retired General Conference president, W. H. Branson, wrote in the 1950 edition of his *Drama of the Ages* that Christ in His incarnation took "upon Himself sinful flesh."

But Froom and Anderson nevertheless affirmed in what appeared to George Knight to be a "less than transparent" way that "the majority of the denomination has always held" the

humanity of Christ "to be sinless, holy, and perfect" despite the fact that certain writers had occasionally gotten into print with contrary views. Unfortunately, this is what they told Walter Martin.

Froom and Anderson kept the new General Conference president well informed. One of Froom's letters acknowledged that in QOD "some of the statements are a bit different from what you might anticipate."⁸ He went on to suggest that their approach was necessary in view of the backgrounds and attitudes of the Evangelicals.

QOD's treatment of the atonement

One of Andreasen's chief complaints was the lack of lucidity as the authors tried to pitch their answers to Martin's questions with language he could accept. He wrote private letters to the General Conference president, imploring him to look at the big picture.

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For many years Adventists had believed (1) that “the conditions of the atonement had been fulfilled” on the cross (*The Desire of Ages*, 819) and (2) that “the intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven” (*The Great Controversy*, 489).

Andreasen was concerned about the Calvinist’s limited gospel where the focus of Christ’s atonement ministry is on the Cross; he feared that the Adventist twin focus of Christ’s atonement ministry on the cross and in the heavenly sanctuary was being muted. Many have felt that if Andreasen, with his undisputed theological experience, had been asked to participate in formulating answers to Martin’s questions, theological equilibrium would have prevailed.

QOD’s treatment of the Incarnation

Here again we must recognize the Calvinistic presuppositions of Barnhouse, Martin, and other confreres. For them the human Jesus was “impeccable,” that is, incapable of sinning. Bavinck, one of their theological giants, wrote that the possibility of Jesus’ “sinning and falling is an atrocious idea. . . . For then God Himself must have been able to sin—which it is blasphemy to think.”⁹

Froom admitted that some Adventists had been in print emphasizing these “atrocious ideas” but such were from those in the Adventist “lunatic fringe”! Remember, Froom and Anderson were trying to find some common ground with their Calvinistic friends! They used words such as “exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendents of Adam.”¹⁰ And, “all that Jesus took, all that He bore whether the burden and penalty of our iniquities, or the diseases and frailties of our human nature—all was taken and borne vicariously.”¹¹

How can we summarize what Knight called “a less than transparent”¹² defense of conventional Adventist thinking on the humanity of Jesus?

♦ The Ellen White statements appended to QOD created “a false impression on the human nature of Christ.”¹³

♦ The authors supplied in bold face a subheading: “Took Sinless Human Nature.” As Knight wrote, “that heading is problematic in that it implies that that was Ellen White’s idea when in fact she was quite emphatic in repeatedly stating that Christ took our ‘sinful nature.’”¹⁴

♦ Curious touches of intimidation are apparent when the authors said (after spelling out their interpretation of Ellen White statements) “it is in this sense that all should understand the writings of Ellen G. White when she refers occasionally to sinful, fallen and deteriorated human nature.” Further, “all these are forceful cogent statements, but surely no one would designedly attach a meaning to them which runs counter to what the same writer has given in other places in her works.”¹⁵ And the implicit response to both assertions seems to be, “Of course not!”

Not only did the quotations contradict their contexts, they seem to have been arranged to foster a particular presupposition. For an example of misrepresenting the context, think of one that has been used many times since 1957: “No one, looking upon the childlike countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children. He was God in human flesh.” Yet a few sentences earlier, White also had written: “He was not like all children. Many children are misguided and mismanaged. But Joseph, and especially Mary, kept before them the remembrance of their child’s divine Fatherhood. Jesus was instructed in accordance with the sacred character of His mission. . . . He was an example of what all children may strive to be if parents will seek the Lord most earnestly, and if chil-

dren will co-operate with their parents. In His words and actions He manifested tender sympathy for all."¹⁶ One gets the larger picture that White was painting when we look at the whole article.

In the list of reasons for Christ coming to earth, it seems that the authors of *QOD* omitted two of the most essential reasons: He came to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). He came to be our Example (1 Peter 2:21). It would have been more than helpful if they had listed the additional reasons Ellen White has provided us.

Radiation fallout

As Knight says, *QOD* "easily qualifies as the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history." To document this divisiveness is easy but painful. Most, if not all, of the so-called "dissident" or "independent" groups of the last 45 years are direct results of the explicit and implicit positions espoused by *QOD* on the atonement and the Incarnation. On two continents the reaction was immediate. Most, if not all, of these "dissidents" would not exist today if *QOD* had not been published.

Hovering over the theological fog that *QOD* generated was the "official" imprimatur that the book was getting in the Adventist world. Although the authors tried to say that *QOD* was not an "official" statement of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, the description of their efforts could not be hidden.¹⁷

In 1975, a representative group of us gathered in Washington in response to the Review and Herald Publishing House's call for counsel regarding the republication of *QOD*. The leadership of the General Conference was generally opposed to its reprinting. The more the book was examined, the firmer their denial for a reprinting became.

Theological concerns that need fresh discussion

1. *Creating a straw man.* Adventists have never argued that Jesus ever

sinned, or inherited evil, corrupted "passions and pollutions." Arguing this way creates a straw man! The Adventist position for a century was solidly based on biblical statements such as Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 5:7-9; Romans 1:1-3; 8:3, 4; 2 Peter 2:21; Revelation 3:21.

This biblical foundation lies at the core of Ellen White's understanding of Christ's humanity. For example: "It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

"Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss."¹⁸

Throughout White's *The Desire of Ages*, many such statements only add to the clarity of the above.

2. *Hermeneutics.* One of the main principles of interpretation is to allow the author to interpret himself or herself. Further, the author can best state his or her position in a book designed to clarify all aspects of the author's thinking.

When an author has written more than seventy years on a subject, one should not be surprised to find statements lifted from letters, diaries, and general manuscripts that may seem to be contradictory. But when the stu-

dent has a grasp of the intent of a letter and has access to the entire diary or manuscript, those apparent discrepancies vanish like Jell-O (gelatin) at a picnic on a hot summer day.

In other words, *The Desire of Ages* should be the acid test of Ellen White's Christology by which all other statements should be judged.

3. *Modus operandi.* On subjects such as "The Ten Commandments," "The Sabbath and the Moral Law," "Scholarly Precedents for 1844," "The Meaning of Azazel," "The Investigative Judgment," "Condition of Man in Death," and "Champions of Conditional Immortality," the *QOD* authors used a host of non-Adventist writers to supplement and enhance their doctrinal positions.

An equally good supply of non-Adventist writers could be gathered, other than Calvinistic writers, to substantiate the historic Adventist position on what is meant by Christ's "sinful, fallen human nature." Why aren't books authored by Harry Johnson, Karl Barth, T. F. Torrance, Nels Ferré, C. E. Cranfield, Harold Roberts, Lesslie Newbigin, Anders Nygren, C. K. Barrett, and Oscar Cullmann, referred to, for starters?

Such scholars clearly espoused the New Testament position that Jesus who was "truly Man," became the kind of person that He came to redeem, not only in His death but throughout His life, that He inherited fallen, sinful nature that makes sin very probable but that He did not yield to that tendency (John 5:17, 18; Mark 4:36, etc.)

In other words, biblical writers and Ellen White viewed what is generally called "original sin" as the universal tendency in human nature to seek selfish interests. Jesus shared this commonality with humanity—but He remained the unsullied Example for us all (Rev. 3:21)—He remained sinless.

4. *Distinguish between "propensities of sin" and "propensities to sin"; between "inherited passions" and "evil, corrupted passions"; between "lower" and "higher nature."* We should let Ellen White tell

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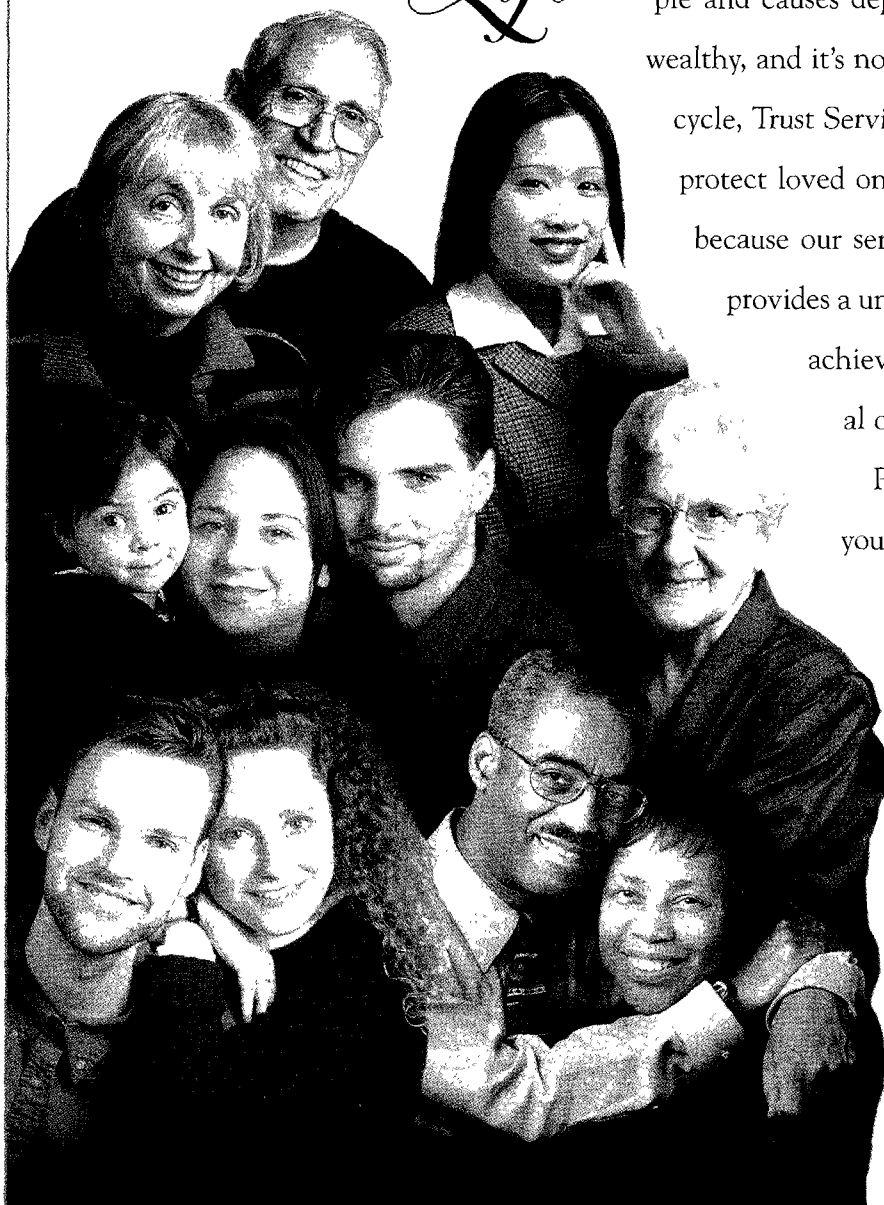
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us what is meant by her usage. Jesus had all the natural passions of a child, or a teenager, or an adult—for self-preservation, for reasonable physical comforts, for an appreciation of the opposite sex, to be appreciated by His friends. But He never allowed these natural, God-given passions to become “evil, corrupted passions.” He never permitted His will to yield to any of these natural passions so that they would have contradicted the will of His heavenly Father (Luke 22:42).¹⁹

Jesus took our inherited tendencies to evil but not our cultivated tendencies of evil—He did not choose to sin, to be corrupted.

Christ’s higher nature, as ours, included choice and will and thus character. His lower nature embraced normal human passions that seek selfish, indulgent ends. The difference between Jesus and us is that He always chose not to be defiled. He was uncorrupted.

5. *Areas of concern that may still require open discussion are found in the extended notes on pages 516-529 of the new republished edition of QOD. The author of the notes framed in gray is correct: “The logic that flowed from that belief was that if Christ was just like us, yet had lived a sinless life, then so must other human beings—especially those of the last generation. . . . [This teaching] became the belief of the majority of Seventh-day Adventists in the first half of the twentieth century. That teaching was so widely accepted that it no longer needed to be argued in Adventist literature. It was accepted as a fact. It was upon that teaching that M. L. Andreasen would build his final generation theology.”*²⁰

The suggestion that Ellen White’s understanding of Christ’s humanity was derived from her reading of Henry Melville is interesting but far off the mark. This connection does

not occur to those who spend a few moments noting how White herself used the words *propensities*, *passions*, *infirmities*, etc.

The suggestion that since the 1890s there have been “two quite distinct Adventist understandings on the human nature of Christ in Adventism” (pre-Fall Adam versus post-Fall Adam) needs substantiation. To suggest that all other writers except Ellen White were in both camps and Ellen White was in a third, the “invisible” camp, seems to be a strange observation. The immediate examples of that “position” follow exactly the pattern of the 1957 QOD’s mistreatment of Ellen White’s writings.

The “last-generation” (the one that waits expectantly for Christ’s return, cooperating with Him to be entrusted with His sealing—Revelation 7) concept seems to be the distinctive feature of Ellen White’s eschatology.

6. *The second topic that has severely divided the Adventist Church since the late 1950s was the issue of righteousness by faith.* Evangelical media observed that by the 1970s the church was divided between “Traditional Adventists”—those who defended positions that were “accepted facts” before QOD, and “Evangelical Adventists” who emphasized the Reformation understanding of righteousness by faith.²¹

Implied in this “evangelical” understanding was (1) a rejection of Adventism’s distinctive view of a pre-Advent judgment and (2) the connection between the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the cleansing of habits and choices culminating in the close of probation.

In minimizing the “essential” aspects of the atonement that are embedded in the heavenly sanctuary doctrine, the spotlight attention focused on the Cross. When this double focus is lost, the biblical concept of righteousness by faith is greatly

damaged. Everything is connected to everything else on the genuine gospel tree; when one aspect of gospel truth is compromised, many other doctrines become tainted!

7. *Part of the fallout since 1957 is the cavalier treatment of Ellen White’s ministry.* Such a view of Mrs. White’s ministry became the *modus operandi* for many pastors and teachers who seemed to get the impression that she has a “wax nose.” In recent years, Ellen White has been viewed by some as a devotional writer but not a theological guide.

A deeper lesson to be learned

What seems to be an unspoken, deeper problem with QOD is what was left unsaid.

Martin and Barnhouse were recognized scholars though listening to a different drummer. But they could think theologically. What a perfect opportunity it would have been for Adventists to use equally trained minds to show why Adventists have a distinctive understanding of soteriology, Christology, and eschatology. ■

1 *Questions on Doctrine* (Andrew U. edition), xiii.

2 *Ibid.*, xiv.

3 *Ibid.*, xiv.

4 *Ibid.*, xviii.

5 *Ibid.*, xv.

6 QOD (Andrews), xv.

7 *Ibid.* In 1953, Branson changed slightly his “sinful flesh” statement to keep the peace, still knowing that Ellen White used this phrase many times.

8 *Ibid.*

9 G. C. Berkouwer, *The Person of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), 259.

10 QOD, 383 (1957).

11 *Ibid.*, 61, 62, 59.

12 *Ibid.*, xvi (Andrews University edition).

13 *Ibid.*, xxx.

14 *Ibid.*, xvi.

15 QOD, 60 (1957).

16 QOD (1957), 650; *Youth’s Instructor*, September 8, 1898.

17 QOD (1957), 8.

18 *The Desire of Ages*, 49.

19 See *Manuscript Vol. 16*, 182, 183 for a clear distinction between “corrupted propensities” and “fallen but not corrupted.”

20 QOD (Andrews edition), 518, 519.

21 Kenneth R. Samples, “From Controversy to Crisis: An Updated Assessment of Seventh-day Adventism,” *Christian Research Journal*, Summer, 1988, 9.



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Letters *continued from page 3*

marginalized and for our message to become virtually unintelligible to the masses of unchurched Americans. Shame on us! Our Lord cannot be happy with such developments.

The genius of the Adventist denominational structure has always been its ability to achieve an efficient and effective balance between centralized institutions and local ministries. Today there is widespread concern among pastors and lay leaders that this has slipped into an "out of balance" situation where effectiveness is seriously degraded. Church administrators need to take this concern seriously.

Out of nearly 5,000 congregations in the North American Division, we have lost fewer than ten in the last decade through congregationalism. There is a much greater challenge from creeping demographic death. In the same decade, hundreds of our local churches died because there was no younger generation to take on its future. In the 1990s we planted fewer new churches than in any decade in the post-WWII era, and almost all of those were simply a response to immigration.

The majority of young people raised in [North American] Adventist homes are slipping out the back door, and almost all of them will tell you that a lack of relevance is at least part of the reason. Almost none of them indicate that they disagree with or disbelieve the 27 Fundamentals. I have interviewed hundreds of Adventists who are urban professionals over the past decade, and they unanimously tell me that they find it difficult to find a way to make conventional Adventist faith relevant to the professional colleagues with whom they seek to share a witness.

The Spirit of Prophecy recognizes our need to get new ideas from outside of Adventist circles. "I have been shown that our labor for the enlightenment of the people in the large cities the work has not been well organized or the methods of labor as efficient as in other churches that have not the great light we regard as so essential" (Letter 34,

1892). Ellen White counsels against being too cautious in trying new approaches. "There has been much lost through following the mistaken ideas of our good brethren whose plans were narrow and they lowered the work to their peculiar ways and ideas" (Letter 12, 1887). She advocates trying new, creative methods even in eras of risk. "In these perilous times we should leave untried no means of warning the people. We should be interested in everything that will stay the tide of iniquity" (Letter 49, 1902).

Are we, in general, at present being too reckless or too cautious in pursuing the mission that Christ has given us? Are we overly progressive or overly conservative? What is God most likely to be concerned about at the moment?

—Monte Sahlin, vice president, Columbia Union Conference, Columbia, Maryland.

Jay Gallimore's response: *I agree. We must be faithful to our mission. But can we be faithful to our mission without being faithful to our teachings? Without our beliefs, do we have a mission? In reality, if Satan could get us to sell out our theology by corrupting our methodology doesn't he still win? It is not a new temptation. History is littered with the wrecks of corrupted churches that attempted to convert the world on its terms. While surveys serve many useful purposes, people's discontent or applause must not be allowed to drive our theology or mission. We must hold to the superior authority—Scripture. Interestingly, persecution comes when the church is not considered "mainstream." Yet, often under persecution, when it is the most "irrelevant" in the world's view, it thrives. Sounds odd! Both articles are a plea that is best summed up by Donald G. Bloesch in Christianity Today (Feb. 5, 2001). "The Spirit of God is indeed moving in some of the new ventures in evangelism and discipleship, but evil spirits are also at work. It is incumbent on us to pray for the gift of discerning spirits so that we can separate what is true and abiding from what is false and ephemeral." And I might add, a faithful church should take huge risks to win souls, but it should never take any risks with worldliness. ■*



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Professional counseling agencies: how does a pastor know where to turn?

Shirley Allen



Shirley Allen is development director for Project PATCH in Clackamas, Oregon.

Pastor, what can I do? My teenage son is out of control. He may take his own life. I am too scared to sleep." Faced with such a cry, where do you turn for help? What referral do you give? As a minister how do you know if you can comfortably refer your church members to a particular facility? Over the years a variety of Christian ministries have emerged that help at-risk young people. Making a choice can be confusing. One way is to look at the outcomes achieved by the ministry.

Outcome has become an overriding concern with Christian residential treatment programs as they have with other nonprofit organizations. Each ministry has to prove its worth to an often skeptical church and public. More and more people are demanding measurable and measured results, and rightly so. Pastors, client's families, counselors, donors, watchdogs, and even academics all want to know about the successes and failures of a treatment program.

An article by Monique Busch¹ looks at accountability and effectiveness in residential programs and services. Busch's research shows that the effectiveness of residential treatment programs is mixed. When evaluating treatment effectiveness, Busch states that there are five key areas that need to be examined:

- ◆ Clinical outcomes.
- ◆ Functional outcomes.

- ◆ Effectiveness of placement.
- ◆ Restrictiveness of living environment.
- ◆ Consumer satisfaction.

Against these prerequisites, a treatment plan known as Project PATCH (Planned Assistance for Troubled Children) is attempting to serve teens in trouble. As a Christian faith-based facility, it had its origin 20 years ago in a vision that Tom and Bonnie Sanford had to establish a ministry to help at-risk kids.

Originally a referral and foster care placement service, it grew into a residential treatment program in 1990 in Garden Valley, Idaho. Between 1984 and 1993, 1,796 children were referred and 397 were placed in foster care. Since 1993, over 300 children have been at the ranch in the residential treatment program. The average length of stay is 18 months.

How have the children fared? Project PATCH wanted to know what the parents felt about the success of the program and where it could be improved.

PATCH's treatment coordinator Colleen Donald comments: "Our alumni have given us a pretty good idea that we are making a difference. Yet a past resident's view can differ significantly from that of their parents when it comes to defining 'doing well.'" The only way to find out is to seek the help of professional and qualified researchers.

So the staff and administration of Project PATCH approached Dr. Tedd McDonald of the Psychology Department at Boise State University (BSU) to research the functioning and the results of the project.

In an attempt to identify areas that needed further development, Dr. McDonald set out to evaluate the program and obtain an idea of the parents' perspectives. He and two of his students first visited Project PATCH in order to familiarize themselves with the program.

Subsequently a team of researchers comprised of faculty and students developed a 56-item survey. The survey measured, from the guardian's perspective, client behaviors before and after treatment at Project PATCH. The surveys were mailed out and returned by the guardians to the researchers at BSU in order to assure confidentiality. Results were then analyzed by the BSU Psychology Department under the direction of Dr. McDonald. The project was completed in June 2003.

Clinical outcomes were measured by asking questions about specific areas including: feel-

ings of depression, hopelessness, despair; willingness to listen to others, showing responsibility; and dealing with issues of anger. All areas were measured before the PATCH experience. The results were compared with the experiences of the young people after they returned home.

In all areas examined, improvement over client's past behavior was noted across the board. With issues of concern such as arguing and hitting others, parents indicated a decrease in these behaviors after the child was at PATCH. Conversely, for areas such as willingness to discuss problems and working individually on projects, guardians indicated a significant increase or improvement after the client's experience at PATCH.

Two questions were asked regarding consumer satisfaction outcomes. Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction on a 7-point Likert-type scale, when it came to the program leaders/staff and the facilities. The mean rating for the program leaders was 5.6 and for the facilities 5.87, which is clearly above 4, the midpoint of the scale.

These results suggest that the parents in the sample, as a whole, felt positive about the quality of the staff that interacted with their children, and the quality of the facilities at the PATCH ranch.

Two "yes" or "no" questions were put to parents. Answers to these questions indicated that two out of three parents felt the program had been successful. In spite of meeting its program goals there was a discrepancy between the expectations of some parents and the goals of the program.

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This result shows an area where improvement can be made in diminishing the gap between expectations and outcomes.

Administration and staff are investigating ways of being more explicit to parents about the outcomes of the program as this would help parents with unrealistic expectations as well as concerns raised by parents in additional comments.

When asked how many of the responders to the survey would recommend Project PATCH to other families with children who are experiencing difficulties, 88.4 percent said they would do so. This is significant: Even though only 66.7 percent thought the program successful, 88.4 percent said they would recommend the program to others.

This study was understandably encouraging for Project PATCH staff. Colleen Donald commented on behalf of the staff, "We are a group of people who are not 'in the business' for profit but for the kids. God has placed each of us at the ranch. We know that there have been, and will continue to be, those teens who are not open to the help we offer. We also know that there are those kids who don't appear open, but who are positively influenced regardless." Like their counterparts in the public sector, managers of nonprofit agencies are aggressively measuring the outcomes of their efforts. Next time you receive that telephone call from a desperate parent and you are not quite sure about a treatment program center, check to see what their outcomes have been and what accountability they have in place.

As far as Project PATCH is concerned, it is making a difference to this generation and the next. To learn more about Project PATCH, visit their Web site at <www.projectpatch.org> or call them at 503-653-8086 for brochures and more information.

1 Child Welfare League of America, Residential Group Care 4 (Summer 2003) 1. Visit <<http://cwla.org/programs/groupcare/rgcq.htm>>.



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Working in the garden in the early evening seems a natural time to talk to God. I often combine my gardening and my praying. I've given up my original garden. Now I use my shade garden for prayer. It has a nice little terrace and benches. I think it would be great if every church provided a prayer garden for members and friends. Several people in the church could plant it and keep it up. I read of a church that does this and thought, "What a ministry that would be!" People who enjoy gardening, would love it, and the community could be invited to use it.

—June Strong

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Bringing up great PKs

Becky Donaldson



Becky Donaldson is a homemaker and freelance writer in Moberly, Missouri.

When friends affectionately identified our three children as PKs (pastor's kids), my husband and I wondered, "What does it take to bring up great PKs?"

Together on our knees, we asked the Lord for help. Thankfully, we soon realized that raising great PKs did not require that we be perfect parents or saints. Neither did our kids have to be perfect. Great PKs are simply kids learning to love and serve their Lord. But, how do we help them learn to love the Lord? Here are four simple steps.

Be faithful to the Lord

We found encouragement in Deuteronomy 6:5-7. * "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." All parents can follow this down-to-earth instruction in normal, daily living.

Of course, holding our kids to God's standard requires that we consistently follow that standard ourselves. PKs need to see in their parents an authentic devotion to the Lord. We told our kids, "If your dad were a plumber and not a preacher, our choices would be the same. We serve the Lord because we love Him

and trust Him." PKs are more inclined to follow Jesus when they understand *why* their parents follow Him.

Be faithful to your spouse

PKs definitely prosper when parents make their marriage relationship a top priority. That means that both husband and wife must promptly and constructively address conflicts. If necessary, they get help.

In an interview with Billy Graham's wife, Ruth, she was asked, "Did you ever, at any time, seriously consider divorce?"

Ruth answered with a smile, "No. Murder, maybe. But not divorce."

Although trials in marriage can test us severely, kids need to see that we choose faithfulness, no matter what. Marriage and family counselors wisely observe, "You can do nothing more beneficial for your children than to remain committed to one another for a lifetime." As Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matt. 19:6).

Be faithful to your children

PKs need discipline, and God assigned that responsibility to parents. We should not rely on others to train our kids. Understandably, at times, a parent can feel stretched to the limits.

A young mother picked up her toddler in the middle of the street one day and with exasperation said, "I am having a hard time with this. It seems that overnight my adorable baby has turned into a devil!" Even when a PK seems to "turn into a devil," parents must love and do what is best for the child.

Terrible twos, teens, and every age in between, need parents who discipline themselves to discipline their children. The apostle Paul tells parents: "Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Along with firm and loving discipline, our children thrive on regular doses of vitamin "H": hearty laughter, happy holidays, home-cooked meals, hospitality (especially inviting evangelists and missionaries into our homes and people from the service professions), helping around the house and yard, having family fun, and healthy interaction.

We found family devotions a fun way to administer vitamin "H." Our kids were especially receptive when we encouraged participation. Often, we invited each child to describe the meaning of a verse in his or her own words. We recited memory verses togeth-

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er in an improvised chant. We sang choruses and hymns, watched Christian videos while munching popcorn, discussed audio recordings, and prayed together. And when the kids were old enough, we invited them to take turns leading devotions.

One of the best things we ever did was to teach our PKs at a young age to take time for personal devotions. We gave each child his own Bible. Occasionally I asked each one, "Which book in the Bible are you reading in your daily devotions now?" Then, we talked briefly about that section of Scripture.

If he had let the habit of daily Bible reading slip, I would suggest an interesting passage to help him get started again. I would check again in a few days, just in case he needed another boost. This, more than anything else, helped our children to establish their own faith in God.

Be faithful to the task

Increasingly, we perceived that

bringing up PKs requires teaching—interactive, aggressive, persistent teaching—at home, by parents. After a visit to Eastern Europe, our friend Barb told us of a huge cemetery in Warsaw, Poland, that reminded her of Arlington National Cemetery here in the United States, where thousands of gravestones honor American soldiers who died in combat.

The crosses in Warsaw's cemetery, however, did not represent soldiers, but teachers. During World War II, soldiers gathered all teachers in that region and ordered them to dig a deep ditch. Then, a firing squad murdered and buried them in one huge grave.

Why teachers? Because the Nazis

understood the powerful influence of good teaching. Parents must understand that as well.

We are called to teach our PKs as we walk, sit, lie down, or get up. Parental teaching is God's plan to save souls for generations to come. No need to be perfect. Be faithful: faithful to God, to your spouse, to your children, and to the task.

Jesus' promise is "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). ■

* All scriptures in this article are from the New International Version.

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Preparing to preach

Every pastor must preach; usually every week. Some preach well; others so horribly that congregants conclude their minister must have slept through homiletics class and they now hope also to snooze through that which they must endure. The difference between dull, lackluster presentation and pulpit brilliance will be fashioned through the diligent effort of a detailed preparation process.

Preach with a plan. Failing to plan is planning to fail. Rarely does God answer your prayers for a "Friday-night miracle" with a top-quality sermon. If you wait until just before your message to search for something to say, your procrastination will be clearly evident.

Determine to plan at least a year in advance. If you begin immediately, this process will begin to bear rich fruit within six months and will refresh your preaching the longer you proceed.

Devise a preaching planbook with dated pages for each sermon of the coming year. Establish now a balanced diet of spiritual food which you intend to present. Select major doctrines, practical topics, serial passages from each chapter of an epistle, narratives of great Bible stories, gospel parables, issues confronting society, calendar holidays and special events, or even a lectionary cycle. The most important concept: write it down right now!

If you design a sermon schedule, the Holy Spirit will begin to drop ideas into your mind which you can place in the appropriate pages of your book. While God's omniscience may foretell what you will eventually preach, if you have no plan, you cannot recognize that with which the Spirit will happily enrich your sermons. Of course, circumstances might occasionally necessitate realignment, but overall, your plan will pay rich dividends.

Preach with participation. Take

JAMES A. CRESS



your planbook everywhere. Jot a note when ideas strike you. Even interrupt a conversation to capture the thought before it escapes. Enlist others to assist by sharing their ideas, then publicly recognize their contribution in your sermons. More will join your process. Engage parishioners through interactive dialogue. Poll for topics or texts which they hope you will preach.

Preach with power. By relying on your relationship with Jesus, born out of quality time invested in reading, praying, fellowshiping, witnessing, and seeking God's will, your proclamation will exude more power than you can imagine. Your messages will come with heaven-sent authority that clever platform histrionics could never equal.

Preach with purpose. When preparing each sermon, ask yourself, "What do I want my listeners to do next Tuesday as a result of what they hear me say?" Once you determine your objective, make that intent the goal of your sermon and conclude with specific, "how to" recommendations for following God's will. Always make an appeal. If you expect nothing from your audience, why waste time?

Preach with place. Recognize that you enter the pulpit as representative of the King of kings. Your words have holy purpose as you stand between the living and the dead. You warn people to

shun hell while you call them to embrace heaven. You deliver a message from the throne room of the universe which delivers souls from Satan's grasp. Always remember this lofty responsibility which has placed you to proclaim for Almighty God.

Preach with priority. If you utilize this planbook system, you need not scratch around for something to say. Instead, you will have more ideas than you can develop—so many that you can prioritize the most important. Select major topics, eliminate minor curiosities, emphasize essentials, and establish the choicest of great themes.

Preach with passion. Reject humdrum, lifeless, willy-nilly meanderings. Express your convictions in such a way that people will know that you believe. Preach "as if" you have faith and you will gain it! Ask your questions in the study and refuse to parade doubts in the pulpit.

William Willimon describes his future father-in-law's endurance of one minister's tentative tapdance. "That particular Sunday, the preacher was a master of ambiguity and equivocation. Mr. Parker squirmed in his pew as the preacher carefully qualified just about every statement . . . The poor preacher continued to flail away, poking here and there at his biblical text, rather than delivering it. 'We need to be more committed to Christ . . . but not to the point of fanaticism, nor to the point of neglect of our other important responsibilities. We must have a greater dedication to the work of the church. Now I don't mean that the church is the only significant organization of which you are a member. Most of us have obligations to various community groups . . . ' On and on and on!" After the service Pastor Parker shook his finger at Willimon, himself about to enter seminary, and thundered, "Young man, if God should be

calling you into the pastoral ministry, and if ever you should be given a church by the bishop, and if ever God gives you a word to say, for God's sake would you say it!"¹

Preach with a person. Lift up Jesus in every presentation. Exalt Him as the answer to every need. He promises to accompany your efforts with consequential success. ■

1 William H. Willimon, "Rev. Parker's Last Stand," in *Christian Century*, May 4, 2004; 10.

Marriage

continued from page 10

Families desperately need reconciliation between the generations, within each generation and between the genders. The world desperately needs the witness that such reconciliation bears. So significant is this coming together in unity that Jesus made it the focal point of His prayer for His followers.

Through our relationships in Christian marriage and family life, we may honor Jesus' prayer: "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23, NIV). ■

Ron and Karen Flowers direct the worldwide Family Ministries of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Integrated family life evangelism

continued from page 14

Seminar. It would be advantageous if these monthly events were hosted at the proposed campaign venue.

The reaping is unique. We are not preaching sermons; we are conducting professional seminars! We use the 24 Happy Family Bible Seminar study guides with the multi-purpose CD. However, professional seminars need professional dynamics: attractive venue, professional ambiance, interactive teaching methodology, appropriate materials (folder, pen, and study guide for each participant), and prior registration. Moreover, since it is a professional seminar, we recommend that there be a modest registration fee.

After the reaping is the conserving as the attendees return to their enlarged care cells for study, prayer, and fellowship; for again, fellowship is the key to conservation.

Family Life Evangelism brings many blessings. First, heightened community interest resulting in larger baptisms; second, reaching persons in the upper levels of society; third, baptisms of more families than individuals; fourth, revival of the church while evangelizing the world; fifth, enrichment of the preacher's own family life; sixth, effective consolidation of new believers. This innovative, internationally tested model is a highly successful method of reaping God's harvest. ■

Gordon Martinborough is co-director of family ministries and associate ministerial secretary for the Inter-American Division, Miami, Florida.

Waveney Martinborough is co-director of family ministries and director of women's ministries for the Inter-American Division, Miami, Florida.

* All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version.

All cited materials are available from the Family Ministries Department of the Inter-American Division of the General Conference. Samples can be viewed at <www.interamerica.org>.



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- 1 See Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1955), 63.
- 2 "An Affirmation of Marriage," General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee, April 23, 1996.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, Revised 2000, 193.
- 5 Ibid., 194.
- 6 Ibid., 196.
- 7 Ibid., 195.
- 8 Fundamental Beliefs, Article 22.
- 9 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, Revised 2000, 196.
- 10 Ibid., 116.
- 11 See Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1892), 72.
- 12 ———, *The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), 35.
- 13 ———, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 352.
- 14 See Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 64.

BOOK REVIEW

Questions on Doctrine. Annotated Edition. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2003. 597 pages. \$29.99.

The original edition of the book *Questions on Doctrine*, published in 1957, became the most divisive book in Adventist history. A number of independent ministries in the church today consider it the beginning of the Adventist Church's theological apostasy.

The book was the result of a series of meetings in 1955-1956 between Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders and Walter R. Martin, a staff member of the evangelical magazine *Eternity*, who was writing a book about Seventh-day Adventists. He later gained fame as author of *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Because of its adherence to such teachings as the Sabbath, the nonimmortality

of the soul, the investigative judgment, and the prophetic gift in the life and work of Ellen G. White, the Adventist Church, since its origin, was often viewed as a "cult" by other Christians.

The series of meetings between Adventist Church leaders (primarily LeRoy E. Froom, W. E. Read, and R. A. Anderson) and Walter Martin, George Cannon (professor of theology at Nyack Missionary College), and Donald G. Barnhouse (editor of *Eternity*) led to a growing acceptance of Adventists as fellow Christians by many evangelicals.

Walter Martin submitted a list of questions to which the Adventist leaders provided answers. The result of those discussions was published in two books. The church in 1957 brought out the book *Questions on Doctrine*, and in 1960 Walter Martin published his book *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*.

Questions on Doctrine contained the questions Martin asked and the answers provided by the church's representatives at the meetings who counseled with

Bible teachers, editors, and church administrators before submitting their written responses. The introduction in the original volume states that "the writers, counselors, and editors who produced the answers to these questions have labored conscientiously to state accurately the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists." However, because the text of the book was never voted by a General Conference in session it has never been considered as an official statement of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

The annotated edition of *Questions on Doctrine* with a lengthy historical and theological introduction by George R. Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University, is one of the first two volumes in the Adventist Classic Library series. The layout of the book is very well done, the page numbers of the 1957 edition are found in the text in bold enclosed by paragraph signs, e.g., §123§, and all page references are to the original 1957 edition.

All additional material, as well as all new footnotes in the annotated edition have been shaded in gray. In contrast to the original edition that used stars and crosses, the new footnotes are numbered with Arabic numerals. This helps the reader to quickly recognize the material that has been added in the annotated edition.

Most of the shorter footnotes provide references to more recent literature such as the 2000 edition of the *Church Manual* or the seven volumes of the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series. Longer footnotes (1-4 pages) that contain a sizeable amount of new material can be found in the sections on the Trinity (pages 44-46), the Sabbath (pages 145, 146), the atonement (pages 277-280), and on the topic of conditional immortality (pages 469-473).


The bibliographic list of Adventist

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doctrinal literature has been almost doubled and appendix B on "Christ's Nature During the Incarnation" has an extensive footnote covering several pages that explains why the book has probably done more to create theological division within the Adventist Church than any other document in its history.

According to the Adventist News Service, three years before his death in 1986, Walter Martin, in an interview, cautioned Adventist leaders that *Questions on Doctrine* should return to the shelves: "If the Seventh-day Adventist [Church] will not back up its answers with actions and put *Questions on Doctrine* back in print, then they're in real trouble that I can't help them out of; and nobody else can either," he told *Adventist Currents*, a now-defunct magazine published by church members. [Mark A. Kellner/ ANN/ Nov. 18, 2003]

Nearly twenty years later *Questions on Doctrine* is back on the shelves. Republication of the book in this annotated form supplies the historical and theological context of its original appearance in 1957.

Every church administrator and pastor as well as all interested church members should have a copy of this volume. Not only is it a valuable work theologically, but it is a part of recent Adventist history which still impacts the church in many areas of the world. ■


—Gerhard Pfandl, *Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland*. Reprinted with permission, *Biblical Research Institute newsletter* no. 6, April 2004.

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