

MINISTRY

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WE NEED TO SEARCH FOR BETTER WAYS OF PACKAGING THE GOSPEL...

Doing Theology in Mission

As I was reading Dr. Dybdahl's article, I found myself saying "Yes! that's what we need!" It was not until I went overseas and immersed myself in another, non-Western, non-American culture that I realized how culturally conditioned I myself have been. And what was even more startling, was that I learned that my way of life and my way of seeing the world is not bullet proof. There are many aspects of my own way of life that are faulty and need adjustment. So my own experience of living without electricity, without the "benefits" of restaurants, Wal-Marts, and the media, taught me many things about what I had been missing out on my whole life.

It was not until after my overseas mission experience that I realized one of the largest and greatest unreached populations was in my own country! I saw the urban centers of America as bustling mission fields, and heard the call of God afresh to open my eyes and see that the fields were ready for harvest.

A great frustration to me is that most of us do not comprehend that America is a mission field that needs to have culturally appropriate mission initiatives, and even theological re-packaging. We need to search for better ways of packaging the gospel to a 21st century differentiated audience that desperately needs to be offended with the cross of Christ and the truths of God's Word.

It is true that the gospel truths of God's Word are applicable to every culture around the world, but it is a mission-limiting, and God-dishonoring position to believe that everyone must articulate and experience that truth in the same way.

We need salvational conversion to God, ecclesiological conversion to the church, and we need a missiological conversion to the world.

Forward on Our Knees

—Billy Gager, M.Div. student at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA

What's New About the New Covenant?

Your November cover article caught my attention, because it is a live issue in our fellowship and because I had written an article by the same title ten years back. Dr. Donkor finds more continuity than change between the Bible's Old and New Covenants, to which he applies Aristotle's grid of four causes. Both these covenants, he writes, share the same essential reality—their formal cause, and the same ultimate purpose—their final cause. So far, so good.

In the material cause, or covenant composition, the author implies that both old and new contain the elements of biblical covenants identified by Mendenhall. The six elements are mostly clear in the Sinaitic book of the covenant, in Deuteronomy and in Joshua 24, but are less obvious in the New Covenant—especially the invocation of witnesses (#5) and the provisions for preservation and public reading (#4). For discontinuity in covenant material here, the author settles for McComiskey's quote that the New Covenant is "incomparably greater" than the Old in terms of grace and glory, but the accompanying phrases "mode of administration" and "mode of obedience" needed clarification for me.

I found more specific answers to the title in the third quadrant—the "efficient

cause." For the author, "the distinction between the old and new covenants with regard to their efficacy must be sought in the area of stipulations"—namely, "the complex administration of these instruments" of laws, priests, and sacrifices. His intent is not immediately clear, as he goes on to affirm the continuing validity of the Decalogue under the New Covenant (Yes!), while denying that of the procedural laws (Yes!)—except those, like dietary laws, that are in principle consistent with spiritual wholeness and relationships. (What? May not most of the 613 laws be extrapolated or applied in this way?)

The author's climactic and definitive point came late in this section where he again quotes McComiskey to underscore his belief that the essential difference between the two covenants is to be found in the work of the Holy Spirit to internalize the moral law and prompt our obedience to it. The article's conclusion also summarizes this well. There is much to like about this emphasis: it remembers one oft-forgotten role of the Spirit under the gospel, and brings needed corrective to deficient views of God's law in the post-Mosaic era.

On the other hand, it is inconceivable that one could say so much about covenant distinctions and so little about the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The truly extraordinary facets of the New Covenant are under the headings of justification and Christology, not sanctification and pneumatology. Instead of merely following Moses with more motivation, we now follow Christ—learning to obey, to be sure, but still just Christians enjoying the grace of God that comes only through Jesus.

continued on page 28

Free Subscription

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

... beyond the expected

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER



When I was about six years old a favorite game of mine was the long jump (at least to me it was a *long* jump). My playmates and I would draw a line in the dirt and then jump from that line as far as we could. The one who jumped the furthest was the winner. I never won because all my playmates were older and jumped further.

But occasionally I was very close to the grand winner. My father, Peter, was liked by the young people and occasionally he joined us in our youthful pursuits. Whenever he saw us jumping, he just could not resist. We marveled that at his age—he was about 36 years old—he could jump at all. How could, we asked, a 36-year-old man jump even a short distance?

The picture is still fixed in my mind. We made sure the line was clearly drawn in the dirt road. All of us stood where we *thought* he would land. My father—with the local mountain in the background—eyed the line and started his run. In a few seconds he reached the line and went into the air. Once again he landed *beyond* our longest jump. How could he do it? At his age! We determined that one day we would jump further than he could. (Inwardly, I was pleased that my father jumped further than the furthest.)

Going beyond—often that is expected from ministers. More importantly, however, do we want to go beyond the minimal, the norm, the average or the expected? This issue of *Ministry* invites us to go beyond—beyond the expected.

Barry Black's article addresses the critical issue of persuasion in preaching. It reminds us that it's not enough to study for a sermon, outline the sermon, then write and deliver it. Persuasion is needed. The sermons recorded in the New Testament are rich with persuasion. Chaplain Black's article focuses on this important issue of preaching. Persuasion

makes the sermon a better sermon, even beyond what's expected.

Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson challenges us to view evangelism from a new perspective. Her article invites us to use reconciliation as an evangelism approach. What about reconciliation in congregations? Some congregations urgently need to experience reconciliation. It is not enough to only tolerate each other—we need to go beyond toleration and experience the joy of reconciliation.

The interview with Jan Paulsen, world president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, focuses on the mission of the church and the ministers. In that interview Dr. Paulsen reminds us that being a church organization is not enough—we are called upon to fulfill the mission given us. We need to go beyond only having a structure—we are also called upon to be a vibrant fellowship participating enthusiastically in God's plan for the human family.

The cover picture tells a story, but only a part of the story. Dr. Milan Paul Moskala is a dentist. A native of the Czech Republic, he has brought relief to people in such places as Bosnia and Herzegovina—areas that experienced great turmoil and suffering during the 1990's. Since 1998, Dr. Moskala has served in Bangladesh, an overpopulated country of more than 150 million. Many of the people live in great poverty. Disease—leprosy, TBC,

cholera, diphtheria, diarrhea, malaria, dengue fever, hepatitis A and B, typhoid fever—is rampant.

But remember, Dr. Moskala is a dentist. He works on teeth. His commitment to mission, however, made him go beyond his professional responsibilities. He was concerned about the begging children. After praying, the image of "Jesus feeding people,"¹ came to his mind. The "image" was translated into action—he started feeding about 100 children. But he did not stop there; he soon opened schools for children. But his dental practice, feeding of children, and sponsoring schools were not enough, so he has started new church groups. What a dentist! Certainly Dr. Moskala is going beyond his job description, beyond the expected.

Going beyond the expected is not just a slogan—it calls for commitment to the work that God has called us. Whether you are a pastor, chaplain, church leader—or whatever kind of ministry—God invites each person to total commitment to ministry.

The *Ministry* staff is committed to doing more than simply producing a magazine for ministers. Actually, producing it is both a joy and a challenge. But we are committed to going beyond that. We want to produce a magazine that will be your partner in ministry. We invite you to let us know how we can serve you. We invite you to share articles with us, and we invite you to read and share your input. We invite you to help us jump way past the line drawn in the dirt. **M**

¹ Quotations from Dr. Moskala are from his email of December 4, 2005. If you are interested in sending him a message of encouragement, please send it to SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org and we will forward it to him.

New Assistant Editor

We are pleased to introduce to the readers of *Ministry* the new assistant editor, Dr. Willie E. Hucks II.

For the past six years he has taught at Southwestern Adventist University, Keene, Texas where he was associate professor of religion. Besides teaching courses to



both ministerial and general students, he also participated in various evangelistic meetings in several countries. Previously he pastored in Louisiana and Texas with the Southwest Regional Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Hucks graduated from Oakwood College, in Huntsville, Alabama and received his M. Div. from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Recently he successfully defended his D. Min. dissertation at Andrews University.

Hucks is married to Kathleen (nee Alexander), a school teacher. They have two children, Whitney and Kendall.

Ministry magazine began in 1928 as a journal for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. Since the 1970's it has been made available to clergy of all denominations. Today its readership consists of clergy of many denominations throughout the world. In addition, the magazine is translated from the English edition into various other languages making it one of the more widely distributed magazines for clergy.

"We are delighted that someone who has been a successful pastor and university religion professor is bringing that experience to the magazine," stated James A. Cress, Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Ministerial Association is the organization that publishes the journal.

—Nikolaus Satelmajer, Editor

A pastor's new year's resolutions

1. Have sermon subjects chosen at least six weeks in advance.
2. Have sermon done weekly by Friday noon.
3. Keep all church bulletin boards current.
4. "Schedule" spouse/family time and keep it holy.
5. Never again keep my topcoat on or sit on the edge of the chair while making a pastoral visit.
6. Start making pastoral visits again.
7. Never again use "each and everyone" in a sentence.
8. Practice moderation at potluck dinners.
9. Participate in at least one significant professional growth experience this year.
10. Take all my vacation time-and work conscientiously the rest of the year.
11. Try to lead without domineering.
12. Listen to a tape of my preaching at least once a quarter.
13. Give attention to the children's ministries and educational programs.
14. Learn the name of every child in the congregation.
15. Have a new picture taken of myself for any publicity requests.
16. Establish regular office hours and share the schedule with the congregation.

—Rev. Randall S. Lehman, Churches of God General Conference, Wooster, Ohio, USA

Persuasive preaching

Barry C. Black



After a career as a military chaplain (most recently as Rear Admiral and Chief of Navy Chaplains), Barry C. Black now serves as Chaplain to the United States Senate.

Some assert that preaching has little to do with secular theories of persuasion. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard believed that secular theories of persuasion form an inadequate approach to preaching because the goals of rhetoric and preaching are different. Kierkegaard advocated his own approach to preaching, called “edifying discourse.”

Although the goals of rhetoric and preaching may differ, preachers can learn much from both the secular and spiritual laws of persuasion. Sometimes, as Jesus asserted, “the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light” (Luke 16:8).¹

Bertrand Russell once said, “What is distinctively human at the most fundamental level is the capacity to persuade and be persuaded.”² Any preacher who fails to realize how the laws of persuasion can enhance his or her preaching may miss a great opportunity.

We attempt to wield influence in several ways. One way is power, which often involves force, threats, and commands. Second, we may seek to use negotiation, trading, exchanging, or haggling. Superior to both of these is persuasion, which involves communicating with others in a way that induces them to think or act differently voluntarily. God bless the preacher who learns to persuade.

At least 13 laws of persuasion provide substantive ministry tools: ethos, pathos, logos,

agora, syzygy, reciprocity, contrast, friends, expectancy, consistency, scarcity, power, and spirit. The first four come from Aristotle’s wonderful book, *Rhetoric*. The other nine have been discussed for years by people who study the nature of persuasion.

The law of ethos

The law of ethos refers to the character of the messenger. Nothing can substitute for the moral authority that comes when people perceive that our words are backed by deeds. We have all witnessed what happens when a great preacher loses his or her reputation. Godliness draws and persuades. Edgar Guest put it this way: “I’d rather see your sermon than hear it any day.”³

The law of pathos

Pathos refers to the preacher’s awareness of motives, feelings, and attitudes, and his or her knowledge of the audience. We should know our congregation and have an awareness of the fact that we speak to multiple concerns. Someone once observed that if in your sermon you seek to speak to broken hearts, you’ll never lack people who will listen.

The law of logos

Are our sermon points and moves logical, coherent, and cogent? Too many preachers focus on the gravy, forgetting that good meat makes its own gravy. Appropriate logos means always having something substantive to communicate.

The law of agora

Agora is a gathering place, especially the marketplace in ancient Greece. The preacher who is aware of agora will be sensitive to the venue, the setting, the culture, and the timing of the worship experience. I would preach differently at the United States’ presidential retreat at Camp David than I might at a general church gathering.

The law of syzygy

Syzygy, a word from astronomy, refers to the rare alignment of celestial bodies, such as the sun, moon, and earth, during an eclipse. One of our persuasion goals should be to properly combine and balance key persuasive elements. For example, it is possible to have excessive logos and a deficiency in ethos. You may have too much pathos and not enough ethos. Effective persuaders properly align persuasion elements.

The law of reciprocity

This law simply states that when someone gives you something of perceived value, you usually respond with a desire to give something back. I saw this at T. D. Jakes' Potters House Church in Dallas, Texas, USA. When three friends and I arrived at the sanctuary, greeters came and asked, "Is this your first visit?"

"Yes, it is," we responded.

Because we were first-time visitors, we were handed a shopping bag filled with sermon tapes, books, and other helpful resources. Then we were led to a preferred seating area and received special recognition during the service.

What was the impact? When the offering plate was passed, I found myself in a very generous mood. Moreover, my heart seemed even more eager to receive the sermon. Implementing the reciprocity principle can enhance our preaching and worship.

The law of contrast

This law declares that when two items are relatively different from each other, we will see them as more different if they are placed together in time and space.

For example, I wanted to attend a preaching seminar that would have cost me a significant part of my monthly salary. The coordinator, however, made a one-time offer of the video for the same seminar for about one-fourth that amount. If I had been told about the video offer first, the price would have seemed quite high. But when I knew this valuable information was available for a fraction of what it would cost to attend the workshop, it seemed like a bargain. This illustrates the law of contrast. Find ways of incorporating it into your preaching and worship.

The law of friends

When someone asks us to do something, and we believe that person has our best interests in mind, it motivates us to want to fulfill his or her request.

Many years ago I worked in an evangelistic series with a wonderful woman named Mildred. She worked as a Bible instructor helping people make a decision for baptism. Eleven other Bible instructors helped, but I noticed a difference:

Mildred's people were drawn to her outgoing, affectionate personality. She called them "my people."

At the end of a 12-week series, more than 250 people were baptized. Nearly half of those were on Mildred's list. She skillfully used the law of friends.

The law of expectancy

The law of expectancy asserts that we tend to fulfill the expectations of those whom we trust or respect.

I recently discovered this when I made an appeal for accepting Jesus after a sermon. After I left the pulpit and moved down to the lower level, many people came forward to meet me at the altar. The power of this law is one of the reasons for the placebo effect. When people are given a sugar pill from someone they respect, they often feel better, although no medical reason can be given. It's the law of expectancy.

The law of consistency


When a person announces that he or she is taking a position on any point of view, he or she will strongly tend to defend or follow through on that commitment. This law of consistency is used in evangelistic preaching. When people sign a commitment card for baptism and bring a baptismal bundle containing clothing for the service, they nearly always follow through with their decision.

The law of scarcity

If people think that something they want is limited in quantity, they believe that the value of that item is greater than if it were available in abundance. In evangelistic meetings, we give away free tickets because of limited seating. As it happens, suddenly the tickets take on enormous value to those who find they can't attend. This occurrence is best illustrated by the phenomenon of "ticket scalping" for sold-out concerts or sporting events. The price of the ticket is fueled by its scarcity.

The law of power

People are drawn to those they perceive to have greater authority, strength, or expertise. In the Old Testament, a



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Risky Praying?

Unusual things happen to people who pray. In fact, they sometimes end up in strange and awful places like a lion's den or even the cross. Are you willing to take the risk to see what might happen to your life if you really start praying and building a deep relationship with God? Here are some examples of what happens to people who pray:

- Abraham praying for an heir (Genesis 15:2-6).
- Abraham interceding for the doomed (Genesis 18:22-33, 19:29).
- Jacob wrestling with God (Genesis 32:24-32).
- Hannah praying for a child (1 Samuel 1:10-18; 26-28).
- Solomon praying for wisdom (1 Kings 3:6-14).
- Elijah praying for a healing (1 Kings 17:20-24).
- Daniel asking his friends to pray with him for understanding (Daniel 2:12-19).
- Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6:13-22).
- Jonah praying for deliverance (Jonah 2:1-10).
- The church praying for imprisoned Peter (Acts 12:5-7).
- Paul praying for healing power (Acts 28:8).
- Jesus praying all night before big decisions (Luke 6:12).
- Jesus praying until his countenance glowed (Luke 9:28-32).
- Jesus praying for his followers (John 17:1-26).
- Jesus agonizing in prayer (Luke 22:39-46).
- Jesus praying even on the cross (Luke 23:34, 46).

—Learning to Pray, by Carolyn Shealy Self and William L. Self

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priest had special attire that symbolized his authority. I discovered during my navy career that with each promotion and increase in responsibility, people more positively responded to my preaching because of the perceived power associated with my new positions.

The law of the Spirit

This is the most important of the laws. Without it the others flounder. The prophet Zechariah referred to it: "So he said to me, 'this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty'" (Zech. 4:6). The apostle Paul alluded to the law of the Spirit: "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Obviously, Paul possessed ethos, pathos, logos, agora, syzygy, and other persuasive gifts. He did not lean on them, but he trusted the law of the Spirit. He seemed to have discovered that only God's Spirit can convert sinners, promote holiness, and comfort the sorrowful.

The call to humility

To activate the law of the Spirit, we must first cultivate a spirit of personal lowliness. Paul put it this way to the believers in Corinth: "I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3).

One young pastor preached his inaugural sermon at his new church. After ascending the staircase to the pulpit with his head high, he discovered he had brought the wrong notes. He attempted to deliver his prepared message without notes and failed miserably.

Descending the pulpit, his eyes cast downward, the rookie pastor was greeted by an old sister, who offered some sage

advice. "Son," she said with a smile, "if you had gone up like you came down, you would have come down like you went up."

Cultivate a spirit of personal lowliness, for Proverbs reminds us, ". . . humility comes before honor" (18:12). God's Spirit gravitates toward those who have contrite hearts.

Reject the ornate

The persuasive preacher who permits God's Spirit to lead him or her rejects the fancy and sensational. Paul said, "I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God" (1 Cor. 2:1). It seems that Paul learned on Mars' Hill (Acts 17) the limitations of eloquence.

Like Paul, John Wesley rejected the ornate and fanciful. Tradition records that he read his sermons to his maid and changed the words she had difficulty understanding.

Master one subject

In George Lucas's film *Star Wars*, during the Death Star trench run, we hear the character Obi-Wan Kenobi tell Luke Skywalker to "use the force." The persuasive "force" for the Christian minister is the power of Calvary to convict and convince. Preachers must, therefore, mas-

ter that one subject, thereby using the force of the law of the Spirit. Paul put it this way: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

The great British preacher Charles Spurgeon was once asked by a young preacher, "Sir, how can I improve my sermons?"

Spurgeon paused as he slowly responded, "Son, no matter where you start in your sermon, head as quickly as you can across country to Calvary."⁴

Calvary brings magnetism. Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all [people] to myself" (John 12:32). Christ-centered preaching that depends on God's Spirit is the way around the pitfalls of manipulation to positive, persuasive power. ■

1 Bible texts in this article are quoted from the New International Version.

2 See Gary Owen, "Gore vs. Bush: Why It's All Greek to Me," *Kennedy School of Government Bulletin*, Autumn 2000, 14.

3 Leroy Elms, *Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 102.

4 Referred to by Gardner C. Taylor in Edward L. Taylor, ed., *The Words of Gardner Taylor: Lectures, Essays, and Interviews*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001), 5:116.

A new evangelism: forgiveness

Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson



Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Modern Languages at La Sierra University, Riverside, California.

The French-Jewish philosopher Jacques Derrida wondered aloud about the recent phenomenon of corporate, governmental, and religious leaders asking for forgiveness.¹ What interested Derrida is that this phenomenon of forgiveness is finding worldwide acceptance as a diplomatic tool, regardless of the dominant religion of the country. Even more curiously, he said, Judeo-Christian language is used in all this “proliferation of scenes of repentance.”² Could it be, wonders Derrida, that Christianity is finding a global voice through the discourse it offers the world through these rituals of forgiveness?

There is no doubt that concepts related to forgiveness exist in nearly every world religion, but the “language” of forgiveness has most carefully been developed in the Christian faith. Confession and repentance, the two supporting pillars of Christian forgiveness (along with restitution and leaving vengeance to God) are creating, in Derrida’s opinion, a kind of “grand convulsion” with certain theatrical elements, in some cases even on the geopolitical stage.³

He points to the powerful tension within the Judeo-Christian tradition of two types of forgiveness: (1) “pure” forgiveness that bears with it no conditions but is gratuitous and generous; (2) a kind of “impure” forgiveness that demands a process involving justice, repentance, restitution. While admitting that nations are obligated to pursue the “law of responsible transaction” to “normalize” situations of injustice,⁴ he insists that the ideal

that makes these kinds of transactions possible is “pure” forgiveness. In other words, pure forgiveness and transactional forgiveness are inseparable; you cannot have one without the other.⁵

Evangelism tool

Reading Derrida in terms of Christian evangelism, I believe that this tension between the two types of forgiveness can provide a unique and powerful platform to make the good news relevant and palatable to a world that is increasingly conflictive. Introducing the gospel through an understanding of forgiveness, and how it works in daily life, is the most logical point of departure to situate newcomers in the mindset of the “kingdom of heaven.” Indeed it is the initial act of gratuitous forgiveness on God’s part that makes the gospel possible. Without this compelling act of divine love, there would be no contact between heaven and earth, between the Creator and His creatures. It cannot be emphasized too much: The gospel begins and ends with God’s “pure” forgiveness.

But this fact cannot be dissociated from the other facet of divine forgiveness, the one that requires justice. If God so generously gave this forgiveness, which opened so many avenues of hope and restoration between errant humanity and its Creator, certainly God can expect repentance from the sinner in return. It is fair and just that it be so. And it is healing, for this act of humility redounds in infinite blessings for the repentant one: love, joy, peace, and all the fruits of God’s presence in the human life through the workings of the Holy Spirit.

“I forgive you, but”

Jesus’ preaching about the kingdom of heaven carries with it many implications that are present in the tensions between Derrida’s pure and “impure” forgiveness. Key parables such as those of the prodigal son or the two debtors provide the basic notions of forgiveness to which people can immediately relate. It is in this immediate relevancy of forgiveness that barriers of suspicion or indifference are broken down and the listener is invited to engage in a healthy and useful self-analysis. The attention is focused on personal responsibility to one’s neighbor as a means of fixing a conviction in the mind regarding individual responsibility toward God. This approach will avoid misunderstandings about “truth,” that it’s merely as a set of ecclesiastical behaviors or fearful expectations outside the boundaries of real life. Instead, it will invite the new believer to think first about how “truth” relates to their real living and real relationships with others.

Over the past more than 20 years, I have had the opportunity—through my seminar, “I Forgive You, But . . .”—to see how quickly and effectively the gospel of forgiveness softens hearts and transforms lives. The title immediately suggests a positive: we *do* forgive. We are willing to look at certain hurts and turn the other cheek. But it also suggests the imperfect way we often forgive: a forgiveness with so many impossible conditions that it eventually negates any benefits we might have hoped to gain from forgiving. The reaction people have to this title is a knowing smile or even laughter. It touches on a reality we all—whether baptized members of the church or seekers—know for ourselves.

This recognition of our human frailties and foibles provides a safe entrance into a discussion about what it means to *really* forgive. And this discussion, in turn, opens the way for a deeper understanding of Scriptural invitations to bear with one another and release each other from our anger. It is one thing to recognize God’s forgiveness of our sins—that in itself is enormously liberating. Often people do

not feel the need for God’s forgiveness; they feel smug in their social or religious position. If so, then giving them the opportunity (through the study of forgiveness) to look honestly at themselves can provide a crucial step. And that’s because this new self-assessment has a power (unlike any other I have seen) to break down walls of pride and selfishness. When the focus is on the practical implications of religion on their own lives, there is a willingness to own behaviors that are incompatible with the standards of goodness present in the Word of God.

A new evangelistic thrust

I would like to suggest that seminars on forgiveness and peacemaking be developed and used as entering wedges for the church’s outreach and inreach across cultural differences and social classes. Reaching out to the community with seminars and workshops that help people address real problems in their lives is a way of placing God’s forgiveness at center stage in our preaching of the gospel. All too often the sequential layout of Bible study in most evangelistic

outreach moves from God’s love to God’s judgment. In the end, fear of judgment may be the driving force in the final decision to join the Christian faith.

If this is less true in contemporary evangelism in some countries, it’s certainly true of evangelistic outreach in many parts of the world. God’s love is often left behind like a distant memory, and people gain the impression that they must busy themselves placating a soon-coming, vengeful God. This “fear factor” works in the short-term and often gives breathtaking numerical results. But if the new believers have no tools to deal with conflict in their own relationships with their own family and their new church family, they will be tempted to wander away. If God’s forgiveness and its implications for human forgiveness were the main course, rather than a mere appetizer at the beginning of the evangelistic meal we serve up, church members would find a unique moral strength in the practice of their religion, not only once a week in church but at home and at work and in all their contacts with others.

Seekers who accept the demands of Christ on their lives and join a church

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are often ill-equipped to deal with the hurtful realities they'll sooner or later face in other Christian churches. Filled with innocent and unrealistically high expectations, new members are often turned away by judgmental or conflictive people. Without the tools to deal with conflict, neither new nor old members are in a position to resolve their differences. The resulting discouragement can easily lead a newcomer to abandon, if not their God, most certainly their church.

That's why giving—right from the start—those who first join a church the tools of conflict resolution and forgiveness can go far in addressing a church's membership retention problem. Training the membership in conflict resolution and forgiveness principles can also provide the local church with a wealth of human resources to teach/preach the gospel. And placing the emphasis on the practice of forgiveness keeps the spotlight on Jesus' grace-filled gospel message of peace in a practical and useful way for all believers—newcomers and old-timers.

Conclusion

Evangelism must fill the call to human forgiveness with the pure beauty of God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness must perfume every doctrine, and it must help the seeker not only accept that forgiveness but understand how to use the tools of forgiveness in their everyday life. Then we'll be speaking a recognizable and useful language that will continue to have practical and personal meaning long after baptism, a language so clear that even people like Jacques Derrida cannot help but take notice. ■

Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson regularly presents her seminar "I Forgive You, But . . ." nationally and internationally. If you wish to contact the author about a seminar in your area, please call her at 951-785-2001.

1 Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes. London: Routledge, 2001.
2 Ibid., p. 28.
3 Ibid., p. 30.
4 Ibid., p. 57.
5 Ibid., p. 51.

The following is an outline that lays out how such forgiveness seminars might be organized as a pre-evangelism presentation:

Times:

To be presented on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday evening (two of the three weekend days)

Number of sessions:

Three Sessions:

- "I Forgive You, But . . ."
- "What Forgiveness ISN'T"
- "Forgiveness and Your Health"

Materials: Workbook accompanies each seminar. Includes workbook and certificate of completion.

I. I FORGIVE YOU, BUT . . ."

A Bible study on forgiveness.

- A. The Lord's Prayer: the Prayer of Forgiveness
- B. Why should I forgive?
- C. Is it ever wrong to forgive?

II. WHAT FORGIVENESS ISN'T

Working definitions of forgiveness and related concepts

- A. What forgiveness is
- B. What forgiveness isn't
- C. Forgiveness vs. reconciliation
- D. "Pure" forgiveness

III. FORGIVENESS AND YOUR HEALTH

Relationship of forgiveness to physical and mental health

- A. The healing power of forgiveness
- B. Studies on anger and diseases
- C. How to forgive: steps to health

Ten things listeners want in a sermon

Robert R. Hostetler



Robert R. Hostetler is pastor of leadership and teaching at Cobblestone Community Church in Oxford, Ohio.

In a bold and controversial decision, Mel Gibson filmed *The Passion of the Christ* in Latin, the language of Pilate and the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus, and in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and His disciples. He intended for the film to be shown without subtitles, thereby combining modern media (film) with languages almost no one speaks (or understands) anymore. By the time of the film's release, however, Gibson changed his mind, adding the subtitles.

That decision is oddly reflective of one of the dilemmas preachers face today. Often, churches tell the old, old story in languages (music, terminology, symbols, etc.) that only the initiated understand, leaving any newcomers or non-Christians in the dark. In contrast, "seeker-friendly" churches target a different crowd: People who are willing to hear the story but don't necessarily speak the language of the traditional church. Some churches try to build a bridge between the two, providing subtitles, so to speak, to interpret what's going on for the uninitiated. Interestingly enough, the sermon itself can be that bridge because, in the end, both Christians and non-Christians seek basically the same things from the sermon.

What are those things? In my view there are ten basic elements that both seekers and Christians want from a sermon. Here is the countdown:

10. Grab my attention as soon as you start speaking. The great preachers of the past

knew how to connect with an audience very quickly, but many modern preachers, even the good ones, tend to start with riveting phrases such as, "Turn in your Bibles to Obadiah." Such tactics won't do. You must grab your listener's attention any way you can—with a dramatic statement, question, story, film clip, etc.—and give them no choice but to listen from there.

9. Teach me something I didn't already know. Ask yourself, "If I were listening to this sermon, what part or points would I feel compelled to write down so I won't forget it?" If the answer is "nothing," start over. Every listener wants to discover new information, new insights, and new perspectives.

8. Tell me what God says, not what you say. Even seekers are far more interested in what God says on a subject than in what you say. Good sermons—whether targeted primarily to seekers or Christians—rely heavily on the Bible as God's Word and let it do the talking.

7. Don't try to make me feel foolish because I don't know my Bible as well as you do. Often seekers and long-time church members don't use their Bibles in church. Many are embarrassed at their inability to find Haggai or Ruth in a few seconds. That's why in my church, when it comes time to turn to the biblical text for the morning, we project on the screen the Bible table of contents with that book highlighted, and say something such as, "Ruth is the eighth book of the Bible, and it begins on page 184 in the Bibles we provide for your use."

6. Make me like you; help me get to know you a little bit. Every speaker is encouraged to seize opportunities to give listeners an introduction and insight into their own life and personality. It's so much better if what we reveal is a little vulnerable, self-effacing, and/or winsome.

5. Make me smile. Not everyone can tell a humorous story, but that is not the only way—and far from the best way—to inject humor into a sermon. Candid observations about our own follies are among the most effective ways to use humor.

4. Show me that you understand what I'm going through. One of the most crucial—and earliest—tasks of any preacher is to identify with listeners. In one message on "How to Survive

Suffering,” I began my sermon with, “Sometimes a speaker bites off more than he can chew,” and went on to detail why I felt ill-qualified to speak in a room filled with people who had suffered far more than I had: a family losing their business, a couple in which each one was dealing with debilitating illnesses, a mother who’d lost her son, and so on. A sincere admission of our own struggles, or a brief acknowledgment of the real-life issues others are facing, is key to identifying with both seeker and Christian.

3. Touch my emotions. Seekers and Christians alike want to be inspired. They want their heartstrings to be plucked. And, while seekers in particular are alert to manipulation, they’re nonetheless longing for a preacher who will help them not only to think but also to

feel. Any sermon that fails to engage both mind *and* heart is likely to disappoint.

2. Meet a felt need. The first question a writer or speaker must answer is, “So what?” If as a reader or listener I am not promised something that I want when you begin, I will quickly start thinking about the upcoming sport event, or where I should take the family after the service. Even worse, if I was promised something that you never delivered, I’ll be far less likely to return next week.

And, finally, the number one thing both seekers and Christ-followers want in a sermon:

1. Tell me clearly how I can apply this to my life today, this week. When I conclude a message, I assume that all my listeners are interested in

following through on what God has said to them. So in addition to giving them opportunity for private prayer and counsel, I try to suggest practical ways they can follow up on what they’ve learned. I’ve encouraged listeners to write their own mission statement, give away one possession in the coming week, or mail a postcard inviting someone to church the following week.

When it comes right down to it, it’s not so different preaching to seekers or to Christians. With Christians, of course, you can assume some knowledge and take some liberties. And with seekers, you might face fewer taboos. But both groups seek essentially the same things from a teacher of God’s Word—none of which are anything new but all of which we need to apply to every message we speak from now until Jesus returns. ■

20 Questions for Effective Preaching

By Bob Hostetler

At Cobblestone Community Church we train our speakers to evaluate a sermon, once they’ve prepared an initial draft, by asking 20 questions:

- Do I grab the listener’s attention as soon as I start speaking?
- Does the talk start where people are (with their culture, needs, problems, issues, questions)?
- Does it come on too strong, too fast?
- Am I teaching something they didn’t already know?
- Am I communicating what God says, and not my opinions?
- Have I included an introduction of myself and words of welcome to the listener?
- Have I included a restatement somewhere in the talk of either Cobblestone’s mission (“loving people into life-changing encounters with God”) or distinctive traits (community-oriented, student-friendly, seeker-aware, outward-focused)?
- Have I offered an elementary (but not condescending) explanation of the text?
- Have I revealed anything of myself in the talk without revealing anything inappropriate?
- Do I interact with my listeners in the talk (e.g., mentioning people’s names, asking for responses, etc.)?
- Have I included humor?
- Am I being realistic instead of shallow? Will my listeners believe I understand what they’re really going through?
- Have I touched my listener’s emotions?
- Is my talk focused?
- Have I played a part in meeting a felt need?
- Is the “solution” I propose realistic? Life-related? Biblical?
- Does the structure of my talk logically lead to the conclusion/application?
- Have I left out anything important, crucial?
- Have I given clear application for both a seeker and a Christian that answers the question, “OK, what am I supposed to do with this information now/today/this week?”
- Have I made reference to how my listener can find help and/or prayer (e.g. prayer counselors)?

Focused on the Kingdom . . . bonded by the Spirit

Nikolaus Satelmajer

Dr. Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church responded to questions posed by Nikolaus Satelmajer, editor of Ministry magazine. Born in Norway, Paulsen ministered in pastoral, academic and leadership settings in various parts of the world before being elected president of the world church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists) in 1999 and reelected in 2005. As the 16th president of this church with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, Paulsen explains his perspectives that we believe will interest and be of value to clergy of all denominations.



The editor of Ministry magazine interviews Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

NS: How did you decide to go into ministry?

JP: I was about fourteen or fifteen when, for reasons difficult to explain, the presence of Christ in my life and a sense of urgency in respect to how I would spend my life came to me strongly. At that time I made my decision to become a minister.

NS: What was the response of your family?

JP: My parents were very supportive. It was a good Adventist home to grow up in, but it was a poor home. My dad, a cobbler, worked hard to help me get to college. The only one of four children to go, by the way.

NS: How do you keep this call to ministry fresh in your life?

JP: That is related as much as anything to what the church asks me to do. The church has given me assignments that have kept my sense of calling very alive.

NS: So the call that we receive from God has to be confirmed by the church in order for it to be realistic?

JP: Oh yes, definitely. For me it's very much that—the needs of the church, the trust of the church, the affirmation of the church. Yes, all of that.

NS: Who are some people—teachers, or historical figures in Christianity—who have influenced you positively?

JP: I think of my Bible teacher in junior college—a Danish theologian who later came to America and became president of Loma Linda University—Dr. V. Norskov Olsen. He did much in those early years to confirm my calling. Then at the seminary, teachers like Ted Heppenstall influenced me a lot. He helped me to understand the wonderful balance between the assurance of salvation and the obligation to live in harmony with the will of God—the dual balance, whether you call it grace and law, or whatever label you use. It's important to have the assurance of things being right with Christ, accompanied with the affirmation, therefore, that I shall live a life of discipleship. Then there was Jürgen Moltmann, at Tübingen, who taught me a lot about the concept of hope. Even though his theology differed in some way from mine, his emphasis meshed very nicely with my understanding of the second coming of Christ.

NS: I noticed in your sermons at the church headquarters and other places that you do put a lot of emphasis on the concept of hope. Evidently that is foundational to your understanding of God's message.

JP: Yes—I think that God is in the business of creating a better future for us. All that is His plan. Thus hope is a big element.

NS: Ministers live busy lives, sometimes at the expense of their own spirituality. What helps you to grow spiritually?

JP: Since my early years of ministry I have been a very early riser and probably get by with less sleep than most people. I get up regularly at four-thirty

in the morning. That gives me some two and a half to three hours at the house when I can think and do some spiritual reflection. I have time to read, and that's when I do some sermon preparation. My wife has also become a fairly early riser, and we have some good time together in the morning. It's a very creative block of time for me, which prepares me for the day ahead.

NS: What would you share with ministers who feel overwhelmed with their ministry and discouraged with their responsibility?

JP: I think it is important that we all recognize our humanity. Don't try to be what you're not. It is important that we recognize and accept our limitations. It's also important to realize that we will have lofty standards that we might not reach. It's good to have standards, noble standards—even if you miss them from time to time. God asks no more than that we do our best.

NS: Let's shift emphasis. What are some of the broad issues and challenges facing the Adventist Church?

JP: First, as you know, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a rapidly growing community. With children and adults, we are now well past the 20 million mark. One of the challenges of a rapidly growing church is, How do you hold such a global community together? So for me, as a church leader, one of the high priorities is the unity of the church.

Now, we are bonded in the Spirit, as the Scripture teaches us. The Spirit is the key element to hold us together, but even when you make that statement you have to work it. You have to nurture the bonds that bind us. And that means that you have to be strong about that which we cannot give up. Strong about that which is a must to our identity. And you have to be generous about that which requires latitude. In a global community with diverse cultures, there will be certain differences because we have to obey God where we are. In Africa it's going to be different from Asia, different from Europe and from America. So I think they are the elements of exactness—the definitions of what make us the Seventh-day Adventist Church—and there are elements of cultural diversity within which worship expresses itself.

We must recognize both aspects. But unity is one of my high priorities.

The second priority has to be with the mission of the church. We are here for a mission; that's how we define ourselves constantly when we sit in counsel. The Lord has asked us to be His witnesses, and thus I am compelled to share the witness about Christ to all. We have to be innovative, creative, finding ways through radio, through television, through satellite, through the Internet to reach people that may not be reachable in other ways. We must at least reach them in the sense that you can implant a seed; the Holy Spirit will then have to do with it as He pleases.

The element of unity in a rapidly growing church and the element of expanding mission represent to me two of our big challenges.

If I should mention a third one, it would be giving to the youth—the age group of 18 to 32, particularly students and young professionals—a sense of ownership in the church. To make sure that we have not only reluctantly made space for them, but that we have actively invited them to come in as partners in the life, mission, and ministry of the church.





going to be part of the life of that community if senior leaders do not encourage them and in fact embrace them.

NS: We just finished a world session of the church—one that we have every five years. What are some of the visions that you have for the next five years? There has been emphasis on the theme “Tell the World.” What are some of the things that come into your mind?

JP: I feel that the church exists primarily for mission. When everything is said and done, if the church is not an instrument of mission, then the church has failed to be what God wants the church to be. We

tell the world by word, by actions, and by relationships. That’s how we communicate the message from Christ to those who do not yet know Him. That has to be the first and foremost task of the church.

NS: So “Tell the World” isn’t a program? It’s a concept or an outlook?

JP: It’s a vision in which we are telling the public that we’re here to share something important with you. We are here to help you become acquainted with Jesus Christ.

NS: What are some fundamental things about the Adventist Church that have made it a worldwide movement? What does this tell us about our future?

JP: From our very beginning we determined that we would bring together—with the preaching of the word—education and the ministry of healing. That was part of a very, very deliberate vision articulated comprehensively through the writings of Ellen White and held to

strongly by our church. So you find that we operate the largest Protestant education system in the world, with over 6,000 institutions touching the lives of one and a half million youth and children every day. Secondly, we have always felt and believed that the health of the body and of the mind are important. As temples of God we are under obligation to God, as an act of worship, to keep ourselves healthy. And, therefore, we run a number of health institutions, not only as a sort of body repair shops, but as centers for healing ministries, where we hold workshops and seminars. We’ve done this everywhere around the world. These things have been hallmarks of our mission activities. We have a deep emphasis on the Bible, while at the same time we have a healing ministry as well.

NS: So then education and the health work is not something that we do in addition to the gospel? It is an integral part of ministry?

JP: Absolutely!

NS: You have emphasized the importance of the Bible. What are some of the ways you enjoy reading it? What happens shortly after you get up at 4:30 a.m.?

JP: You know, I’ve gone through stages. When I returned from Africa to England and began teaching at our Theological Seminary at Newbold College for our ministers in Europe, I began using for the next decade the New English Bible. To me it had such a beautiful rendition of the poetic sections of the Bible. Not just the Psalms. Isaiah reads beautifully in the New English Bible. I then went to the NIV. Early on, of course, I used KJV. I came to the NIV and again I found newness in it. And it’s probably the one I use primarily now when I preach.

NS: To another topic. How has the structure of the Adventist church served us? We have a system that’s gone through some changes over the years, but there is a lot of similarity to that which we had when we were first organized and now. How has it served us and where do you see us going into the future?

NS: Do you have any specific suggestions for local congregations on how they could help keep these youth involved?

JP: To every local congregation I would say this: Be sensitive to the presence of the youth. Do not relegate youth to be observers. Bring them into the life of the church. And I must say, trust them. Allow the Holy Spirit to find expression through their creative ideas.

NS: Do you find the youth around the world enthusiastic for Jesus Christ and the gospel?

JP: I find that there are many who are constantly searching for ways to make faith relevant to the challenges that young people struggle with. They are searching for answers to questions that are not easy to deal with.

You know that I have had some television conversations with youth and young professionals. They are saying, “Look, it’s a choice I make about the church. I want to be part of the life of this community.” And there is no way that they are

JP: The structure we set up as a church is over a hundred years old. We set it up when we had a global membership of some seventy-five thousand. We are at this very time asking ourselves, Is this the best way we can stay structured and organized? Given the shift in the population within the church, given the fact that the talents and resources of the church are also widely distributed, we need to look at things again. We have agreed that we *will* bring together a representative body from around the world to look at the structures—to look at the ministries which flow out from these structures and ask ourselves, Is this still the most effective way we can do it? It may well prove to be. But we cannot assume that it is without looking critically and in an explorative manner. So we'll see where it takes us.

NS: We have a financial structure that has probably in many ways helped our worldwide expansion.

JP: Yes.

NS: Do you see it continuing to serve the world church as well as it has in the past?

JP: I hope so, I hope so. We need to be sure that our church globally sees itself as one body and any weakness found in one part of the body is supported by the strength that is found in another part of the body. I think it was God's plan for us to share. And as a global community we are financially intermarried; we do share our resources. Yes, I see that as continuing. I think when that ceases, if it were to cease, we would quickly become a regional church.

NS: If you had an opportunity to speak to all the Adventist ministers, what would you like to say to your colleagues in ministry?

JP: I would say . . . well, maybe many things. But one thought that comes to me is this: Because we're a global community, we hear stories coming from some parts of the world, particularly from the soil of southern Christianity.

Stories of rapid growth, extraordinary exploits for Christ, and with fruits that go so far beyond what people in other parts of the world would think possible. We praise the Lord for what is happening there. But it can be disheartening for someone who lives in America or in Europe or in Australia and New Zealand, or in a certain part of Asia, Japan, or Hong Kong. Some of the big cities and countries, where secular values have so settled into the minds of people, it's very difficult for these people to see what God could possibly offer through the instrument of the Christian faith in Jesus Christ and what God could possibly do to improve their lives.

So it's difficult, it's tough, for ministers who minister in these areas to see the rapid expansion from elsewhere. And I would just say to them: "God does not expect anything but obedience where you are. Don't define your success in ministry by looking elsewhere. Just share Christ as effectively as you know how where you are. That's all He's asking. And He will say to you, 'Well done, ye good and faithful servant.'" Faithfulness has to do with faithfulness in the ministry where we are.

NS: Thank you for sharing that. By the time we publish this interview, it will be a new year. We have no idea what the new year is bringing to us. What does the church need to do today to be ready for whatever is before us?

JP: The only preparation we can make for the future is spiritual and in terms of the basic fundamental decisions we make regarding others. These are the only decisions we can make for the future. As we look at what's happened this past year and in the most recent years, it's clear that we live in a very unstable time. It will be a miracle if one year were to pass and there would not be a major disaster somewhere, either natural or man-made. I think this should tell us that we need to be focused on the kingdom whose Builder and Architect is Someone other than ourselves. We need to keep focused on that.

NS: Thank you very much. ■

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Doing theology in mission— part 2

Jon L. Dybdahl



Jon L. Dybdahl, Ph.D.,
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Washington.

Once a missiological consciousness is understood and, hopefully, practiced, what are the next steps we can take to effectively proclaim the gospel? I suggest that we must recognize three core changes that have taken place in our world and begin as much as possible to adjust our mission practices to them. These are a new context, a new mode, and a new identity.

The new context

Basic thesis: The earlier context of Adventist theology was mission to other Christians. The new context is mission to a pluralistic world often dominated by non-Christian religions.

I vividly remember during my earlier years as a missionary talking to some older Adventist missionaries to India. I asked them what their evangelistic approach to Hindus was. They replied, "We don't go to Hindus. We search out Christians and give them further light." Even though India is officially 82 percent Hindu and perhaps 14 percent Muslim, they concentrated on the small Christian minority.¹ This was undoubtedly easier for these missionaries because their theological training all focused on reaching other Christians.

Translation of Bible studies, evangelistic sermons, and books does *not* do the trick. Framework, cultural issues, priorities, examples, and subjects chosen all come from the Christian West. To reach other religions means a rethinking of

the whole endeavor. We are beginning to take these steps, although some mass-produced Bible studies and DVDs are not sensitive to this issue. I point out three attempts that have been made to be sensitive to this issue.

Scott Griswold, now director of the Buddhist study center, as a missionary in Cambodia formulated a set of Bible studies for the Cambodian Buddhist people. While being totally biblical, the subjects chosen, the arrangement of topics, and the illustrations and stories used were all deliberately thought through with Cambodian communication in mind. The studies were extremely popular among our pastors, and many non-Adventist Christians purchased the lessons because they saw their appeal. I have included a list of the topics covered in this lesson study series in Appendix 1.

In 1995, a scholar—under the pseudonym Abdel Nur—published *Bahakat Allah*, a six-booklet study guide for Muslims. Since Abdel is always working to improve, there may have been some revisions to this guide, but I have included in Appendix 2 a list of topics covered in the 1995 edition.

These guides not only use Muslim terminology and deal with topics of concern to Muslims but are arranged deliberately to lead Muslims step by step into fuller knowledge of Jesus and the deeper practice of the spiritual life. They are not only topically sequential but experientially progressive as well.

During our pioneering missionary days in North Thailand, we began working among the mountain-dwelling animistic Hmong people. As family by family people came to believe, we decided we needed a song book. Many Hmong were illiterate, but we adopted the Romanized Hmong formulated by earlier missionaries and began to teach Hmong to read so they could use the Bible and song book. We also decided they should have a brief statement of our beliefs in the form of a simple catechism or question-and-answer format. Pastor Leng and I worked on this belief statement, and we printed it in the back of the song book—the first Adventist Hmong book. I have often told people that this statement is the most important theological document I have ever had a part in writing. I provide you a translation in Appendix 3. Note that core Adventist beliefs are covered, but that the statement is simple, brief, and completely set in the Hmong world of concern for evil spirits and the practice of the spiritual life.

I make no claim of infallibility for any of these attempts, but plead that similar efforts be made in all parts of the world so the gospel can be heard clearly.

The new mode

Basic thesis: Traditionally Adventist theology has seen truth as doctrinal and used the modes of logic, rational argument, and philosophy to convince people to accept correct belief. The “new” mode emphasizes experience. Truth is a living experience of God’s presence, which involves an active devotional life, seeing God at work in daily affairs, improving family and community life, and reforming ethics.

Scholars of societal change in North America have noticed for years the trends of postmodernism to emphasize experience in matters of spirituality. Books that emphasize mission to contemporary life have often given this trend an important place in their works.² It is clear that successful missionaries to contemporary North American culture must be open to show Christianity as an experience, not simply as a philosophical statement.

Most North American churches have not really grasped that point. Church membership is based on intellectually believing certain things. This is part of a heritage that emphasizes creeds, confessions, and statements of belief. Adventists have probably done better than some in this area since Sabbath observance and ethical standards are part of the package, but still, for many, Adventism is understood as basically acceptance of a list of intellectual doctrinal statements.

Doctrinal truth is important, but biblical faith is always a lived-out/experienced faith. They must go together, and many young Adventists do not see Adventism as an experience of God.

When this fact dawned on me, I, as a missiologist, began to look at other religions. Even a simple look at the most basic statements of these major faiths showed how experiential they are, especially as compared to Christianity.

Islam has five pillars.³

1. Declaration of faith—“There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet.”
2. Prayer—All Muslims are called to pray five times a day in the same way.
3. Almsgiving—A set alms tax is required yearly with percentages varying from 2 to 10 percent on the basis of the

material paid on. Other almsgiving is also encouraged.

4. Fasting—Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset during the month of Ramadan.
5. Pilgrimage—This pilgrimage to Mecca takes place yearly and all Muslims are called to do it at least once in their lifetime.

Notice the nature of these five pillars. Only one, the first, is theological or creedal. The other four deal with spiritual practice and ethics. To be a Muslim is to live a Muslim religious experience.

Take the example of Buddhism. Buddhism’s core teaching is the four noble truths.⁴ These truths are (1) suffering is a universal fact; (2) the cause of suffering is desire; (3) there is a state where we can be free of desire and thus escape suffering; and (4) we arrive at that state by the eight-fold path.

The eight-fold path deals with *moral-ity*, including truth telling, theft, murder, immorality, etc. Paths four through six deal with *concentration*. This presents ways to get rid of evil thoughts and be aware of our world. Meditation and higher states of consciousness are called for. The last two paths call for *wisdom*.

Notice again the heavy emphasis on experience. The four noble truths address directly the universal human experience of pain and suffering. The eight-fold path talks about ethics, the practice of meditation, and the spiritual life. Today many Buddhist sects are differentiated by the forms of meditation they practice. Most Christian denominations are differentiated by doctrinal beliefs, *not* spiritual practice.

Lastly, consider the charismatic movement. Birthed in the early months of the twentieth century in the United States, the movement has exploded worldwide. What began as a separate group of denominations later spread to other mainline denominations and has now seen some of its convictions and part of its practice become well-nigh universal in Christianity. The numbers of people involved and the percentage growth of the movement are staggering. The actual membership of charismatic churches is over 10 percent of the world’s population and about one-third of all Christians, but its influence spreads much further.⁵

The movement claims to be an orthodox form of Christian faith. Belief in the Holy Spirit has been espoused by all Christian creeds. What is new about the charismatic movement is the conviction that God through the Holy Spirit is really active in everyday life and can be experienced. The primary ways emphasized have been in fervent worship, speaking in tongues, healing of physical and emotional problems, expulsion of demons, and various physical manifestations. While one may question the validity of some of the experiences, we cannot quarrel with the basic premise. Instead of simply condemning this movement and presenting our beliefs in a traditional way, who will write/preach the first series that recasts Adventism as a powerful experience of God’s presence and spell out how to be a part of that life? The experiential aspect of the charismatic movement is, in my mind, its major driving force.

Most realize that experience needs to be balanced with thought and explanation. Experience without such a balance is eventually lost. I am not suggesting we abandon theological explanation or doctrinal truth but return to a biblical balance that makes truth lived/experienced truth. This is especially true in the present-day missionary context.

The new identity

Basic thesis: Traditional Adventist identity has seen itself as a small remnant among Christian churches. We are the ultimate Protestants with an ecclesiastical identity. The new identity awakens us to the fact that we are not necessarily small (we are the largest Protestant church in at least 14 countries,⁶ about the size of Judaism, and over half the size of Sikhism⁷), and it may be time to think seriously about how we label ourselves.

I grew up feeling small and different as an Adventist. Different may still be true, but in many parts of the world and overall, the small is questionable. Adventism in many areas of the world is a major religious player.

What we must remember is that remnants begin small but need not and in most cases do not remain small. The small remnant of Jews who returned to

Jerusalem from Babylon did not remain small. By the time of Jesus, Palestinian Judaism was the major force in the religion. Christians saw themselves as the true remnant of Judaism. That remnant has in size far outstripped the original piece of cloth in size.

What is of most concern for me here is the mindset of smallness. Too many see smallness as a framework for our mission. Because we are small and different, we cannot expect to get a hearing from large numbers of people. This is all wrong. If “the remnant” has truth, it has broad appeal and can hold its own in the world of religious ideas. Smallness thinking has often created a sense of inferiority and a resignation to rejection of the message, both of which are counterproductive to mission.

Besides the issue of “smallness,” the identity question raises also the issue of how we view the nature of our religious community. I suggest here three possible kinds of identities. Please remember that these are tentative suggestions only and that there could also be some combination of these ideas that could make sense as well.

Identity no. 1: Adventism as a pan-religious movement drawing a remnant from all religions. Adventists have commonly seen themselves as a remnant of other Christians. Recently, a subtle shift has taken place in the minds of some. They have begun to see the remnant as any from *all* backgrounds who respond to the remnant message.⁸ The Adventist Church then proclaims the remnant message to those in all religions who have been prepared by God to hear it. This remnant may not necessarily join the visible institutional form of the Adventist Church.

Abdel Nur has attempted to pragmatically apply this concept and found a movement based on it.⁹ He has helped to found and nurture a movement that draws a remnant believing in the Sabbath and second coming from mainstream Islam while allowing believers to continue to identify with their Islamic culture and heritage. One of the things the church continues to do is to wrestle with how to relate to this new and creative remnant movement of the spirit. This movement is one model for how this new identity might work.

Identity no. 2: Adventism as a movement that is more than a denomination. Traditionally we have seen Adventism as a denomination that one must formally belong to in order to be classified as a Seventh-day Adventist. This identity would broaden us to see some who have not formally joined our organization as part of the “Adventist movement.” Adventists have long believed, based on Ellen White’s teaching, that non-Adventists will be saved. This merely formally acknowledges this.

A model would be the charismatic movement. Initially Pentecostals formed denominations and expected those who had their experience to join these denominations. But this has begun to change since the mid ’50s, and the phenomenon has quickly spread to other churches. Many espoused most or all of the unique Pentecostal teaching and experience but remained in their original denomination.

A third phase developed when in the 1970s and ’80s¹⁰ elements of the Pentecostal experience were adopted gradually by many church groups. All these three groups or levels together form the present charismatic movement.

Could such a thing happen in Adventism? I’m not sure, but several things could be pointed out. Adventism began as a movement among churches, and many early leaders resisted formation of a denomination. In a sense, we would be going back to our roots.

We should also point out that some of the same things that have happened in the charismatic movement have happened to us. The difference is that we and others have not often pointed it out or acknowledged it. When Adventism was born, most Christians were postmillennialists who believed that the second coming of Jesus took place after 1000 years of peace on earth. Now, although they may not agree with us on all points, most Christians are premillennialists who believe as we do that Jesus’ second coming takes place before the millennium. Some churches now worship on Sabbath. There has been movement among many Christian groups to Adventist-like beliefs. What do we think of such things and how should they shape our identity? Could it be possible to promote

an Adventist movement identity that operates on three levels like the charismatic one?

Identity no. 3: Adventism as a world religion. Adventism has clearly presented itself as a Protestant denomination and has fought to be viewed as a legitimate orthodox nonheretical Christian body. Is this the way it should be now and always?

My suggestion here is not having to do with changing our beliefs but with viewing our identity. Christianity in many parts of the world—especially Islamic ones—is viewed as an extremely decadent religion. The identity of Christianity with the western secular world is in many parts of the world a serious barrier to proclaiming the message of Jesus. It is a label that has been corrupted and misused. To call oneself Christian in these areas creates problems and barriers.

On the other hand, many of the religions of the world today grew out of other religions. The prime example is Christianity, whose earliest followers saw themselves as a reforming sect of Judaism. They were the true Jews and only much later did a separate identity develop.

Buddhism is often called the “middle way” because it sees itself as the moderate path between the extreme asceticism of Jainism and the self-indulgence of Hinduism. In many ways its core beliefs and philosophies parallel those of Jainism and Hinduism, yet it has positioned itself as a reformer of these two other world faiths.

I would suggest that Adventism has some characteristics that make it fit more as a world religion than as a Christian denomination. Major world religions all have dietary restrictions or ideals. Few Christians do. Conservative world religion communities have careful behavioral standards relating to dress, entertainment, etc. Adventists can identify with this. The complete system of Adventism, which includes educational and health institutions as well as churches, is shared and appreciated by world religions.

In short, I believe we could position ourselves as a world religion without compromising our beliefs and perhaps even appear more credible in many parts of the world.

Conclusion

I am by conviction and passion a mis-
siologist. That means that my deepest
concern is discovering how best we can
fulfill Christ's final commission to us, His
followers. Theology must arise out of that
and serve that goal. That means my aim
here has been to ask how the mission
we have adopted can best be pursued
and how taking it seriously may affect
business as usual in the church. My hope
and prayer is not that you will accept all

my suggestions but rather that you will
be inspired anew to use all your creativ-
ity and energy in fulfilling the task Jesus
called us to do. ■

- 1 Patrick Johnston, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 274.
- 2 See, for example, Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 185–235, and Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 56–61, 69–71.
- 3 See, for example, David A. Brown, *A Guide to Religions* (London: SPCK, 1975), 213–16.

- 4 Ibid., 126–29.
- 5 David B. Barnett and Todd M. Johnson, “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2004” in *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 28 (2004) 1:25.
- 6 Jon L. Dybdahl, “Adventist Mission Today” in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century*, ed. Jon L. Dybdahl (Review and Herald, 1999), 18.
- 7 Barret and Johnson, 25.
- 8 George Knight, “Remnant Theology and World Mission” in *Adventist Mission*, ed. Dybdahl, 94.
- 9 Jerald Whitehouse, “Reaching the Muslim World” in *Adventist Mission*, ed. Dybdahl, 189–197.
- 10 Peter Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry in Any Church* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1988), 37–64. Wagner seems to have originated this term.

Appendix 1:

Cambodian Bible Lessons

1. Will there ever be justice?
2. The correct use of finances
3. Where did this world come from?
4. The family
5. Sin
6. Who knows the future?
7. The difference between religions
8. The birth of the Savior
9. Overcoming temptation
10. Jesus, a good teacher
11. Power over evil spirits
12. God protects us
13. The power to raise the dead
14. Jesus arrested and tried unjustly
15. The death of Jesus
16. The resurrection of Jesus
17. The steps in conversion
18. God calls us to follow him

Appendix 2:

Barakat Allah Study Guides

Book 1: Teacher's guide: introduction and overview

Book 2: Allah's blessing through the scriptures and his messengers

Book 2 leads me to a new trust in all the Holy Books, and of my need to know Allah better and for him to give me a new heart. Then I can worship him with a clean heart.

1. Five articles of faith—signs of righteousness
2. Allah's blessing through the Holy Books
3. Overview of Torah, Zaboor, Injil
4. How to study the Holy Books
5. Allah in the beginning—the story of creation, sin, and the fall
6. Introduction to the prophets
7. Prayer and personal piety

Book 3: Allah's blessing for power and personal deliverance

Book 3 leads me to trust in Allah for freedom from fear and in Isa as my mediator for sin. This trust is deepened as I understand more about the last day and how to personally prepare for that great event.

1. Allah's blessing of deliverance from fear
2. Isa the mediator—who can save us?
3. Preparing for the last day: Isa el Masih's coming described: the blessed hope
4. Preparing for the last day: signs of his coming
5. Preparing for the last day: the blessing of the resurrection
6. Allah's blessing even in death
7. Preparing for the last day: the judgment day
8. Paradise—the eternal blessing
9. Preparing for the last day: Allah's last day people

Book 4: Allah's greatest blessing—the great sacrifice

In Book 4 my faith in Allah is deepened further as I understand the great plan of Allah in providing the tremendous

sacrifice. My worship is more complete as I make the confession of a true believer.

1. The faith of Ibrahim and the great sacrifice
2. Why a sacrifice?
3. The life of Isa el Masih—deliverance from sin
4. The great victory of Isa el Masih
5. Allah's eternal plan to restore honor in his family
6. The confession of the new believer

Book 5: Allah's blessing through my religious life

In Book 5 my trust and worship is tested as I learn more how the true believer should live. The relationship is deepened as I learn of the power for obedience provided through the Holy Spirit.

1. The special blessing of Allah's presence
2. Allah's blessing in my lifestyle
3. Prayer, alms, and fasting
4. Angels, saints, and dead men
5. Allah's special covenant
6. Allah's sign of special blessing
7. The great apostasy versus Allah's sign

Book 6: Allah's blessed people in the last day

In Book 6 I am led to a fuller understanding of Allah's last-day people and the fellowship of true believers, which is a witness to God's character among my people.

1. The great apostasy and Allah's call for restoration (Islam in prophecy)
2. The purpose of the judgment day—Allah is just
3. The millennium and the final end of evil

4. Allah's last-day people—the special end-time message for the world
5. The new believer's pilgrimage (baptism—sibghat Allah)
6. Last-day prophets
7. Allah is worth serving—complete restoration—the eternal blessing

Appendix 3:

Hmong Statement of Belief

The Way of Faith

1. Q: Who created the world?
A: I believe that God (Hmong name for God—Vaj Tswv Saub) created the world, animals, and humans in six days.
2. Q: What is the Creator God like?
A: I believe that He has greater power than Satan and people. He loves us because He created us and is our Heavenly Father.
3. Q: How should we worship this God we speak of?
A: I believe that we honor and worship Him when we sing and pray together and remember His creation by resting on the seventh day as He gave us an example.
4. Q: What was the world that God created like?
A: I believe that the world that God created was beautiful. Evil, sickness, poverty, suffering, and death were not present.
5. Q: Why then is the world today full of sickness, suffering, and death?
A: I believe that because humanity disobeyed God, this caused all kinds of evil to spread over all of us.
6. Q: Who has the authority and power to help us escape evil and judgment?
A: I believe that because God loved us, He sent the divine Savior Jesus to help us escape from sin and the grasp of the evil spirits.
7. Q: How does our divine Savior Jesus help us escape from evil, punishment, and the grasp of the devil?
A: I believe that because our divine Savior Jesus died in our place on the cross, He has the power to help us. If this is so, if we believe in our divine Savior Jesus and discard and renounce our spirit beliefs, Jesus will help us escape from evil and will wash our hearts, making them white and new. He will not allow the spirits to have any power over us.
8. Q: Will we always live on this earth, or will we go somewhere else?
A: I believe that if we believe in our divine Savior Jesus and wait for Him, He will return to take us to live with Him in the new heavenly city He is preparing. We will live forever there, and all sickness, pain, crying, and death will be no more.
9. Q: If we die before our Savior Jesus returns, how will we rise from the dead?
A: I believe that when Jesus returns the second time, He will bring us back to life and give eternal life with no more death.
10. Q: As we await the return of Jesus, how should we live?
A: I believe that we should live as Jesus taught us. We should love one another and join in teaching the Jesus message to those who do not know it. We should live by the Ten Commandments and keep our bodies clean. We should not use opium or tobacco, drink liquor, or eat the meat that God has not given us permission to eat. We will give a tithe of our earnings to help spread the message of God to the whole world.
11. Q: What should we do to keep close to God and avoid falling into sin?
A: I believe that we should daily sing, pray, and study God's message.



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BOOK REVIEW

CHILDREN MATTER, by Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell. Grand Rapids, MI., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 374 pages, \$20.

Do children really matter? Are churches really serious about children's spirituality that the faith community is involved in effectively nurturing its youngest members? Or, do we still believe that children should be "seen and not heard?" If we believe children today are no longer expected to do that, then why do we still find in many churches children are still involved *only* in programs designated for children?

Yes, children matter! The authors believe affirmatively that children matter to God. They matter to the church of Jesus Christ because they are created in the image of God. From the study of Scripture, we obtain a glimpse of God's heart for children and His desire for children to be valued, welcomed, instructed, and seen as models of faith in the home and the church. Expanding on this, the authors examine biblical, historical, theological and psychological foundations of our ministry to children. Through stories of their own ministry experiences, the authors provide practical insights on how to do ministry effectively with children, and how the faith community, the church, can be the primary setting of faith formation for children and their families. How welcome and accepted children feel and how fully they experience the church and family powerfully influence the context that encourages or hinders their coming to Jesus. Thus, church leaders and pastors need to connect meaningfully with children and seek to provide a nurturing environment for children to grow by including them in all aspects of church life.

Unfortunately, many leaders, pastors and educators still view children as being too young to understand the concepts of salvation, worship and commitment. These active, restless and busy children just can't sit quietly during the worship service. So let's keep them separate from adult worship till they are older. But the authors in chapter 11 highlight recent neuroscience research findings that are worth noting. Neuroscientists see a connection between the limbic system and religious experiences, and that messages that come through the left hemisphere are regulated by emotions and relational responses through the limbic system. Thus, these scholars advocate "letting young children *know* God initially rather than focusing on helping children *know about* Him." Besides knowing God through memorizing a few scriptural texts and knowing the Bible lessons, letting children have time and space in worship or other church activities where they can be present thoughtfully

and without haste, encourages a relationship with the Good Shepherd.

This book is highly recommended for all church leaders, pastors, educators and parents. *Children Matter* contains theories as well as practical suggestions so that church leaders can explore and try out new ideas. We can't afford not to read this book! It is time the church takes this group of young members seriously. We need to get beyond just paying lip service to the welfare of our children in the church. Don't be satisfied that we are already providing children's church and Bible classes for them. In our churches we have made a commitment to welcome all children, but we need to go beyond—we need to help them truly belong as valued participants in the church for all of God's children. This book matters for churches where children matter! ■

—Reviewed by Linda Mei Lin Koh, Children's Ministries Director, Seventh-day Adventist World Church.

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Editor's Note: Dateline, a new feature of Ministry magazine, begins this month. News items of interest to clergy, about clergy or other reports will be featured. We welcome your submissions. Please send to SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org.

Theological consultation in Africa

Somerset West, South Africa: Some fifteen theologians gathered at **Helderberg College** on November 29-30, 2005 to present and respond to papers on "**Spiritualistic Issues Facing the Adventist Church in Africa.**" All the papers were presented by individuals who are currently teaching in Africa or are from Africa. The eleven papers presented dealt with such topics as witchcraft, magic, casting out of demons, and ancestor worship. Three of the papers addressed the topic of how to minister to victims of spiritual powers from different perspectives.

Representatives came from Bugema University (Uganda), Solusi University (Zimbabwe), University of Eastern Africa (Kenya), Valley View University (Ghana), Helderberg College (South Africa), and church offices from Zimbabwe, Ghana and the world headquarters (USA).

A similar group will meet in December 2006 after which guidelines will be issued. The meeting will be held at University of Eastern Africa, Eldoret, Kenya.

Relief available for hurricane victims

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA: **Adventist Community Services (ACS)**, the humanitarian agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church working within the United States and Bermuda, has provided Disaster Response services for more than 30 years, with over ten thousand trained volunteers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Homeland Security recognized this

organization as one of the leading national volunteer agencies deployed in disaster relief.

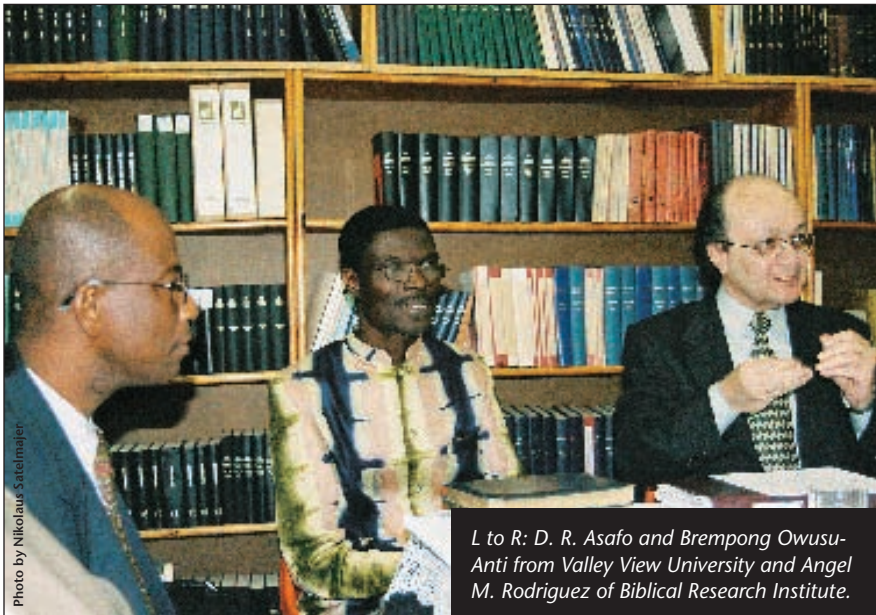
The inconceivable damage caused by Hurricane Katrina on August 29 and Hurricane Rita on September 24, 2005 spawned an unprecedented response from caring donors who have contributed over \$2 million to provide long-term aid for the hurricane evacuees. These funds have been designated for the "Community Rebuilding Project" and will be allocated by ACS' partners who are working throughout the Gulf Coast states.

Experienced disaster responders estimate that it will take a minimum of two years to complete the "Community Rebuilding Project" and to meet the evacuees' ongoing need for emergency supplies. With commitment to the long-term recovery efforts, ACS Disaster Response volunteers continue to manage eight warehouses and fifteen donation distribution centers where food, water, ice, personal care kits, cleaning supplies and other necessary items are made available to the survivors.

Currently, ACS volunteers have managed about \$40 million worth of goods through the eight multi-agency warehouses at an approximate cost of \$200,000. "For every dollar ACS has spent for expenses, our volunteers have delivered \$200 of product to the survivor," said Joe Watts, National ACS Disaster Response Director.

Additionally, the international agency, **Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)** continues to aid hurricane Katrina survivors and evacuees as well as focusing on long-term development.

Currently ADRA has funded close to \$1 million through local partners and organizations that are directly involved in emergency response programs providing food, clothing and other relief items for evacuees. Additionally more



L to R: D. R. Asafo and Brempong Owusu-Anti from Valley View University and Angel M. Rodriguez of Biblical Research Institute.

Photo by Nikolau Satelmajer

than \$1.2 million worth of personal care supplies, new clothing, food, cleaning supplies and general items for evacuees has been distributed.

Funding has also been made available for a project sponsoring more than 1,000 volunteers who will implement relief and rehabilitation projects in the Gulf Coast. The program, implemented by the Center for Youth Evangelism, will provide housing, food, and basic necessities for volunteers.

For more information, visit www.communityservices.org or www.adra.org

New radio program for the Fulani

Maroua, Cameroon: In a remote region of Africa between the Sahara desert in the north and the wetter tropical areas of the south live a people called the Fulani. It is a society with more than 20 million people who are held together by a dominate religion and language that **Adventist World Radio (AWR)** has been longing to reach.

With the help of the Seventh-day Adventist Conference for North Cameroon, a new radio studio has been built in Maroua, Cameroon. Soon AWR studio staff will begin producing messages of hope to the Fulani people in Fulfude, their own language.

"I first learned about Jesus when I heard The Voice of Hope on my radio," says an AWR listener. "When I decided to become a Christian, I was driven out of our home. All of my properties, including my cows, were seized. I had to leave the area for fear of being killed."

"While it is often difficult to see hope amidst the oppression and despair of our brothers and sisters around the world," writes Benjamin D. Schoun, president, Adventist World Radio, "we are constantly reminded of the power of prayer. This project, which was once merely a vision, has now developed into an outlet of opportunity for the Fulani people."

For more information, visit www.awr.org

Eight thousand theologians meet

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA: Several hundred Adventist scholars met in Philadelphia during the latter part of November 2005. Each year more than 8,000 religion scholars from various parts of the world meet and during that time Adventist scholars convene to present papers in their groups and also to the large gathering.

A special feature was a dinner during which **Raoul Dederen**, professor emeritus at Andrews University, along with his wife **Louise**, pioneer archivist, was honored. Angel Rodriguez, director of the Biblical Research Institute pointed out that many of those present were once students of Dederen. It was announced that a forthcoming book is being dedicated to Dederen. Dederen not only served for many years as a professor of theology at Andrews University, he also represented the church at various theological meetings.



Earthquake relief

Muzzafarabad, Pakistan: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) continues to bring relief to victims of the recent earthquake in Pakistan. Tents and food kits have been delivered to 300 families in Bagh District, an area badly damaged by an earthquake near Muzzafarabad, Pakistan.

In addition, ADRA is in the process of delivering more than 200 tents, and 10,000 blankets that have been donated by the organization's offices in **Sweden** and **Ger-**

many. An additional 20,000 blankets and 6,000 hygiene kits have been ordered and will soon be delivered as well.

For more information, visit www.adra.org

Bans on religious expression confronted

Sigüenza, Spain: Highly-controversial bans on religious expression, such as the French government's outlawing of the Islamic headscarf in public schools and a recent court judgment on a Turkish government headscarf prohibition, have brought a detailed response and analysis by religious freedom experts.

The Board of Experts of the **International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA)** meeting in Sigüenza, Spain, November 12 to 16, 2005, took issue with the blanket ban on the wearing or display of religious symbols in state schools.

"While states clearly have the right to ensure a good educational environment for learning, we consider this ban on religious expression as extreme and a violation of an individual's religious freedom," said **John Graz**, secretary general of the IRLA.

In a document entitled "Guiding Principles Regarding Student Rights to Wear or Display Religious Symbols," the IRLA experts spell out specific concerns, commenting that "It is not the role of the state to decide to interpret the significance of a religious symbol for an individual or a community."

"The right to manifest belief is a vital part of religious freedom as defined by the normative international documents, and this includes the right to manifest belief by wearing and displaying religious symbols and clothing," they further conclude.

Recommendations include respecting the rights of students and parents, the seeking of solutions on a case-by-case basis, and that "Legislation establishing a total ban on the wearing of religious symbols in public educational settings should be avoided because it tends to be unnecessarily insensitive to those acting on sincere religious beliefs and often does more to inflame than reduce social tensions." ■

For what they're worth, my four answers to "What's New About the New Covenant?" were, (1) The Person of Jesus; (2) The Promise of Resurrection; (3) The Presence of the Spirit; and (4) The Power of Love.

Thanks for sending *Ministry* in my direction.

—Calvin Burrell, Editor, *Bible Advocate*,
Denver, Colorado, USA

Another look at evil

I recently read the November issue of *Ministry* magazine and found it to be helpful, as always. I especially appreciated Clifford Goldstein's *The Inexplicable Unexplained*. It is indeed time for "another look at evil," to make sure we don't blame God for what God does not do.

—David Robert Black, Pastor, Calvary and
Covenant Presbyterian Churches in Warren,
Ohio, USA

Kudos

Dear Sirs: Many kudos to Goldstein for explaining the unexplainable.

—Ann Walper, Lancaster, Tennessee, USA

Especially blessed

I have been receiving *Ministry* magazine for several years and am much blessed by reading it. I want to thank you for sending it to me so faithfully.

In this latest issue (November 2005), I was especially blessed by the article on page 16 by Ed Gallagher on Hudson Taylor. My wife and I wanted to go to China as missionaries, but that was during the revolution and could not go. We went instead to Japan and after 33 years there retired in 1984.

God bless you for your wonderful magazine.

—Rev. Kenneth Henry Mukilteo, Washington,
USA

Hudson Taylor

Please publish more articles like Gallagher's inspiring story on Hudson Taylor. Ezekial 34 has some powerful comparisons of effective ministry and ministry gone wrong. Seems to me Hudson Taylor was doing something right and effective. Childhood education and influences, combining medical and missionary work, adapting to local customs, prayer, and a

Christ-centered life; all potent ingredients well worth examining.

—Daniel Jacobson, Lumby, British Columbia,
Canada

Bathed with sunshine of sweet memories

I just finished reading your interesting editorial in the October *Ministry* magazine, "Images of a Pastor, My First Pastor." It brought a flood of memories into my thinking and I felt a warmth and gentle kindness I had not felt in my reading of *Ministry*. You see, I too knew and admired Stuart R. Jayne before I moved from the Northern California Conference to pastor back East in Wisconsin and Michigan. As I read I saw his tall frame, gentle smile, and heard his kind voice as you painted word memories in my mind. Both he and Ruth were wonderfully thoughtful servants of Christ. I loved the twinkle in his eye, the kindness in his voice and his genuine love for people—they all bathed me with the sunshine of sweet memories.

Thank you for your tribute to our pastor and friend.

—Bruce Babienko, email

Only retirees could write such an article

I have just read and reread the article in the November issue of *Ministry* by Myrna Tetz and Cliff Sorensen regarding retirement. One of my reactions was that only retirees could write such an article because only they could reflect reality so accurately.

I, too, am retired. I believe I was loved and appreciated when I was in active ministry. I had the privilege of serving on church administrative committees. I have offered my services to two ministerial secretaries, but have not even received a reply from either. I receive a letter from the Conference president once a year (the same letter every conference member receives). It is an appeal for a generous contribution to the Evangelism Fund promoted very heavily at campmeeting. We do get a little news packet from time to time regarding some happenings in the conference. There is no personal contact and absolutely no indication that they know or care if I exist.

I once suggested to a ministerial secretary that he use some retirees at a workers' meeting to share what years of ministry had taught them. I thought then, and still do, that we would have had some worthwhile things to say. We use retired laymen on committees, even the Conference Committee. Sad to say very few Conference administrators recognize the value of a largely untapped reservoir among their retired workers.

I would like to see things improve. I would hate to see a sad situation become even worse.

—Name Withheld

Thanks and appreciation

As always, *Ministry* is a must read when it arrives.

I especially appreciated the November 2005 issue articles on pp 23 and 25, re: "Ministry Lessons from War" and "Retirement: An Unfinished Ministry."

I appreciated the article on the military chaplaincy as I am a retired military chaplain with 26 years of active military duty with the United States Military. I retired in 1975. Since military retirement, I have been active in military organizational affairs. I served as National Chaplain for the Military Order of the Purple Heart for seven years. I am known as Padre Jeff.

The article was to the point and a direct object lesson to any clergy, military or otherwise.

The retirement article spoke so loud it did not need voice or words. I was ordained in 1952 as a Lutheran. Upon retirement from military duty, I figuratively dropped out of sight and mind as far as the civilian church was concerned.

My service to military organizations kept me alive spiritually and mentally.

Recently, three of us military chaplains began a mission church in a local city. We are respectively 68, 71 and I am 82 years of age.

The people are responding to the gospel message not our ages. I told them that Moses was 80 when he led the Exodus, I am 82 and I am two years behind time and must catch up.

Retire? I have not found it or its meaning in our Judeo-Christian scripture.

Thanks for your interest in ministry and those of us who serve in this capacity, retired or otherwise.

—J. Jeffrey, email

The hours and days drag on

In response to the article “A look at suffering—again!” (October 2005) by Rose LeBlanc. At last a writer who expresses exactly the sentiments of so many—there seems to be no reason and no good appears to come from the suffering we often experience in families and friendships. Too many writers and theologians have tried to answer the question of suffering but none of them can answer my questions—why did my mother and sister both die miserable deaths at 54 years of age, 20 years apart, leaving broken and disintegrating families? Why did my other vibrant, bright and friendly sister have a stroke at only 63 years of age, unable to be the hospitable minister’s wife and a loving grandmother to her young grandchildren who had adored her? Now my 54-year-old friend is dying—a woman who is appreciated by all who enjoy her artistic giftedness and one who wants to continue her outreach for people all around the world. What good does all this do? There are no answers and we must just wait for completion of this sorrow when Jesus comes. Thank you, Rose, for your kind article. I agree, the hours and days till His coming, drag on. Even so, please come soon Lord Jesus.

—Joy Butler, Director of Women’s Ministries/Prayer Ministries Coordinator, South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Wahroonga, NSW, Australia

Profitable for many Christians

Thank you for Ron Carter’s article on evolution in your September ‘05 issue of *Ministry*. I appreciate his balanced and good-sense approach. If only more people could approach problems that way. Editors could have more fully adapted this article that originally was position paper to a Faith and Science Conference, “with the *Ministry* reader family in mind.” I only hope readers did not give up on the article because of the scientific words which were not often enough explained. Mr. Carter’s article (with better explanations of “tough”

words made more thorough) is profitable for many Christians. Thank you again.

—Gen Landon, United Methodist Church, retired pastor, Nampa, Idaho, USA

PS Will use your magazine article as reference when I address a study early next year.

A sure path to pastor burn out!

As a hospital chaplain and a psychotherapist, pastoral counselor, I must take issue with Dr. King in his article “Available?” in the November 2005 issue. What he proposes is a sure path to pastor burn out! The ideal situation would be to have the phone transferred to a church staff person or volunteer’s cell phone during off hours. Another option would be to have the answering system page the on-call person when a message is left. With today’s technology either would work.

The whole idea of having a pastor on call 24/7 feeds into the messiah complex that all of us in ministry are susceptible to. I see this problem frequently in my counseling of pastors. They are burned out shells but they feel that they are the only ones who can handle the problems that people bring to the church. On the other hand the people think that only the pastor can help them. It is a vicious cycle.

—Rev. T. Patrick Bradley, Director of Pastoral Care, United Medical Center, Cheyenne, Wyoming, USA

PS Life is full of these things but I really like *Ministry* or I wouldn’t bother to write.

The Bishop, husband of one wife

Having just completed in our congregation another season of examining/selecting church leadership, I found Nancy Vyhmeister’s article, “The bishop, husband of one wife: What does it mean?” (October 2005) crisply written and confirming. She dispassionately opens the biblical text to discover what it says—and what it does not say.

With this reading experience fresh in mind, I reached for a dusty volume on one of my shelves: *Women in Ministry/Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, (1998 Andrews University Press), edited by Nancy (the dust represented my neglect to read it, thinking I understood something of the issues!).

In the book, some twenty Adventist scholars present a rather comprehensive overview of priesthood and ministry, beginning at the gates of Eden. The even-handed and obvious commitment of each author to discover what the Bible teaches us about the ministry of women yesterday and today was another refreshing find.

Nancy Vyhmeister may be *professor emerita*, but I hope *Ministry* won’t let her “gather dust” or be “shelved” any time soon.

—Ken Lockwood, pastor, Porterville, California, USA

A regular feature?

Thank you for the article by Elder Zackrisson, “My Personal Classics. . .” I wish that this would be a regular feature in your magazine. I am just out of the seminary and I know that lists like this would be a great benefit to the development of my library. It also may encourage ministers my age to read. I talk to many colleagues my age about reading and often their comments are, “I don’t have time,” or “Why do I need to read?” Maybe if they saw that the top pulpits out there and the leaders of our church were voracious readers they too would be encouraged to read. I would probably have never even considered two-thirds of the books Zackrisson had suggested if that article had not been in your magazine. Please print more articles just like that!

Thank you. ■

—Chad Stuart, Associate Pastor, Calhoun Adventist Church, Calhoun, Georgia, USA

Corrections:

In the November Letters page, a portion of a sentence was inadvertently omitted from “Earth’s Altered Geology and Geography,” (third column, first paragraph). The sentence should have read, “This process is precipitated by a small group (humans or other animals) becoming isolated from its larger community, thus losing its access to a gene pool that has a richer variety among its members.”

In the “Book Review” (p. 28), the author’s name should have been listed as: Hans K. LaRondelle.

We apologize for these errors.

More

JAMES A. CRESS



The unreality of most resolutions is in direct proportion to their inherent inability to be kept—this year I will reduce my weight back to the thirty-two inch waistline I enjoyed at age 13. Like Israel raising its collective hand to pledge “all that the Lord has said, we will do,” our promises focus on the intent of our own efforts more than on our expectations for heaven’s empowerment.

On the other hand, some resolutions not only are possible, they are essential for increased effectiveness in ministry. Relying on the Holy Spirit’s power, I believe we can expect and experience more in this new year. Specifically . . .

More confidence. God is still on His throne and we can trust Him. We can even trust Him with our own experience of sanctification. *“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 1:6).

More discernment. Too often, winds of unsound doctrine and tickling falsehoods fascinate our members and even captivate our preaching. Through the Holy Spirit’s power, we can “measure twice and cut once” rather than advancing every whim and rumor.

More invitations. Extending gospel invitations is really a choice. If we conclude every message with a call to accept Jesus, results will multiply. Reject making calls only when you suppose someone is present who needs to make a decision but rather upon the reality that someone needs to decide upon that which you have preached with specific purpose. Otherwise, why did you preach?

More growth. The fields are ripe, ready for harvest. Do not pray for greater results; pray for reapers.

More concern. Thousands attend worship services longing to hear some good news. They hunger and thirst to see Jesus and His righteousness and deserve our deep concern for their individual and

corporate spiritual welfare. Pastor with compassion.

More quality. Clergy lead too many slap-dashed services which have been cobbled together in the vestry rather than planned and prayed into excellence. Even the holy angels cannot sustain interest in such lame offerings.

More opportunities. Too many pastors perform too much work themselves rather than recruiting, training, and deploying laity leaders. And too many ignore the available effective ministry leadership potential of our women and youth that comprise seventy percent of the membership.

More vision. Pray heaven to show you the possibilities beyond just next week’s service or next month’s paycheck. Pray and prepare for where God wants your congregation to be five new years from today.

More mission. And pray heaven to awaken a sense of global need; a view beyond your own precincts. The vitality of your local congregation will be directly impacted by the distance it can see and then participate in ministry beyond its own borders.

More tolerance. Remember, your way is not the only way. Familiarity does not guarantee success. Try new methods and respect those who may differ. While we need unity in doctrine, we desperately need tolerance for differing methodolo-

gies. Anyone who believes their mother is the best cook in the world has never traveled far.

More giving. Never apologize for asking people to give. Teach and preach stewardship—both systematic and project benevolence. The hearts of your members will end up in exactly the same place as their treasure.

More focus. You will never do everything you would like to accomplish. Success requires prioritizing. Know and understand your limitations and determine where to expend your energies. “This one thing I do” brings greater results than “These many things I intended!”

More affirmation. Appreciation motivates those upon whom our success depends. Begin with your spouse and kids and move on to your elders, laity leaders, school teachers. If you really want to stir things up, drop a thank you note to your judicatory leaders.

More help. Your encouraging telephone call or thoughtful note may be just the lift a colleague needs to sustain burdens that seem overwhelming. If you think you ought to contact someone—you ought to!

More reconciliation. Sometimes that note or telephone call needs to be an apology. Even attempting a restoration of fractured relationships eases your own soul and initiates a process that may produce healing later on.

More hope. Return again and again to the certainty of Jesus’ promised return. Preaching the blessed hope both motivates and prepares your members. If you’re ever in doubt as to what to say, preach the Second Coming.

More Jesus. Make our Lord the theme of every sermon, the center of every doctrine, the focus of every prayer, and the reason for every call.

And what will this produce?

More!

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TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006
[Repeat broadcast March 22, 2006]

MINISTRY | PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SEMINARS



Roy Adams, an associate editor of *Adventist Review*, hails from the Caribbean nation of Grenada, and was the first candidate to finish a doctoral degree in Systematic Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. His pastoral ministry began at the West Toronto Seventh-day Adventist Church, and he is the author of four books, including his latest, *Crossing Jordan: Joshua, Holy War and God's Unfailing Promises* (*Review and Herald*).



Marguerite Shuster turns to the Word in each of her roles: as a woman, a pastor, and as a teacher. A professor of preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary who has been on the faculty there since 1992, Shuster holds a Ph.D. in psychology. She is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who has served as an associate pastor for six years and a solo Pastor for five years. Her books and articles about the dynamics of good and evil, as well as on Paul Jewett's Christology, have pointed readers back to the Word.



William G. Johnsson is editor and executive publisher of *Adventist Review* and editor of the new *Adventist World* magazine. A theologian who has taught in India and the United States, his writing ministry has spanned a gamut of subjects over several decades. He has authored books on prophecy, Bible study and theology, including two on the book of Hebrews. Before joining the *Adventist Review*, Johnsson had been an associate dean and a professor at Andrews University Theological Seminary, having previously been the dean of the School of Theology at Spicer College in Puna, India.



Haddon W. Robinson is the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and he is widely regarded as an expert in the area of preaching. Dr. Robinson was named one of the twelve most effective preachers in the English-speaking world in a 1996 Baylor University poll. He is one of the hosts for *Discover the Word* (formerly *Radio Bible Class*), a daily radio program of RBC Ministries in Grand Rapids, MI, which is broadcast 600 times a day on stations around the world. His book, *Biblical Preaching*, is currently used as a text in 120 seminaries and Bible colleges around the world.

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