

MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors

March 2006

GOD'S TIME



OUR TIME

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MEANING OF WAITING

Ministry is the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association and has been published since 1928.

Association Secretary James A. Cress
Editor Nikolaus Satelmajer
Assistant Editor Willie E. Hucks II
Production Consultant Myrna Tetz
Editorial Assistant Sheryl Beck
Database Assistant Mark Sigue
Professional Growth and Interchurch Relations Anthony Kent
Contributing Editors: Jonas Arrais, Sharon Cress, John M. Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Anthony Kent, Peter Prime, Kit Watts
International Editors:
French John Graz
Inter-American Division Felix Cortes
South American Division Zinaldo A. Santos
Consulting Editors: Ben Clausen, Raoul Dederen, Ron Flowers, Michael Hasel, Roland Hegstad, Gerry Karst, Kathleen Kuntaraf, Ekkehardt Mueller, Jan Paulsen, Robert Peach, Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Penny Shell, William Shea, Russell Staples, Richard Tibbits, Measapog Wilson, Ted Wilson, Edward Zinke
Pastoral Assistant Editors: John C. Cress, Fredrick Russell, Maylan Schurch, Loren Seibold
International Advisors: Alejandro Bullón, Russell Burrill, Daniel Duda, R. Danforth Francis, Passmore Hachalinga, John Kakembo, Pavel Khiminets, Miguel Luna, Hector Sanchez, Houtman Sinaga, Bruno Vertallier, Gary Webster
Pastoral Advisors: Leslie Baumgartner, S. Peter Campbell, Jeanne Hartwell, Mitchell Henson, Norma Osborn, Leslie Pollard, Dan Smith, Steve Wilsey
Advertising Editorial Office
Ministerial Association Resource Project Coordinator Cathy Payne
Cover Illustration Harry Knox
Layout 316 Creative
Subscriptions: 12 issues (double issue for July/August): United States US\$29.99; Canada and overseas US\$31.99; airmail US\$41.75; single copy US\$3.00. To order, send name, address, and payment to Ministry Subscriptions, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 U.S.A.
Web site: <www.ministrymagazine.org>
Queries/renewals/new subscriptions/address changes: ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org (email); 301-680-6510 (phone); 301-680-6502 (fax)
To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Editorial preference is to receive manuscripts on diskette with name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and Social Security number (if U.S. citizen or possessing a U.S. Social Security number). Send editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A. 301-680-6510 (phone); 301-680-6502 (fax); ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org (editorial office email).
Writers' Guidelines available on request and on Web site at <www.ministrymagazine.org>.
Ministry (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 2006, is published monthly (except for July/August, when a double issue will be published) by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193. Member Associated Church Press. Standard mail postage paid at Nampa, Idaho.
 PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.
Vol. 78 Number 3
Bible credits: Texts credited to the NEB are from The New English Bible. Copyright © 1961, 1970 by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press. Reprinted by permission. Texts credited to the NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission.

IN EVERY ISSUE

Letters 3

Editorial 4

Pastor's Pastor 30

6 **God's time? Our time? Another look at the meaning of waiting**
An insightful look into the concept of waiting, as seen in 2 Peter 3.
 Marguerite Shuster

9 **Embracing the next generation: reaching young people for Christ**
A well-known speaker and author shares his passion for ministry to youth.
 Josh McDowell, interviewed by Derek Morris

12 **A person of peace**
How does the busy pastor experience peace amidst the hustle and bustle of life?
 Randall Roberts

16 **Laughter from the lectern: making theology fun**
Theology can be dry and boring, or maybe you'll smile. Which would you prefer?
 Willie E. Hucks II

19 **How could I?**
How often do pastors say "thank you" to their spouses?
 Paul Charles

20 **Conflict resolution: how to handle a crisis**
What are some of the "do's" and "dont's" pastors should keep in mind when their pastoral ministry is challenged?
 David VanDenburgh

22 **Pastor at sea—an unusual ministry opportunity**
What does ministry look like when your congregation changes every seven days?
 Robert Bradford

24 **Let the Scriptures speak: preaching memorized passages**
Reciting long passages of Scripture from memory may be easier than you think.
 Andrew Marttinen

26 **Dateline**

OUR ENTIRE CULTURE IS BUILT ON KEEPING THINGS IN THE BOXES TO WHICH WE HAVE ASSIGNED THEM.

Doing theology in mission

Regarding Jon L. Dybdahl's article, "Doing theology in mission—Part 2" (January 2006), thank you for a concise, logical, and experiential presentation of immense issues. This article gives me words by which to think the thoughts I've been working on for a long time. I think I embrace and sometimes try to explain a mixture of all three of these "new identities."

From my experience, the difficulty in achieving some form of a new group identity resides not only with "insiders" to that identity. Our entire culture is built on keeping things in the boxes to which we have assigned them. But perhaps a meticulous and sometimes excruciating effort to know and speak our own identity under God is what is meant by "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world." Our God is a God of miracles!

Keep up the good work.

—Wilma Zalabak, M.Div. Self-employed Bible instructor living near Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

Jon Dybdahl combines his experience as a missionary in Asia with a thorough education in theology and missiology. However, I have some concerns with his articles ("Doing Theology in Mission" November 2005 and January 2006).

The pivotal issue in his articles is the Adventist understanding of our role as a *remnant* with a God-given commission in the greater religious world of both Christians and non-Christians. Dybdahl proposes future approaches and concepts that are quite new, and substantially differ from the distinctive and unique Adventist concepts that have guided and directed mission strategies.

The Protestant/Evangelical theories of mission held by more "ecumenical" liberal scholars seem to have inspired his propositions. The overarching drift in the articles reveals subtle suggestions for a diluted remnant theology and diminished self-understanding of our task and role in the world.

At the same time the ideas are offered for choice in an attractive way as they are "contextualized" to Adventist readers with vocabulary, idioms, use of components from our mission experience, and even a brief reference to the Spirit of Prophecy.

Humanly speaking, my mission commitment welcomes these much easier, broader, and more adaptable approaches. But I am bound by my belief in the Advent message, movement, and special role in the world's history. I accept that there are reform and remnant currents taking place in the Christian and even non-Christian religious world. However, the Adventist understanding of her own call to mission, as I understand it, is focused on a special message of warning and a direct call to join a specific remnant church.

Should the trend in the articles be accepted in its full meaning and the suggested new missionary approach be applied, it would involve drastic changes in our way of promoting, organizing, financing, and doing mission. It would also oblige the Seventh-day Adventist Church to change its mission statement: "The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to communicate to all peoples the everlasting gospel of God's love in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Saviour and Lord and to unite with His church

(italics supplied), and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return."

Having worked together with Jon Dybdahl in the training of missionaries, I accept that the worthy intention of the articles is to strengthen missions and expand methodology. At the same time, Dybdahl wishes to bestow some credibility to present experiments where the suggested methodology is tried out. However, the trend of the articles points in the direction of a complete change in both the unique Adventist concept of mission and our role in the world.

—Borge Schantz

The inexplicable unexplained

I wonder, if evil cannot be explained, does that mean that it cannot be understood?

Does it also mean that God is not all-knowing in that He did not foresee the rise of evil and that He did not know what evil was when it arose?

When we see tragedy in our world, there are two levels of understanding. There is the human level, which even though we know what happened, we would not always excuse what happened. But then there is the question, Why did God allow the tragedy to happen? Goldstein seems to suggest that God won't explain why because He doesn't know why. If God does not intend to explain His actions in allowing evil to seemingly prosper, what is the purpose of the millennial judgment where the saints judge the world and even angels?

Goldstein's article "The Inexplicable Unexplained," (November 2005) did not have a clear scriptural basis. Where are the

continued on page 27

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 clergy of other denominations. To receive your complimentary subscription, please write to us at our Editorial Office, visit us at <www.ministrymagazine.org>, or email us at ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.*

Ministry: the commitment continues

When *Ministry* made its debut in 1928 as an international journal for pastors, it was meant primarily to serve Seventh-day Adventist pastors worldwide. In that role, the journal served well until 1975 when the publishers, the Ministerial Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, decided to launch out into new frontiers.

What propelled the new decision was a vision and a commitment: a vision to see ministry as a global mandate and a commitment to make the journal enrich the ministry of the clergy of all denominations, in addition to resourcing the Adventist pastors. Thus began the new venture in April 1975, and now for over 30 years *Ministry* magazine has gone to clergy of all denominations throughout the world, becoming one of the largest professional journals serving pastors, chaplains, religion teachers, church leaders, and other church workers of all persuasions. Letters pouring in to our office from different parts of the world testify to the value and the wisdom of making *Ministry* an instrument of professional resource and service to clergy everywhere.

Not long ago the widespread recognition and appreciation of *Ministry* struck me at a gathering of some 10,000 clergy representing various denominations. In our display, we had about 2,000 copies of *Ministry*. All the copies were taken away by the pastors long before the convention concluded. Many of the pastors were readers of *Ministry*, while others had seen it for the first time and wanted to have a copy.

I believe that *Ministry* has become a stronger journal since its readership has widened. We receive more input on a continuing basis and, therefore, ask ourselves if we are fulfilling our mission to be faithful to the Word of God.

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER



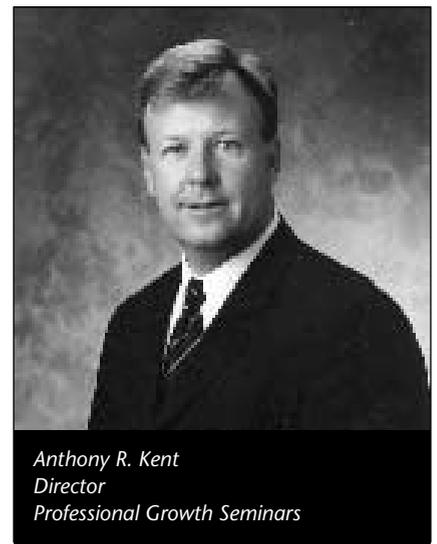
Our vision of ministry has also widened. In addition to offering the journal to clergy of all denominations, we, as publishers of *Ministry*, started offering seminars aimed at providing quality continuing education to all clergy. So far more than 1,000 seminars have been held in various parts of the world with thousands of clergy participating in these one-day events.

By 1998, technological advances had made it possible for these continuing education seminars to be broadcast by uplinking from one central broadcasting location and then downlinking in numerous centers throughout the world. Thanks to such instant satellite broadcasting, the world's best preachers and exponents of pastoral calling were made available from one center to thousands of pastors around the globe. Surely, a marvelous ministry to clergy everywhere!

How was this ministry made possible? It was a dynamic cooperative venture of *Ministry* and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Kermit Neteburg, at that time director of communications for North America, provided the production team for the first broadcasting, and we provided the program. Since then the Hope Channel broadcasting system has made the program available worldwide, and Adventist Media Productions has produced the event. Now just one event brings together thousands of

clergy who participate in quality continuing education. Who knows what new ways will be developed to deliver this important resource even beyond what we are able to provide now.

For nearly ten years I had the privilege of directing these broadcasts. Since I assumed the editorship of *Ministry*, Anthony R. Kent, an experienced and innovative minister, has been appointed the new director of the *Ministry* Professional Growth Seminars. You will see him, of course, in this next broadcast, and I am certain he will provide quality continuing education. The next *Ministry* Professional Growth Seminar will be broadcast on Tuesday, March 21, 2006, with a repeat broadcast on March 22. (For details of the event, see the full-page advertisement in this issue.)



The 2006 Professional Growth Seminar will be the tenth annual broadcast that we have organized. The seminars have been broadcast from Canada, Korea, Scotland, and the United States. We have also provided assistance with two broadcasts in South America. The more

than 40 different speakers who have made presentations are well-known individuals who also have credibility with clergy. Our readers and viewers have repeatedly expressed appreciation for the quality of the presentations.

This issue of *Ministry*, in response to clergy requests, carries presentations (adapted for print) from some of the speakers from previous *Ministry* Professional Growth Seminars, such as Marguerite Shuster and Randy Roberts. Our "Dateline" section presents R. Leslie Holmes, who has broadcast twice via satellite and has spoken at local continuing education events.

Meanwhile, here at *Ministry* the commitment continues. Willie Hucks, assistant editor; Sheryl Beck, editorial assistant; Mark Sigue, database assistant; and I are committed to maintain the quality and the global service of *Ministry*, even as we meet the needs of Adventist ministers and the clergy of other denominations for continuing education. To clergy of other denominations and religious organizations, our request is this: Use the parts of our journal that will help you more effectively fulfill the work God has given you to do.

If you are a clergy person from another denomination and would like to receive six complimentary issues of *Ministry* each year, please contact us as explained on page 3. Or if you have a colleague from another denomination, pass this information on to that individual.

We look forward to seeing you by satellite on March 21, 2006. ☐

Maybe you agree. . . or maybe you disagree

This is your invitation to respond to the articles in *Ministry* magazine by writing a letter to the editor.

Send to
SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org
or visit on the Web at
<www.ministrymagazine.org>
or send fax to
301-680-6502.

Would you like to write for *Ministry*?

Here are some areas of emphasis that interest *Ministry* magazine readers:

- Pastoral practices: preaching, evangelism, lay training, education, congregational leadership, administration
- Spiritual growth
- Development of professional skills
- Pastor and spouse team ministry
- Pastoral family needs
- Worship, music, and church nurture
- Theological and biblical topics
- Current issues in church life and mission
- Health and lifestyle issues
- Reports of interest to pastors: church growth techniques, empowerment of laypersons, community outreach, and other ministries
- Shoptalk items (for instance, how to improve the ministries of local church members)
- Brief reviews on books relevant to ministry
- Letters of comment on recent *Ministry* articles

International flavor:

When writing, keep in mind the international nature of our readership.

Article submission:

Before writing and submitting an article for publication, you may wish to consult with one of the editors regarding the topic of your choice.

Article length:

Articles should not be longer than 2,500 words.

To receive Guidelines for Writers:

- Web site: <www.ministrymagazine.org>
- or send an email to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org
- or call 301-680-6518

Article submission:

- send in Microsoft Word to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org
- or send via mail to *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

God's time? Our time?

Another look at the meaning of waiting

Marguerite Shuster



Marguerite Shuster, Ph.D., is a professor of preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, United States. This article was adapted from a sermon based on 2 Peter 3:8-15a given at a Ministry Professional Growth Seminar, broadcast live from Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama, United States. To prepare this manuscript for publication, certain elements have been changed, with permission from the author.

“**Y**our God is too fast,” wrote Rich Mouw, now president of Fuller Theological Seminary.¹ He was reflecting on our impatience, our unwillingness to wait, our apparent assumption that anything God *really* wants done, He will do quickly—whether it be the creation of the world or individual salvation. On the other hand, whatever He *doesn't* do quickly and decisively, in a sort of once-and-for-all manner, He mustn't be too interested in or mustn't think too important—or, worst of all, must be helpless to do anything about. Obviously, Mouw disagreed with all of these propositions.

Still, it's not hard to see why the popular view prevails. We are a people in love with speed, and not just with the fast cars that were the status symbol of an earlier generation. The love affair is not getting better. Progress in science today depends on dealing with events that occur so quickly we measure the elapsed time in nanoseconds—a word new enough that it just sneaked into the addenda of the current Webster's unabridged dictionary. It means a billionth of a second. Imagine. But even that's not fast enough for photon research. For that, I am told, we need attoseconds, a quintillionth of a second, one times ten to the negative eighteenth, a span so short it's beyond any reasonable conceiving. Nor have our daily lives escaped this acceleration. Airmail is now just one more form of snail mail, intolerably slow. Processor speeds of ordinary personal computers, which in theory and

pretty much in practice have doubled every year and a half or so, we now measure in gigahertz.

Waiting? Patience? How can these snubs of our technological competence possibly be seen as virtues? At best, they're a manifest threat to the economy. Get it *now*; no payments or interest until next year, with your good credit.

But if all this obsession with speed seems silly to, say, the writer who finally takes a step back and realizes that she won't produce a single sentence more with the brand-new 3.0 gigahertz screamer than with the ancient 486, or to the thinker who cares more about the quality than the quantity of ideas conveyed, still, even that sudden effort at perspective does not tell the whole story. In the midst of the silliness, a hard truth hides: It is in fact possible, from our point of view, for speed to matter, and matter a lot. It is in fact possible for things to come *too late*.

You know: the cure for the disease of which your child just died. And if some bureaucratic bungling or some company's greed delayed the distribution of the critical medicine that could, otherwise, have been made available in time, well, whether grief or futile rage would prevail is hard to say. The check can come too late—the one that would have made it unnecessary for you to sell your home or would have spared you from succumbing to doing wrong to get desperately needed funds. Oh, it came, all right; but the damage was done.

Some other things come not, strictly speaking, when it's too late but when one has been hurt too much in the meantime. Picture a prisoner of conscience, jailed unjustly for decades. He would be unlikely to tell you not to bother to let him out of jail, since you'd already been so slow about it. If he's still alive, he probably wants out. He will be different, though, than he was before. He may be alive, but something of trust, something of confidence in human nature, will likely be dead. Slowness killed them. Had you let him out immediately, they would still be alive. Some things can't be undone.

And some things don't come at all. That's one of our rawest fears when the desired outcome seems slow: will it *ever* arrive, or is all our waiting in vain?

Slowness? It's not just foolish impatience that makes us anxious about slowness. Terrible things can happen when deliverance does not come in time, or does not come at all. So Christians have long cried out, “How long, O Lord, how long?” And they have earnestly prayed, “Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.” The Lord does, indeed, sometimes seem very slow.

SLOWNESS? IT'S NOT JUST FOOLISH IMPATIENCE THAT MAKES US ANXIOUS ABOUT SLOWNESS. TERRIBLE THINGS CAN HAPPEN WHEN DELIVERANCE DOES NOT COME IN TIME, OR DOES NOT COME AT ALL.

He seemed slow to Peter's group of readers, who had been confronted by taunting scoffers, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Pet. 3:4).² What made people think it would ever be any different? Why should they hang on to futile expectations? And why should we, we who have yet another two thousand years of evidence of things just going on and on, as they always have.

Peter did not try to respond by arguing that it hadn't really been such a long time after all, or that someone had made a minor miscalculation of the date. There's no point in flying in the face of the facts. Instead, he simply interpreted what the long time *means*. "The Lord is not slow about his promise," he said, "as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Better, the Lord is not *late* (that's the more precise sense of the word); the Lord has not gone past the appointed time for the fulfillment of His promise to return and make things right. The Lord is not *late*. He's not off twiddling His thumbs or attending to the needs of some more interesting and less recalcitrant planet. He hasn't become indifferent. He is not thwarted by some barrier to His acting. He has not been unexpectedly delayed, has not changed His mind. No. He is giving us time. He is patient with us; He is giving us opportunity to better fit ourselves for His coming; He is holding back His wrath.

Do we count it slowness? We are badly mistaken. We should count His forbearance salvation (v. 15). He does not wish that we should perish.

All will be saved?

We would be overinterpreting to take this text, as some have done, as a sort of proof that all will in fact be saved in the end; or, contrariwise, to dismiss its argument as absurd, as cynics with an eye for math have done, on the grounds that with every day that elapses, more people die in their sins, so that far more will have been lost when the Lord actually does return than would have been had He been more prompt. Neither of these approaches is fair to the context. Peter is not concerned with global, abstract theological questions, on the one hand, or matters of strict logic on the other. His goal is pastoral. He is telling his people, and us, to ask not "What is going to happen to all of them out there," not "Why doesn't God hurry up and spare us so much suffering," but rather "What sort of persons ought [we] to be in lives of holiness and godliness" now (v. 11). After all, the seeds of dissolution are already at work in the world as we know it, and the end is sure. Yet the Lord graciously gives us time to repent and amend our ways and better fit ourselves for the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells. He gives us a bigger context for our waiting, one that can give us new perspective on our current circumstances.

Knowing that the seeds of dissolution are already at work, pointing to the sure end of the world as we know it, may give

us a way of understanding both how to value this world—precious, oh so precious, but not permanent—and how to view some of the terrible sorrow and evil it contains—agonizingly painful, to be fought against with all of our strength, but not permanent either. Obviously, we are fools to get a death grip on the perishable. It won't hold us, and we can't keep hold of it.

Tyranny of the perishable

Take this issue a step further, though, and consider how our view of the perishable interacts with our view of time. Actually, even to call a thing perishable is to say something precisely about what happens to it in or over time, right? Given just a little time, the grass withers and the flower fades. Given a little more, youth is gone. Yet more, and the last chance for a promotion passes one by. It may take but an instant for a fortune to be lost, or one's health; but these are nonetheless lost in time. And hear the double meaning when we say that help was too slow, that it did not come "in time": It did not come in such a way as to deliver us from some evil of this perishable, time-bound life. If we were in fact less ultimately attached to these things that are being dissolved, would we not be less terrorized by time? Do we not want more time, or less time, precisely because of them? I love the story about the fellow sitting in his living room wondering what time it was. He heard his small daughter, too young to read a clock, out in the kitchen and called out, "Susie, what is the little hand on?" After a short pause Susie, misunderstanding the question and taking it literally, replied, "A chocolate chip cookie." But her answer can make a point. In so many ways, it's the chocolate chip cookies we have our hands on, or wish we had our hands on, that tell us what time it is—too early? Too late? A moment we wish we could preserve forever?

The idea, again, is not that these things we so desire are necessarily bad or that they lack their own proper value, but that they are perishable, already being dissolved. We cannot keep them. They cannot keep us. Much of our sorrow and grief have to do with transience and loss,

with our wanting one way or another to hang on to something precious to us, which we too often attempt to do in a way that speeds its passing or poisons our enjoyment of it in the moment we have. But remember something else: The sorrow and grief and pain also belong to time, as does the shallow optimism that would deny them. The seeds of dissolution are to be found in them too. They too shall be done away. A great Christian said this: "Remember that complacent optimism, no less than pessimism, is treason against hope. The world, as it is, is not good enough to be true. We ought not to be satisfied with it. 'God has prepared some better thing.'"³ Do you not like that, and does it not ring true? "The world, as it is, is not good enough to be true." If the Lord is anything like what He has revealed Himself to be in Jesus Christ, this world simply cannot be what He plans for us, or all He has for us. It is in too many ways a mockery of His goodness and mercy. He will not finally be satisfied with existence poisoned with evil. We should not be satisfied either. He will, assuredly, do them away. The more we believe and trust in a holy God, the more certain we will be that His future, His promise, holds something far better for us. And consequently, "according to His promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." We wait.

Waiting with a passion

But we do not wait immobile, passive. The text does not contemplate that route for a moment. Rather, it directs us right away—fast!—to the question, What sort of persons should we be *now* to fit ourselves for these new heavens and new earth? I read of a Kentucky politician who had a diverting fancy about judgment day: When the last trumpet sounds, he imagined, the Lord won't send anyone to heaven or to hell. He'll just remove everyone's inhibitions, and they'll all go where they belong.⁴ There's something to that fancy. Think, right now, about what you love, what attracts you, what you long for, and what makes waiting for it so desperately hard. Do you, do I, in fact, love the things that would make us rejoice in inhabiting a place characterized

as being where righteousness dwells? That's the only feature of the new world Peter considers relevant, the only characteristic he mentions: it will be a world in which God's will will be done. The less sure we are that we would feel at home in such a place, or the more we want to cling to this or that self-indulgence (or sin, to give the thing its proper name), or the less bothered we are by those imperfections, those spots and blotches, that are, after all, merely human, the more we need the time the Lord has given us in order to repent and change.

It is safe to assume that as long as we remain on this earth, even if our circumstances are miserable in the extreme, it is still possible that, by grace, we might today become a little more prepared for the Lord's return than we were yesterday and that it would be pleasing to God were we to orient our attentions in that direction. But perhaps not just if we have become cynical and discouraged, but especially if our circumstances are good, we may fail to recognize that progress is required. Even what is admirable, say by way of zeal, in a young person, must take on new qualities if it is to remain admirable and not destructive in an older one; even as a flower is beautiful in spring but has failed in its purpose if it remains a flower and not fruit in the summer. And sometimes, whatever our circumstances, we will simply become resistant to the pain involved in so much of our human progress. A Jewish writer reports, "A few days ago my rabbi asked me how things were going, and I answered, 'Things are going all right, but it wouldn't hurt if they went a little better.' Raising his formidable eyebrows, the rabbi said, 'And how do you know it wouldn't hurt?'"⁵

Perhaps it is because so many eventually worthwhile things hurt that someone pointed out that the great risk is that we will become satisfied with this or that moral conquest or achievement and fail to realize that it will be spoiled if we rest in it. Especially by middle age, if we have much sought to make progress in these ways, we are likely to be weary of the effort and weary of change. Maybe even our longings have shrunk and died, and we no longer much aspire or hope and, hence, no longer wait with much

urgency or anticipation. Then we are tempted to say to ourselves, "I have at last come far enough. I don't really want to be better or wiser or more attuned to the call of moral adventure than I am now. This will just have to do." But that, of course, is moral death.⁶ No way could we ever have more time than we need to seek to make progress in every sort of holy behavior and piety and search for purity, because we serve a holy God who will not be satisfied until, in our proper measure, we are like Him.

Well then, if we could no way have more time than we need, how much time do we *require*? How much time does the earth require? That, only the Lord Himself knows. To say that with Him a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day is no doubt primarily to say that He does not experience time as we do and certainly feels none of the anxiety about the outcomes that plagues us. He would have no reason, then, to describe His work as either slow or fast. The relevant category is that He is not *late* in fulfilling His promise (or in any other way). But it may also be true, as someone suggested, that in the Lord's economy, a single day may be as productive of events, as significant to the course of history, as are a thousand. Such a day comes with respect to our individual human lives when we come to know Christ and trust in Him for the first time. Such a day comes for the earth on Christmas and Easter and, of course, the day the Lord returns. Perhaps today is in some sense such a day in your life. Perhaps today requires a decision of moment for the rest of your earthly existence, one that must *not* wait. This may be a day in a thousand in that sense. Or perhaps today is simply one more opportunity to ask ourselves what sort of persons the holy, faithful Lord wants us to be and to act accordingly. ■

1 "Humility, Hope and the Divine Slowness," *The Christian Century*, April 11, 1990, 365.
2 All Scripture quoted from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible.
3 William R. Inge, quoted in John Baillie, *A Diary of Readings* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955), 19.
4 *Context*, July 15, 1989, 4.
5 Quoted in *Context*, August 15, 1989, 4.
6 Adapted from A. E. Taylor, quoted in Baillie, 277.

Embracing the next generation: reaching young people for Christ

An interview with Josh McDowell

Derek J. Morris



Derek J. Morris is the senior pastor of the Forest Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church in Apopka, Florida, United States.



Josh McDowell is an internationally known Christian speaker and author based in Dallas, Texas, United States.

Josh McDowell is an internationally known Christian speaker and author. He has spoken to more than 7 million young people in 84 countries, including visits to 700 university and college campuses. He has authored or co-authored more than 75 books that have sold more than 10 million copies. Among his most popular books are *Beyond Belief to Convictions*, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, and *More Than a Carpenter*.¹

Derek Morris: As a Christian apologist and evangelist, you have probably spoken to as many young people about Jesus Christ as any in the history of the Christian church. Share with us one of your most memorable experiences.

Josh McDowell: I was in Phoenix, doing a high school assembly. On the first day, there were about fifteen hundred students outside at noon. I stood on a huge boulder in order to connect more effectively with the crowd. I had been warned that there was a group of Gothics on campus who would try to break up the assembly. I had just started to speak when six Gothics came up and stood about ten feet away from me. They were dressed in black, with tattoos and piercings on every part of their bodies. They just stood there and scowled at me. Without the crowd knowing it, I changed my topic and spoke about intimacy. I shared with the crowd that Christ can give you the capacity to be real with another person. When my talk was over, I stepped off the boulder and the

head of the Gothics leaped toward me. The whole crowd gasped. He came within six inches of my face. There were tears running down his cheeks. He said to me very respectfully, "Mr. McDowell, would you give me a hug?" And before I could even say "Yes," this young man put his head on my shoulder and cried like a baby. Then he said to me, "My father never once hugged me or told me that he loved me."

That story keeps coming back to me whenever I stand up to speak. Young people need to know that God loves them. And who are His instruments to share His love? We are.

DM: When did you first discover a passion to tell young people about Jesus Christ and God's amazing love?

JM: After I had committed my life to Jesus Christ in my late teens, I immediately wanted to tell the whole world about Him. I was born running! I have a passion for young people because that's where I was when I came to know Christ. I was so thankful that I had come to know Christ myself and I wanted to share Him with others. I started out my Christian ministry talking to university students. I have spoken on over seven hundred university and college campuses. But a major shift occurred 15 years ago. I realized that decisions once made in university were now being made in eighth, ninth, tenth grades. So now I focus my ministry on 12 to 17-year-olds. I want to reach kids for Christ before they have made a lot of decisions that are going to negatively affect them for the rest of their lives. After about 13 years of age in today's culture, a young person is hardened like young people were after university 15 years ago. At a younger age today, young people are being confronted with different worldviews, conflicting ideas. For example, 15 years ago Islam was a religion in a different part of the world. Now it's next door. Today, with free access to the Internet, anything that you believe as a Christian is challenged. That wasn't true 15 years ago. That's why George Barna suggests from his research that if you don't reach young people in today's culture by age 13, you might never reach them.

DM: You've been involved in ministry to young people for over 40 years. What keeps you going?

JM: One reason why I keep on reaching out to young people for Christ is that I am so

What do Adventists believe?

It's the question every Adventist prays to be asked. Do you have an answer? How well do you know your faith? How would you best present the teachings of your church?

Seventh-day Adventists Believe is a freshly edited declaration of the fundamental teachings of the Adventist Church, including a **NEW CHAPTER** dedicated to spiritual growth in Jesus and victory over demonic influence through His victory on the cross. Whether you're a ministry professional or a Christian with a hunger for knowledge, this 448-page book is an indispensable addition to your resource library.



"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15-16

US\$12.95

plus 18% shipping

AVAILABLE NOW AT:

www.ministerialassociation.com

(301) 680-6508

or at your local

Adventist Book Center.

grateful for my own salvation. I'm overwhelmed that the Creator God of the universe wants a relationship with me. In Exodus 34:14, He says "I am passionate about my relationship with you." I'm just overwhelmed with that! So, every time I see someone, especially a young person, that verse pops into my mind. God wants a relationship with that person! He wants pastors, youth pastors, and parents to be the channel for establishing that relationship with God.

A second reason why I keep reaching out to young people for Christ is because I believe that every person's destiny is dependent on how they relate to Jesus Christ. I am more convinced than ever that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. So, young people need to hear the truth about Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I keep on reaching out to young people for Christ because there are so many hurting kids in the world today. There is one word to describe today's mosaic generation: Abandoned. Young people feel abandoned emotionally and spiritually. They need to experience God's love.

DM: You mention on your Web site <www.beyondbelief.com> that we need a spiritual revolution in the Christian community—a CrossCulture revolution.² What do you mean by that?

JM: I hate to say this, but right now we are losing the battle. We are not seeing transformation in the lives of professed Christian young people. Seventy-five to eighty percent of our young people are leaving the church. Research by Barna, Gallup, and others shows that there is hardly any difference between a young person inside the church and a secular young person outside the church. It used to be that on issues like lying, stealing, cheating, there was a 14 to 18 percent difference between professed Christians and unbelievers. Now, it's less than three percent difference. We are beyond needing a reformation. We need a revolution, a drastic change.

DM: What are some ways that we can be more intentional in reaching young people for Jesus Christ?

JM: Providing a loving environment is one way that you can be more intentional in reaching young people for Christ. Young people need a loving environment in order to flourish. Ideally, a young person needs a Christian home, where Mom and Dad are in love with each other and love their kids, and their kids sense that love. Research sponsored by the YMCA, Dartmouth Medical School, and the Institute for American Values showed that young people are hardwired for enduring connections to others and for moral and spiritual meaning.³

Secondly, if you want to be more intentional in reaching young people for Jesus Christ and passing on your values to the next generation, you must live out that truth in their presence. Teach your children, or the young people within your circle of influence, not only the "what's" but the "why's" of the faith. When that happens, it is very likely that the young person will assimilate the Christian faith. Over the years, my wife and I have watched many movies with our kids. On 20 to 25 occasions, we got up and walked out of the theater. That had an impact on our kids. Now we'll hear our kids say, "We went to watch a movie with some friends last night, but we got up and left!" Where did they find the courage to walk out? I had modeled for them the importance of being careful what you take into your mind, and the courage to walk out if necessary.

Thirdly, if you want to be more intentional in reaching young people for Christ, model what it looks like to share your faith. Be actively involved in changing the world. Talk about missions. Be involved in the community. Look for people, for events, for seminars, for conferences that will supplement what you are teaching and modeling to your children. Go on mission trips. Each year, ask yourself, "What seminars do we want our kids to attend this year?"

DM: As you view the Christian church as a whole, what obstacles or barriers are preventing young people from finding a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

JM: One obstacle is this: Young people are not seeing dynamic, living,

IN MANY WAYS, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY MUST ENDURE A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COLOSSEUM. THEY MAY NOT FACE LITERAL LIONS, BUT THEY QUITE POSSIBLY ENCOUNTER MORE ETHICAL AND MORAL TEMPTATIONS, GREATER SPIRITUAL BATTLES, AND MORE INTENSE EMOTIONAL AND RELATIONAL STRUGGLES THAN ANY OTHER GENERATION IN HISTORY.¹⁰

examples of Christ's life within the body of Christ. A young African-American woman, Lena Williams, put it this way: "We are not seeing God's love through other people." When today's generation sees a lack of authentic modeling, they say, "It's not true." Biblically, all truth is taught in the context of relationships. Young people are looking for truth that works. If they don't see it working in their own lives, they will say, "It's not true." This is why it is so important for us to live our faith in the presence of our children.

DM: I was impressed by your answer to a young person on your Web site who was struggling with impure thoughts and actions. Like many committed Christians, both young and old, she wanted to honor Jesus Christ by maintaining pure thoughts and actions, but it was a struggle for her. You spoke about pure thoughts displacing impure thoughts, and about the importance of memorizing Scripture.

JM: In the flesh, you will never resist impure thoughts and actions. We need to teach our children to be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. It is the indwelling presence of God's Spirit that strengthens us. It's a simple process: Desire to be filled, because the Bible says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6, NKJV). Have no unconfessed sin in your life. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, NKJV). And then, ask the Holy Spirit to fill you. "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14,15, NKJV).

Once we have asked to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to recognize that God uses His Word to transform us. Only as we put Scripture into our hearts and minds can it replace those thoughts which can be so destructive. You can cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of renewing your mind by striving to replace impure thoughts with pure thoughts. When you pour liquid into a test tube, it forces the gas out. In the same way, pure thoughts can force impure thoughts out of your mind. Memorizing and meditating on Scripture is particularly helpful. Here are some useful tips to help you memorize Scripture: Decide to memorize at least one verse per week. Start with these: Romans 12:1, 2; Psalm 51:10; Colossians 3:1-3; and Philippians 4:8. Memorize word for word. Don't make up your own translation. Think about the verse. Ask what this verse means and what God is saying to you through this verse. Apply the verse to your life. "As a result of this verse, I will _____." Review. Go over the new verse every day for two months. Then once a week after that. The psalmist said that he hid God's Word in his heart to help keep him from sin (Ps. 119:11). When you ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit and fill your mind with the Word of God, you will be blessed!

DM: What are some resources that can help us to reach young people for Christ?

JM: There is Dare 2 Share with Greg Stier.⁴ They have a vision to train one million teens to clearly and confidently share their faith and to establish thirty thousand evangelism teams (e-teams) nationwide by the end of 2010. It's a marvelous movement, and they are reaching thousands of kids for Christ. WisdomWords Ministries, with Mark

Matlock, holds PlanetWisdom conferences to help young people grow into a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ.⁵ I thank God for Mark. And then there's Teen Mania with Ron Luce.⁶ There is nowhere that you can go where your faith will become more contagious than Teen Mania. Ron challenges teenagers to take a stand for Christ in their schools, communities, and throughout the world. Paul Fleischmann and the National Network of Youth Ministries are working with over eight thousand youth pastors. Their goal is to expose every teenager to the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁷ Youth Specialties works alongside Christian youth workers of just about every denomination and youth-serving organization.⁸ They are providing resources and training for thousands of youth pastors every year. And then there is our own ministry, Beyond Belief.⁹ We are committed to equipping young people in this generation to become so thoroughly convinced of the reality and relevance of Jesus Christ and His Word that they act on their Christian convictions regardless of the consequences.

There are so many resources. The structure is there. The foundation is there. But we still have a great work to do to reach the next generation for Christ. We need to pray, be faithful to our commission as the body of Christ, and God the Holy Spirit will move! 

1 <www.josh.org>

2 <www.beyondbelief.com>

3 <www.americanvalues.org/html/hardwired.html>

4 <www.dare2share.org>

5 <www.planetwisdom.org>

6 <www.teenmania.org>

7 <www.youthworkers.net>

8 <www.youthspecialties.com>

9 <www.beyondbelief.com>

10 Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, *Beyond Belief to Convictions* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2002), p. 4.

A person of peace

Randall L. Roberts



Randall Roberts, D.Min., is the senior pastor of the University Church of Seventh-day Adventists, Loma Linda, California, United States.

I've got a problem. I've been asked to speak on "A Person of Peace." As a Christian, I'm called to be a person of peace, to speak on peace, and to live in peace. And my life is anything but peaceful.

The reason I struggle with peace can be summed up in two simple words. The first word is *hurry*. One statistic tells us that 36 percent of Americans say that they are rushed all the time. One writer says that this is historically unprecedented, anytime, anywhere.

I wonder how many of those 36 percent are pastors. Do you wonder if you're one of them? Then take this little test:

No doubt you have pulled up to a stoplight just recently, right? Now let me ask you, What happened immediately before and while you were there at the stoplight waiting? First of all, while you were still approaching the stoplight, you raced another car to even *get* to the stoplight just so you could be first in line when the light turned green! Then, if you lost that race, while you sat there fuming, you surveyed the car in front of you, asking yourself some questions. Who is the driver? How old is the driver? Is the driver male or female? What kind of car is it? What are the chances that that driver is going to take two extra seconds to put the pedal to the metal when the light turns green?

Have you ever done that? Then join the one-third. And I'm happy to welcome you, because that means that I'm not the only one with a problem.

But it's not just the word *hurry* that threatens to define our lives and rob our peace. It is also the word *worry*. There is just so much to do. Will it never end? Will the phone never stop ringing?

There is just so much to do and so many people for whom to do it. Did you know that the average office worker in this country has 36 hours of work on their desk at any given time? Thirty-six hours! That means that at any given time, you are approximately one week behind just in terms of office work.

And rest doesn't always help. In fact, the average American gets two and one-half hours less sleep than Americans did one hundred years ago.

So there's my problem. I am to be a person of peace. I am to speak on peace. And yet, hurry and worry frequently crowd the forefront of my life.

Now, please don't misunderstand. It's not that I don't want peace. I very much do. I am deeply drawn to it. My life may be filled with hustle and bustle, hurry and worry, but I want peace. The question is, How do I get it?

Have you heard Chuck Swindoll tell this story? It seems that a pastor left the pastorate after 20 years. He decided to become a funeral director. Somebody asked him, "Why did you do that?"

"Well," he said, "the answer is pretty simple. You see, in the pastorate, I spent about 12 years trying to straighten out John, and I never did get him straightened out. And then I spent about 14 months trying to straighten out the marriage of the Smiths, and I couldn't get it straightened out. And then I spent three years trying to straighten out Susan, and *she* never did get straightened out. But now? Let me tell you something—now when I straighten them out, they stay straight."

I suppose that's one of the problems of working with the living—they just won't stay straight. And since they won't, being a person of peace is a challenge.

How can we become persons of peace?

One way is to escape. Escape to the islands. Escape to the movies. Escape with a good book. Escape, our culture says, because in escape there is peace.

Escape is certainly one option, though, quite frankly, it's not a very good one, because as soon as the escape ends, all life's problems are still sitting right there, right where we left them.

Another option is to depend on the circumstances around us to provide us with peace. If the circumstances are right—if they are slow and unhurried—then we can be at peace, right?

There was a time when that option worked reasonably well.

One of my all-time favorite TV programs is *The Andy Griffith Show*. I remember an episode where Sheriff Andy Griffith and his deputy, Barney Fife, played by Don Knotts, are sitting out on the front porch after dinner. The evening is quiet. Andy is slowly strumming and picking on his guitar. Barney is just sitting there, listening and thinking. Finally, Barney speaks slowly and says, "Think I'll go over to the diner and get me some ice cream."

There is silence for a few seconds, with neither of them speaking. Andy continues to strum the guitar. And finally Andy says, "Well, why don't you go on over to the diner and get yourself some ice cream, then?"

Again there is silence for a few seconds. And finally Barney says, "You know, I believe I will go over to the diner and get me some ice cream."

And then, what seemed to be about three years later, Andy finally says, "Well, go ahead on over to the diner and get yourself some ice cream then."

By that time, my twenty-first century, Southern California, overly stimulated insides are screaming, "Just get the ice cream!"

There was a time when, if you were dependent on circumstances to make you into a person of peace, it might have worked and even worked reasonably well. But such times have long since disappeared from the rearview mirror.

The biblical perspective

Turn to John 16 and then John 14.

Consider two verses together, one from each of these two chapters. But first, we must remember the setting. In both of these texts, Jesus is speaking the night before His crucifixion. The cross looms right ahead. Life has grown dangerous, deadly. In fact, it would be hard to imagine a more turbulent time. The storm is preparing to unleash its fury upon Him. Even now, the thunder rolls. The emotional climate is heavy. Trouble is on its way. It's a good time for hurry and worry—"Let's hurry up and get out of here because there are plenty of reasons to worry."

And yet, it is in the midst of this turbulent time that Jesus talks about peace. *About peace!* Can you imagine? Could

M Y LIFE MAY BE FILLED WITH HUSTLE AND BUSTLE, HURRY AND WORRY, BUT I WANT PEACE. THE QUESTION IS, HOW DO I GET IT?

there be a worse time to be talking about peace? This is the most troubled time of Jesus' life. And yet listen to what He says, just as the storm is about to break.

Read John 14:27 and 16:33.

This is a new promise. John 14:27 is the first time the word *eirene*—*peace*—occurs in the fourth Gospel. It's a strange time to start talking about peace right when the storm gathers. It would have made much more sense to talk about peace back in the early days of preaching, before the crowds grew so large, before the conflict set in, before the days of threat arrived. It would have made much more sense to speak of peace then. The circumstances would have been much better. But no, not until here, not until the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls does Jesus speak of peace.

I don't know what you make of that, but at least one thing must be clear—the peace of which Jesus here speaks cannot mean the absence of conflict. After all, He is merely hours away from crucifixion. He has just recently—just a couple of chapters before this—said that He is "troubled" (John 12:27) by what lies ahead of Him. And yet here He speaks of peace.

So whatever else peace may or may not be, of one thing we can be sure—the peace which Jesus offers us is not something that comes from the cessation of trouble, difficulty, or stress.

One New Testament theologian states it in a very simple way. Listen: "The peace that Jesus gives is grounded in God and not in circumstances."¹

And that's a point we must understand, because in the world around us, absence of conflict is often the meaning of peace. Make sure the circumstances are right, and you will be at peace. Make sure there's no hurry and no worry, and you will be at peace.

And here Jesus, in the midst of conflict, surrounded by reasons for hurry and worry, speaks of peace.

If we draw together these two verses, we can make two simple statements about Jesus' brand of peace.

In the world, trouble

First, we can say this: *in the world, trouble*. What we can expect in life, as one country song says, is T-R-O-U-B-L-E! And yet, that certainty, that verity, that promise on the part of Jesus is oddly comforting, for it tells us that when we do face trouble in the world, it doesn't mean that something has gone wrong. In fact, it may mean that something has gone right.

Back in the early '90s in the United States, large numbers of upscale professional people began moving from the cities to the country. Well, when wealthy people—people accustomed to all the conveniences of suburban and city living—arrived in rural areas, you can imagine what happened. There were quite a few surprises in store.

Patrick O'Driscoll, writing in *USA Today* (August 8, 1997), said, "Your neighbor's cattle may stink. You may have to haul your own trash to the dump. The mail carrier might not deliver daily, or perhaps not at all. Power or phone lines may not reach your property. The fire department or ambulance may not come quickly enough in an emergency. And, yes, your remote mountain road may not get plowed—or paved, for that matter."

Apparently many were not ready for such realities, so they called to complain. They were upset that they weren't provided with all the amenities to which they were accustomed and which they now expected. Their complaining didn't go down too well. In fact, one county commissioner—a man named John Clarke of Larimer County, Colorado—got so

many cranky calls that he finally wrote a 13-page booklet titled, “The Code of the West: The Realities of Rural Living.” Listen to some of his warnings:

“Animals and their manure can cause objectionable odors. What else can we say?”

“If your road is gravel, it is highly unlikely that Larimer County will pave it in the foreseeable future.”

“The topography of the land can tell you where the water will go in case of heavy precipitation. When property owners fill in ravines, they have found that the water that drained through that ravine now drains through their house.”

Clarke says he wasn’t trying to keep newcomers away. “No,” he said. “We just want them to know what to expect.”

And just so, Jesus. He says to His disciples, He says to you and me, “In the world, T-R-O-U-B-L-E.” But that fact, that reality—and the hurry and worry that come with it—need not deter us from the reality of His second statement.

In Jesus, peace

The second statement we can make about what Jesus says in these verses is this: *In Jesus, peace*. In other words, though you can count on the fact this “world [is] with devils filled,” those who are in Jesus are with peace filled. They are given the grace to rise above the fray to a place of serenity.

Eugene Peterson, author of *The Contemplative Pastor*, writes about a seminal scene in the classic book *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville. It is in this scene that we see a whaleboat thudding across the frothing, turbulent ocean in pursuit of that great, white whale, *Moby Dick*. The sailors labor intensely, with every muscle taut, focusing all their attention and energy on the task at hand. It is the cosmic conflict we see, the battle between good and evil. There is the chaotic sea and the demonic sea monster versus Captain Ahab, the morally outraged man.

But what catches our eye is that in this boat there is one man who does nothing. He is not holding an oar; he isn’t sweating; he doesn’t shout. He is deliberate and languid amidst all the crashing and the cursing. Who is he? He is the harpooner—the one who will

launch the harpoon toward the whale. And as the harpooner, he waits quiet and poised. And then, in *Moby Dick*, comes this sentence: “To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooners of this world must start to their feet out of idleness, and not out of toil.”

Did you catch that? You may not have heard it with the wind roaring in your ears and the waves crashing into the boat and the oarsmen fighting the sea and the great white whale just beyond reach. So, just in case the spray dimmed your hearing; just in case in the midst of all the frothing commotion, you missed it, listen to it again: “To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooners of this world must start to their feet out of idleness, and not out of toil.”

Now listen to what Eugene Peterson has to say about Melville’s images and words: “Melville’s sentence is a text to set alongside the psalmist’s ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ (Ps. 46:10), and alongside Isaiah’s ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength’” (Isa. 30:15, RSV).

Peterson continues:

“Pastors know there is something radically wrong with the world. . . . The white whale, symbol of evil, and the crippled captain, personification of violated righteousness, are joined in battle. In such a world, noise is inevitable, and immense energy is expended. But if there is no harpooner in the boat, there will be no proper finish to the chase. Or if the harpooner is exhausted, having abandoned his assignment and become an oarsman, he will not be ready and accurate when it is time to throw his javelin.

“Somehow it always seems more compelling to assume the work of the oarsman, laboring mightily in a moral cause, throwing our energy into a fray we know has immortal consequence. And it always seems more dramatic to take on the outrage of a Captain Ahab, obsessed with a vision of vengeance and retaliation, brooding over the ancient injury done by the Enemy. There is, though, important work to do. Someone must throw the dart. Some must be harpooners.”²

It is so tempting to allow all of the *hurry* and *worry* of life to crowd out that for which every Christian and, more

closely, for which every *pastor* has been appointed—the duty of simply *being with Jesus*. When the storm of life’s demands pounds into the boat in which we ride, we are tempted to abandon the harpooner’s post and throw our weight into rowing. But it is *then* that we must remember that certainly every Christian, but more specifically, every *pastor* is called, first of all, to simply *be with Jesus*.

That’s what He says here in John: “*In me* you will have peace.” In the world, trouble, but *in Me*, peace.

That means, then, that we must be with Him, we must *abide*—as He says in these closing chapters of John’s Gospel—in Him.

When was the last time you were with Him? When was the last time you lingered long in His presence? When was the last time you huddled in the eye of the storm, huddled in that one still, silent pocket of peace while the fury raged around you, huddled alone with Him? When was the last time?

The songwriter said it well:

“Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,

“When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;

“Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,

“Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.”

Have you heard the story of the elderly lady in World War II London? The city was being bombed to pieces all around her, and she seemed strangely at peace. “How can you be at peace?” her friends asked. “How can you rest when it seems the city will be blown apart?”

“Well,” she said, “it’s like this: every night before I go to bed, I kneel and ask God to be with me through the night. And then I figure there’s no point in both of us staying up, so I go to sleep.”

You know, the real problem is not hurry and worry. The real problem is whether I dwell mainly in the world or mainly in Jesus.

In the world, trouble. In Jesus, peace. ❏

- 1 Rodney A. Whitacre, *The IVP NT Commentary Series: John* (Downer’s Grove, Ill.: University Press, 1999), 365.
- 2 Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 33, 34.

Share it anytime Take it anywhere!



Someone came to make it right.
Someone came to pay the price.
Someone came to save us—
Jesus, the Savior, the Promised One.

The MESSIAH.

Book, 360 pp.	7-619-2182-7	US\$20.95 / \$26.95
Large Print, 360 pp.	2-1181-1071-1	US\$35.00 / \$41.95
Large Edition, 360 pp.	2-8153-1578-2	US\$29.99 / \$37.99
Kindle Edition	1-1184-1741-4	US\$17.99 / \$21.99

Author Jerry Thomas's contemporary adaptation of Ellen G. White's timeless volume, *The Desire of Ages*, amplifies the beautiful message of this devotional classic, making the sublime themes of the original easier to grasp.

Now this contemporary adaptation has been reformatted to accommodate today's on-the-go lifestyles. This portable "pocket" edition makes it easier to share *Messiah* with anyone, to take it with you anywhere. It will change you. It will change others. **Guaranteed.**



Pacific Press®

Available at your local ABC, 1-800-765-6955, or online: www.AdventistBookCenter.com

Laughter from the lectern: making theology fun

Willie E. Hucks II

Editor's note: Our new assistant editor has come to us from Southwestern Adventist University, where he was associate professor of religion. Previously he served as a pastor in several congregations. This article is written from the perspective of a classroom lecturer, but the principles can be applied to other teaching situations, such as a church.

While sitting at the desk in my home office, I heard what sounded like running water. Disturbed, I arose to see where the sound was coming from. I went first to the kitchen, assuming my wife was cooking, but she wasn't, nor was the water running there. I wandered through the den, then through the living room toward our bedroom. My wife was in the bedroom; the water wasn't coming from there, either.

When leaving the bedroom, I saw water slowly flowing onto the carpet in the hallway. When I got to the doorway, I saw my three-year-old son on top of the sink. He must have turned the faucet on and the water was flowing too forcefully to safely flow down the drain. And there he waited until someone, anyone, would rescue him. So I grabbed him with one arm, while using my other hand to turn off the water; then I gingerly stepped through the thin layer of water on the floor.

It took only a few minutes for the water to overflow and create a mess; it took a good 15 minutes to clean it up.

My students laughed as I told that story but grew pensive as I drew my conclusion. I referred to Malachi 3, where God says that He will open the windows of heaven and pour out so many blessings, there won't be enough room to receive them. I said that, just as it took me longer to clean up what my son poured out, so also will it take us longer to gather all of God's blessings than it will take Him to pour them out upon us.

And this is how I summarized my lecture on tithe and offerings. It was an attempt to add some humor and to lighten up my discourse.

Theology: traumatic or terrific?

Theology has been seen by many scholars and students in purely academic terms, which frequently leads to staid, stodgy presentations. Many students are left wondering why the study of theology must be so boring.

I contend that theology is as natural as life itself and it must be done responsibly. This, then, becomes the role of the theology professor: to assist the students, theology majors or otherwise, to safely navigate the pages of Scripture so they can properly exegete both the Scriptures and the challenges of life.

Teaching theology can be done with the appropriate utilization of humor. There is biblical precedent for this methodology; the Scriptures are full of humor, or certainly what might border on the humorous. Think of the imagery that Jesus employs in Matthew 7:3, when He cautions against focusing on the speck of dust in someone else's eye, yet failing to see the blade of grass that just got into your eye (when, I suppose, you were mowing the lawn). Or the quizzical look on His face when, after the travelers on the road to Emmaus spoke of the events of Passover, He asked them what were they talking about (Luke 24:19). Or James' illustration of a man seeing his dirty face while looking at a mirror, then deciding there was no need to do anything about it (James 1:24). When dramatized, these passages not only bring smiles to the faces of those listening but aptly illustrate the deeper theology that the Holy Spirit was revealing all along.

Why the traditional approach to teaching theology?

I admit it took me a little longer than it should have to learn how my students approached the learning event. I employed what I refer to as the conduit methodology of instruction, in which information is funneled from a source to a destination. In this model, learning flows in only one



Willie E. Hucks II is the assistant editor of Ministry magazine.

direction. Another term that I use is the suzerain method, in which there is an unrivaled authority that is indispensable to the entire process of learning. In both the conduit and suzerain methodologies, instruction is mono-directional, and too often lacks true interactivity.

Professors may find such models advantageous for several reasons. For one, because Western society is facts-driven and information-focused, it is easier to disseminate a body of data to be memorized. The second reason, especially beneficial in an academic setting, is that such objectivity is easier to evaluate. It is also easier for the student, who is already accustomed to memorizing a body of information that will be evaluated via objective quizzes or examinations. And it is safer for the professor in that this approach discourages dialogue, unless the students are seeking information via questions.

However, all this can be incredibly boring!

Why the fun approach to teaching theology?

Why do I promote a fun methodology? First, the mind thinks more easily in pictures, as opposed to abstract concepts. If painting pictures worked for Jesus, I suspect it will also work in a classroom. Illustrations are a teacher's best friend. Like a window, illustrations serve two purposes: They let light in, and they allow those who are inside to see outside.

On the first cruise that I took with my family, we sailed from Miami, Florida, United States, to the eastern Caribbean. After taking into account the price of airfare, we had to cut corners, so we purchased an inside cabin. That's the last time I'll ever do that! Not only did we have to keep the lights on in the cabin whenever we were in the room, it was depressing to walk down the hallway, look into other rooms across the hall, and see outside. A window really made that much of a difference!

Second, the fun approach reaches the postmodern generation. I've noticed an interesting contradiction among today's youth: There is a greater biblical illiteracy among today's students than

in the past; yet there is also a stronger hunger for relationships, for connection with God and with others. They may not know where certain books of the Bible are, but they connect with stories and other visuals that illustrate biblical truths.

Third, this methodology shows the lighthearted side both of theology and of the professor. Students can see that theology is within the reach of everyone. The God of theology is within their reach personally, and the professor is also within their reach, easily approachable, and wanting to be approached. As such, this methodology opens the door for serious conversations about spirituality, life, relationships, and a myriad of other topics.

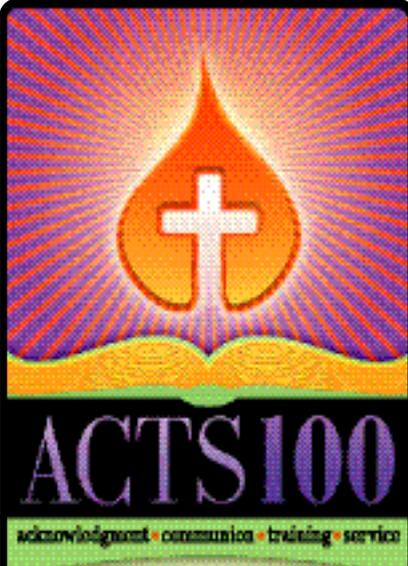
How to make theology fun

From the first day of the semester, I attempted to give my students permission to enjoy the class—our journey through a systematized theology. I wanted to give them a reason to believe that coming to class was going to be worth it, because (1) they never knew what to expect next (that was a good thing), and (2) the topic was going to be discussed at a level that they could comprehend, and would be practical for their current and future experiences. I realized that I only had a small window of opportunity to bond with them, and I had to make the best of it.

So, how can professors make theology "fun"?

Tell your story. Classrooms (and pulpits) are awash with urban legends, oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. Be genuine, be unique. No one but you can use the illustrations that come from your personal experiences; and even if they tried to tell them, it could not ever have the same force!

Almost anything is fair game: marriage, children, hobbies, childhood, travels, vacations, just to name a few. Of course, you shouldn't tell stories that would embarrass the objects of your stories. In fact, my wife and children have attained celebrity status, as it were, because of the stories I have told involving them. Anyone who knows me knows about my favorite American football team, my favorite form of vacation



ACTS 100
wisdom • insight • connection • training • service

Reading to Know Him!

Read the Scriptures to deepen your relationship with God.

Pastor Curtis Thomas says, "It came as a surprise to me that one of the problems I faced in the ministry was that when I opened the Scriptures I found it extremely difficult to forget the need to determine the background, outline the passage, divide it into an appropriate package for delivery, and think of ways to get this particular truth across to others."

Pastors and teachers are susceptible to reading Scripture just to prepare for the next sermon or lesson. When we read the Scriptures, we should seek Him first. To know Him is our highest privilege and should be our primary aim when we open God's Word. He wants to reveal Himself to you and He wants you to know Him. Through His Word, He has provided all you need to know about Him on this side of heaven.

—Don Pucil, *Lifeway Christian Resources*

Fresh ideas for developing your church's spiritual life
www.ministerialassociation.com

travel (have you figured it out yet?), my favorite vacation destination, and many other things.

In the classroom, students have even been fair game. If, for example, I had a student who lightheartedly teased me about the failures of my favorite football team, when we would talk about the sanctuary in Leviticus, I would draw my stick figure of a sinner bringing his lamb to the sanctuary. I would then name the sinner after that person. Now my student has attained celebrity status, and the class has had a good laugh for both that class session and every time the student is reminded of being a “sinner.” (Please know that I wouldn’t pick on students if I knew they couldn’t handle such barbs.)

Each story becomes an avenue for the sharing of theology. But be cautious, lest the point of the illustration becomes lost in the recounting of the story itself. If there’s no spiritual application within the story, don’t waste your time telling it.

Relax. College life is stressful enough. Through storytelling and relationship-building, create a comfort zone that actively encourages the students to understand that there are things more important than the grade. Admittedly, that becomes a tightrope because the class is still an academic exercise, and the students must still meet some standards of evaluation that have been spelled out in the syllabus. However, in a religion classroom, there has to be something that supersedes the merely academic. And when that comfort zone has been created, the learning will follow.

Eat with them. Not only must the students understand that the class is just that, a class, professors must understand that university life is just that, life. A part of life is fellowship—needed for context and balance.

The life of a professor need not be consumed with research and development and professional meetings; for with the semester over, students probably will not remember your work of research and development, no matter how brilliant. The common touch, the listening ear, impacts them the most.

Take the time to go to the college cafeteria, eat the same food that the

students complain about (it’s a rite of college life to complain about college food; after all, it’s not like momma cooks it), and converse at the table with a group of students while eating. What are the advantages? You avoid the “suzerainty trap” that separates some faculty from the students. You bond with the students, whether there are a lot of students at the table or it is a one-on-one encounter. The conversation may open the door to serious life-altering conversations down the road.

Keep your office door open. The demands upon professors always exceed the time available. However, for religion professors it is of paramount importance to maintain an open-door policy. Before we were religion professors, we were ordained ministers who vowed not to be served but to serve. It seems extremely inconvenient to have students constantly coming by, wanting to talk about everything from grades to sports to religion to the unimportant. But it comes with the territory. Every opportunity for contact with the students is a divine appointment that makes a statement about the

professor and the God who called that professor to this special ministry.

Conclusion

Though written mostly from the perspective of a university professor, the principles in this article are applicable in other venues. The lively, interactive elements herein discussed easily apply to preaching, teaching Sabbath School lessons (even in the adult division), telling the children’s story (age appropriately, of course), even overseeing the collecting of the tithes and offerings (I’ve got stories and illustrations for that, too). I am convinced that, just as teaching can be fun, so also can preaching, without lowering the dignity of the pulpit.

Whether with the students in the classroom or the congregation at the church, the ultimate objective is to lead them into seeing a loving God who actually does smile. He even laughs and lets us know that laughter has its place in life (Eccles. 3:4). And when all is said and done, we will all be with Him, sharing peals of laughter around His throne, rejoicing forever in His victory. ■

Lutherstädte
A Reformation
Travel Guide

adventist media germany
www.adventist-media.de

Plus CO-ROM!

A Reformation Travel Guide
Martin Luther: Follow the miner's son on his way to becoming a university professor and reformer. This travel guide takes you to the location where many important Reformation events occurred. Written in German and English, the guide includes numerous photographs along with a valuable CO-ROM. Use this booklet and the CO to plan visits to these historical sites. The material can also be used in various study groups.

- www.adventsource.org • 1-800-328-0525
\$ 9.95 (plus tax, shipping)
- In Europe: www.stimme-der-hoffnung.de/shop
€ 9.95 (plus tax, shipping)

NEW! Order now!

How could I?

Paul Charles

It was one of my most memorable days ever, the day of my ordination—an official confirmation by the church of God’s calling to ministry. Looking back at the service, I now realize that I made one big mistake in what was, otherwise, a perfect day. Though acknowledging my colleagues, friends, family, and fellow believers for being instruments that God used to help me reach this point, I didn’t acknowledge the one who shared my tears, my joys, and my deepest emotions. And that was my wife, Caroline.

How could I?

At times, when it seemed as if I were standing alone, she was always there to reassure me that God has a plan, that He cares, and that He’s near. “This too shall pass,” she would say in her own way, comforting me with the assurance that our Lord would not allow us to go through anything without giving us the strength to endure.

Caroline never made any demands for luxury. She was content with the blessings of God. When separated for long periods (sometimes for weeks) due to my preaching appointments, she faithfully led the home, all the while praying for me. My heart would ache as I sensed the pain in her voice during those separations. And when I was away, and my son would get sick (he, it seemed, always waited until I was gone to get sick), I knew what a burden it placed on her.

How could I? How could I have not have shown my appreciation to her on the day of my ordina-

tion? I don’t know. What I do know is that not only am I determined to learn from this experience, I want to share with others what I have learned.

My lapse has made me realize the dilemma of many pastoral homes. Could it be that because our ministry often assumes an open and public stage, the temptation is to focus on our “performance” at the expense of our home life? I believe that this problem has become more common than most are willing to acknowledge.

The minister who invests in the marriage and family will enjoy a more fruitful and exciting ministry than will the one who ignores the home. One of the most dreadful sins that a minister can commit against the spouse is to be ungrateful and unappreciative. As ministers, we need to stop living up to the expectations of people and concentrate more on our homes. I have seen many who, in the name of the Lord and the ministry, have ruined their families. It’s not, nor will it ever be, worth it. Never!

Fathers, our sons and daughters will not remember us for the eloquent sermons we preach, or the number of visits we make, or even how many we baptize. They will remember us for the time we spent wrestling with them on the floor, playing house with them and their dolls, kicking that ball with them, coloring a picture, and being there to kiss the bruised knee. That’s what matters, even more than whatever success we have in our work.

**I DIDN’T ACKNOWLEDGE
THE ONE WHO SHARED
MY TEARS, MY JOYS, AND
MY DEEPEST EMOTIONS.**

I was not ordained alone on that day, but ordained with my wife. While our roles may be different, we are conditioned by one purpose and intention, to serve our Lord.

Let us, then, value our spouses as individuals as well as the contribution and sacrifices they make. I am taking a day off today just to be with my wife (Don’t even try to call me on my mobile phone!). That’s, perhaps, something more ministers need to do, and more often than we normally do it.

The church, believe it or not, will survive without you. Your family may not.

How could I?

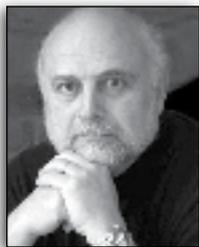
It’s easier than you think. ■



Paul Charles, Ph.D., is education and communication director of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Southern Africa, headquartered in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Conflict resolution: how to handle a crisis

David VanDenburgh



David VanDenburgh, D.Min., is senior pastor of the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church and adjunct faculty member of Kettering College, Kettering, Ohio, United States.

Not unusual in pastoral ministry, crises may come without notice and may take different shapes. A death of a family member, an accident, a marriage falling apart, a run-away child, a theological conflict, a challenge to the pastor's leadership, a complaint, a committee meeting gone sour, a church split, a power play, an interpersonal conflict—and the list goes on.

Our human tendency to feel personally threatened and vulnerable makes every crisis both frightening and potentially destructive. The crisis, whatever its origin, quickly and easily becomes a challenge to our own sense of self. We take it personally. We worry about how we respond. We hope we will prove adequate and competent. We identify with the people in crisis and feel vulnerable. We allow the crisis to become a referendum on our personal value as pastors and as persons.

The last is especially true when the crisis centers on pastoral performance. A church member writes a letter suggesting that we might be happier doing something else somewhere else. We hear that people are unhappy with our leadership. Or, a family transfers to another church and lets it be known that they are looking for better preaching. Our supervisor may at that point ask us to come to his office to discuss the complaints from some of our members.

How do we respond to such crises? What *should* we do? And what should we *not* do? The following pointers may be helpful.¹

What you should not do

Don't feel you are a victim. You are not. You are not helpless. People have different personalities and perspectives. Just because people don't agree with you doesn't mean you are a helpless victim. Once I felt that some members were constantly after me, and their criticism clouded my thoughts and perceptions. I was telling some fellow pastors about this situation and how hard ministering in that church had become. One pastor looked at me and said, "How long have you been feeling victimized by your church?" That was all it took to shift my perspective because I realized that I was not a victim. I chose to continue pastoring that church and to stop complaining about it. I chose not to be a victim.

Don't get defensive. Keep your mouth closed and breathe through your nose! Listen carefully. Seek to understand rather than to be understood. Don't explain, give reasons, or argue.

Don't take yourself too seriously. What you are facing is not a catastrophe. Relax. You're not the first pastor to be criticized—nor will you be the last. Concentrate on what you can learn from the crisis. It's OK to be human. It's OK to fail. After all, even the great apostle said, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16). The answer was clear: No one. You're just a servant of God. You don't have to be God. Relax.

Don't get tensed up. God looks after you. He can help you handle this.

Don't overwork. You don't need to show off by launching a blizzard of activities to solve every problem. Don't try to solve problems that belong to others.

Don't try to control everything. All you get when you try to control others is a conflict between wills. Will conflicts polarize? Just get behind someone on the highway, and blow your horn to get them to pull over or speed up. Even God doesn't attempt to control people. He gives them freedom of choice.

Don't distance yourself from people. When you are hurt, the natural tendency is to pull away from those who have hurt you. No matter how painful, seek them out, and spend time with them. If you distance yourself from them—either physically or emotionally—you will increase the misunderstanding and fuel the fire of conflict. You have to stay engaged. Edwin Friedman calls this maintaining a "non-anxious presence."² You must stay present, and you must not be an anxious presence if you want to bring healing.

Don't try to get people to like you. We pastors are powerfully motivated by the desire to have people like us. This is understandable, but not

the best. We must be more concerned for the good of the people we serve than we are about their liking us. God has called us not to meet all the needs of people, but to make them fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Don't manipulate. Manipulation means trying to get people to do something they don't want to do, often by arranging circumstances so that they have no choice but to do what we want them to do. This usually happens behind the scenes.

Don't vacillate. Your vacillation causes anxiety in others. An old adage in carpentry says, "Measure twice; cut once." Carefully, prayerfully, thoughtfully decide what to do, then do it without vacillation. People who act like they know what they are doing calm other people's anxieties and reduce tension.

WE ALLOW THE CRISIS TO BECOME A REFERENDUM ON OUR PERSONAL VALUE AS PASTORS AND AS PERSONS.

Don't polarize or allow polarizing. Don't draw lines. Don't exclude people who disagree with you. Don't put people into opposing camps, and don't let other people do it. When people polarize, they feel obligated to defend their position. It's so easy to let a disagreement become an "us versus them" issue. When it does, reason goes out the window. Tension increases. Conflict escalates.

Don't get triangled. A triangle happens when you get pulled into a conflict between two other people, or between two groups, or between two conflicting ideas. Two church members in conflict with each other tell you their sides of the story, and each hopes you will take their side. Get out of the triangle and refuse to listen to gossip about others.

Don't try to rescue every time someone has a problem. When we see some-

one in trouble (even if it's their own fault), we want to rescue them. In most cases, people are more resilient than we give them credit for. They don't need to be rescued. They can handle it; they will grow from it. Besides, our efforts to rescue often prevent real issues from being brought to light, and they never get handled.

What you can do

Share your vision. Tell people your dreams, what goals you have for your church and your members. Paint a compelling picture of a better future. Instead of responding to attacks or criticisms, say what you are trying to do, where you are trying to go.

Stay optimistic. You can get through your problems, for God is with you. He is faithful and will not abandon you. He continues as your Rock, your Fortress, your strong Tower. The people who oppose you are good people. They aren't evil. They just have their point of view.

Keep a sense of humor. Try to find something funny, even in difficult situations. Grim desperation attracts the buzzards.

Empower others. Help other people, including your opponents, to say what they want to say. Express your confidence in them to do the brave thing and deal with the crisis.

Stay connected. People in interpersonal difficulties normally tend to keep apart from each other. Resist this tendency! Stay connected to everyone, especially to those who create the most unpleasant reactions in you. Don't avoid them; work toward an even stronger relationship.

Disagree nicely. Stay polite and respectful. If you feel yourself getting emotionally hot, take a break, and count to ten.

Hold on to the wheel and keep the ship on track. Don't start steering all over the place trying to please everybody. Listen to the other party carefully. Listening carefully and respectfully doesn't mean that you will necessarily do what your critics want you to do.

Manage triangles. The basic rule for managing triangles: Get the people (groups) at the other two points of the triangle to deal directly with one another

rather than going through you. How? By refusing to keep their secrets for them. Open the doors and windows, and let in as much light and air as you can. No private meetings. No private conversations. No secrets.

Stay tuned to God. Conflict situations should force you to your knees. God becomes your one true refuge and strength. Stay connected. Pray. Listen for His voice. If He calls you to repent of what you have said or done, repent and make it right with Him.

If you need to tell someone else you are sorry for what you said or did, do so, but be sure you are not just doing it to please people.

Be open and direct. Hidden agendas create problems. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. Paul talks about the mutual benefit of "speaking the truth in love" and how such a practice helps us all to "grow up" (Eph. 4:15).

Keep your boundaries clear. Know what actually "your stuff" is and what is not. Think of your life as your yard: you have a property line that separates your yard from your neighbor's. What's on your side is yours, but what's on the other person's side is theirs. Determine for yourself, under divine guidance, how to feel, and let the Holy Spirit do the same for them.

Conclusion

Conflict is difficult. We all have our secret fears. When somebody "pushes our buttons," we react because they are touching one of our secret fears. When this happens, we get frightened, panicky, and begin to act defensively. Our bodies go into a "fight or flight" mode. Our heart rate goes up. Our pupils dilate. Blood goes to our muscles and away from our internal organs. We are no longer rational. This happens to everybody to some extent. The good news is that you have time between the stimulus and the response, and you can use that time to choose a different response than the one that comes naturally. ■

1 I'm indebted to my friend Calvin Thomsen for much of this list.

2 Dr. Friedman's book, *Generation to Generation*, deals with family systems theory.

Pastor at sea— an unusual ministry opportunity

By Robert C.
Bradford



Robert C. Bradford is a retired American Baptist minister, living in Arlington, Washington, United States.

Suddenly a worshiper sitting in the third row began to weep while the congregation sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” I immediately stopped the service, sat down next to the stranger and put my hand on his shoulder. Now he was sobbing with his head buried in a handkerchief. We were not in a church but on a cruise ship, on the Pacific Ocean.

“How can I help you?” I asked.

“Just two months ago,” he answered, “my dear wife passed away. The hymn ‘What a Friend We Have in Jesus’ was played at her memorial service. For years we looked forward to this cruise to celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary. I loved her so very much. I feel a terrible loss.”

For the remaining days of the cruise I spent quality time with him at meals, events, and in his room, each time bringing care and comfort.

After all, I am his on-board cruise chaplain.

Join me as I share with you the unique and rewarding ministry of a pastor at sea.

Each evening the passengers have delivered to their room a schedule of events for every hour of the next day, religious services included. Worship services attract the faithful and those in need.

A cruise chaplain does not have the luxury of time. With a room assigned for a half-hour service, it must be short, simple, and to the point. The congregants are strangers, but the service embraces all denominations, ethnic groups, and gender and age differences.

The chaplain will see the worshipers for the next few days, then never again. After 44 cruises to 50 countries, not once in the 445 days on a cruise ship have I cruised with a previous passenger. To develop lasting friendships during a two-to-three week cruise does not happen easily. However, when you share a passenger’s loss, the bond of friendship lasts a long time.

Following a worship service en route to Hawaii, an elderly lady handed me a navigation map and asked, “Can you help me?” Her United States Navy husband was buried at sea during World War II. On the map was a cross located at the position where her husband was buried. I took the map to the navigation officer to find the approximate location of the burial site, not far from where we would be. On returning from Hawaii, I met with the lady on the fantail of the ship, where together we participated in a very emotional memorial service with Scripture, prayer, and an aloha to her husband as leis were thrown into the sea. The lady, thrilled with the service, experienced peace and closure.

A rumor on the ship spread like wildfire: “Lady Bird Johnson, wife of the late President Lyndon B. Johnson, is on the ship with her family.” During a reception, there she was, surrounded by Secret Service agents and Royal Canadian Police. One agent introduced me to her and her family as they greeted me warmly. Later, much to my delight, they attended a worship service.

Previous famous passengers include Elliot Roosevelt, oldest son of Franklin D. Roosevelt; an ambassador to Rome from Ecuador; an Australian medical doctor; and a personal physician to the king of Saudi Arabia.

Although well-known personalities have been on board, I consider everyone on the ship famous and part of the congregation. I chat with captains, cooks, casino dealers, stewards, and waitresses, always with the hope of sharing the gospel. Connecting to a person at the point of their need opens the door for witness.

A crew member discovered my role on board ship as a cruise chaplain. One day he shared the following, “Pastor, I am having a terrible time doing my job because I have great pain in both hands. I may be sent home. I am so frustrated.”

I said, “Hold out your hands and I will pray the Lord will heal you.” The next day I met with a very amazed crew member. The pain was gone.

Because many of the passengers are seniors and physically challenged, a cruise chaplain can expect to provide crisis ministry. With passengers separated from their home, families, and doctors,

THE CONGREGANTS ARE STRANGERS, BUT THE SERVICE EMBRACES ALL DENOMINATIONS, ETHNIC GROUPS, AND GENDER AND AGE DIFFERENCES.

a chaplain must be prepared to deal with death and serious illness.

A few days after 9/11, I boarded a cruise out of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, en route to Florida, United States, through the Panama Canal. The worship services were attended to capacity, with standing room only. The same was true on a cruise bound from Singapore to China and Japan, for the Iraq war had begun, and the SARS epidemic had broken out in China. Unlike the usual excitement and hilarious spirit on the ship, the mood was quiet, solemn. The passengers, as well as the crew members, were visibly frightened and confused. These cruises resulted in many visits to state rooms for prayer and counseling where I had the privilege to bring peace, calm, and blessing to passengers in crisis.

One time, at the conclusion of a service when everyone else had left, a Chinese man slowly made his way up to the pulpit. "I am from San Francisco," he said, "on board with my family. There are sixteen in our group, with a number of my family from Hong Kong. We planned this cruise together to honor our mother's eightieth birthday. But sadly, just a few weeks ago she died in an airplane crash in China. After a lot of discussion among the family we decided to cruise and honor our mother."

He continued, "Thank you! I am profoundly grateful for the message this morning. We are finding it extremely difficult to be on board without her. You have helped all of the family to come to terms with Mother's loss. Again, thank you!"

The most fulfilling experiences of every cruise were the Bible studies with the crew members. The studies were always late at night because crew members begin work at six o'clock in the morning and finish at eleven o'clock at night or later. Think of it! These crew

members, many of whom have spouses and young children, stay separated from their home and families for a year.

On a recent cruise to South America I accepted an invitation from Filipino Christian crew members to conduct a Bible study at midnight. I was weary! As I entered the ship's theater, where that morning I had conducted a passenger worship service, 25 Filipinos stood and greeted me with enthusiastic handshakes and joyful smiles. The service began with singing in English and Filipino.

Following the sharing time of woes and wows that was filled with praise, I began the Bible study. Their looks of anticipation made me forget my weariness as I thought, "What a privilege to share with those who are so eager to study the word of God!"

Maureen, a lounge waitress and the only woman there, became a Christian that day. "My friends," she testified, "are angels for their care and love of me. I am overwhelmed with joy in my new-found faith."

Still on board? Excited about the thought of being a pastor at sea? I hope so. Be prepared for a fulfilling ministry and an adventure of a lifetime.

Generally the cruise lines assign retired clergy as cruise chaplains with free passage. Considered passengers, the clergy couples have a room assigned to them and all the amenities provided for passengers. They are responsible for their own transportation to the embarkation port and will not receive remuneration. However, they are richly rewarded because—in addition to travel—they also share in the joy of ministry. Meeting and ministering to people aboard ship is priceless.

Contact the various cruise lines in order to be put in touch with agents assigning cruises. Be patient—more than 1,500 clergy/couples are seeking cruises.

No wonder. ■

QUIT
Now!

A fresh, easy-to-use update of the world-famous five-day plan.

Get a starter packet containing 12 participant booklets, resource CDs (PowerPoint presentation & Facilitators Guide), forms, and advertising packets. Everything you need to conduct a successful seminar!

order online at
www.quit-now.info

NOW ONLY \$50

Let the Scriptures speak: preaching memorized passages

Andrew Marttinen



Andrew Marttinen is the pastor of the Chatham-Kent district in Ontario, Canada.

You're visiting a church and you're asked to preach. Even though you haven't brought along notes or your favorite Bible, you don't need to perspire. You walk up to the lectern and recite the Sermon on the Mount from memory without missing a word. You start with "Blessed are the poor in spirit" and go on to "the crowds were amazed at his teaching" as you look intently into the surprised faces in the congregation. Does this sound like a preacher's dream?

It's quite real for me. Each month I recite by memory a 30-minute passage from Scripture. It's actually quite easy to do. In this article I will demonstrate how I've branded the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) into my brain. Then I will show how any passage of Scripture can be quickly and easily memorized and recited to a church audience.

To begin with, you might be surprised at how much of the Sermon on the Mount you already know. The passages are probably as familiar to you as church hymns, childhood rhymes, or Christmas carols. If you read the Bible with any frequency, you've already memorized all the parts of the Sermon on the Mount. To recite it, all you need is a good filing system in your brain that allows you to connect everything together.

Locus

The memory technique that works consistently, quickly and completely for me, called *locus*,

meaning "place," was invented more than 2,500 years ago by the Greek poet Simonides.

In the Middle Ages, much of the wisdom of the ancient world was lost. This "secret art of memory" went underground, but it was kept alive by those who used *locus* to remember every word that they used for rituals. During the Renaissance, the "secret" was freed up. Still, it never became as widely used as it was in the ancient world. Today most people think that someone who can recite large amounts of Scripture must be gifted or savant, or have extremely good spiritual discipline. Simonides' technique turns such ostensibly grand efforts into a simple trick. Your *locus* can be a home, school, or church—whatever is familiar to you.

Daydreaming improves your memory

For me, memorizing the Sermon on the Mount is as easy as taking a tour through my own house, describing what I see. I put into order key words that remind me of familiar verses or sayings that I already know. For example, regarding the phrase, "the meek shall inherit the earth," the word *meek* is simply a title that reminds me of the whole phrase, in the same way the title "Silent Night" would bring the whole hymn to memory.

Here's how I file Matthew 5 to 7 into my memory, using my own home as the *locus*:

"Poor in Spirit." I visualize a poor man, unshaven and dressed in shabby clothes at my doorstep.

"Those who mourn will be comforted." I welcome him into my entrance hall. He's crying because he is poor. I place my arms around him and comfort him. Note: Drama, action, or emotion associated with the word makes it easier to remember.

"The meek." He takes off his shoes (a meek act) before going into my living room.

"Hunger and thirst." He enters the next room—my dining room, where hunger and thirst are satisfied.

"The merciful." I see a whole bunch of nuns—sisters of mercy—in my kitchen performing the merciful act of serving soup and sandwiches to the poor man.

"The pure in heart." My bathroom purifies any dirty person when they wash with soap.

"The peacemakers." I go to my bedroom to find peace and quiet.

"The persecuted." I can find my two youngest children in their room. From there they "persecute" me by disturbing my sleep at night with requests for water, blankets, and diaper changes.

I finish the chapter by finding something to relate to these other words in my other rooms,

such as salt and light (v. 13-15); God's law (v. 17-20); vows (v. 33-37); and love for enemies (v. 43-48).

For chapter 6, I put my key words into a short sentence: "Give (v. 1-4), pray (v. 5-15), fast (v. 16-18), and you'll receive treasure in heaven (v. 19-21), see (v. 22,23)?" This gets me down to verse 24. The rest of the chapter tells about two masters (v. 24) that I'm worried about serving (v. 25-34). The dramatic visual hooks of chapter 7 make it easy to memorize. Most pastors know about the "mote in the eye," "the Golden Rule" and "building on the rock or sand."

To deliver the sermon, I take a stroll in my imagination and explain to the congregation what I see. Remember, the important thing isn't having a terrific memory but in the creativity that you show in storing information. Daydreaming improves your memory!

Try it now!

If you prepare well and preach the Sermon on the Mount as soon as possible, you'll have enough confidence to recite other passages that will make your congregation's joyful hearts quiver. In the past two years I've used the couplet of Isaiah 40 and Psalm 40, the letter to James, Hebrews 11, 1 Corinthians 13, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, 2 Peter, Matthew 26-28, Luke 21, Proverbs 20-22 and the entire book of Revelation (in more than one sitting, though). The more you do it, the better you'll get. I've been preaching Scripture sermons at least once a month for two years.

Here is my usual schedule for reciting a book or a chapter by memory for a sermon using the locus system:

- Two weeks before my sermon, I select the passage to be memorized. After learning several verses each day, I make a game of giving myself random "pop" quizzes while washing the dishes, mowing the lawn, or putting the children to bed.
- The last week I concentrate only on review. Wednesday I practice in my empty church. If I am struggling greatly, I push the sermon back for another week.

TO BEGIN WITH, YOU
MIGHT BE SURPRISED
AT HOW MUCH OF THE
SERMON ON THE MOUNT
YOU ALREADY KNOW. THE
PASSAGES ARE PROBABLY
AS FAMILIAR TO YOU
AS CHURCH HYMNS,
CHILDHOOD RHYMES OR
CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

The day before I preach, I practice in the church again.

If called to preach the text on the spur of the moment, a glance through the chapters completes the preparation. After praying, I recite the passage during the divine worship hour.

I find it easier to preach to a full congregation than when I'm alone in the church. As I look into the peoples' faces, they help me along with nods, "amen's" and sometimes tears. My church members want me to succeed. I know that their prayers are giving me power and confidence that will make my presentation grow stronger as I continue preaching. One woman in my congregation, so eager to help, mouths the words from her Bible while I'm preaching. Several others, with their Bibles open as they check on my progress, get into the habit of finishing off the endings of familiar verses.

Blessed results

You and your congregation will be blessed as you recite Scripture from memory during the worship hour. In fact, I can think of several blessings for preachers and several for the congregation. For the congregation: their Bibles are open during the entire service. They are reading Scripture (some may even recite the text along with you). They are hearing God's Word. They're not bored. You've grabbed

their attention with your memory "stunt." Next, the Word of God speaks. They receive a free copy of sermon notes, because it's all in their Bibles. Their faith increases, because the Bible promises that "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17, NIV). And last but not least, they are praying for their pastor to make it through the passage that, in turn, gives them such a blessing.

For the preacher: You're always prepared to preach. No notes. You can look directly into the eyes of your congregation, watching the Scriptures win victories for Christ. With your mind on Scripture all week, other less useful thoughts are crowded out. Instead of replaying members' critical comments, your thoughts are on God's Word. Memorized passages are useful for other times during the week—in prayer, counseling, and for rebuking the devil. It takes less time to memorize Scripture than it does to compose most sermons, and then you have more time to address other pastoral concerns. You never have to worry about saying the wrong thing while preaching—if people are offended they have to take it up with God's Word—not the preacher.

Additional suggestions

Read the Bible often—at least once through Old Testament and twice through the New. Listen to Bible tapes in your car. Dramatized versions are helpful if the music in the background doesn't distract. Repeat five to seven challenging phrases often so you can become more familiar with these phrases. If you get stuck while you're reciting, ask for someone to open a window or give you a glass of water as you regain your thoughts. Read many different translations of Scripture. Sometimes there are easier-to-remember phrases in Bible versions that you used as a child. For confidence, review your old files at least once every two months. You might be surprised at how good your memory is. Finally, practice brief portions of Scriptures you have memorized throughout the week.

Then let the Scriptures speak! ■

Dateline

Is the U.S. Congress penalizing tithe payers?

Washington, D.C., United States—Most clergy don't necessarily focus their attention on the details of budget legislation pending before the **U.S. Congress**. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the voluminous budget deficit reduction package that passed in February 2006 did so with little interest from the religious community. But among the bill's many provisions was something that could make a significant difference to parishioners who tithe and/or give generously.

In order to qualify for **Medicaid** (a government health-care program for the poor), applicants must verify their lack of significant financial resources. Some people have decided to qualify for Medicaid by giving their assets away rather than depleting them by paying their medical bills. In this way they get to direct their assets to those they love or to causes dear to their hearts—rather than watching their assets erode via medical bills. In order to save the government money, Congress included language in the deficit reduction bill designed to make this a lot harder.

The problem? It is unclear whether tithe payers and those who give generously to their churches will find it more difficult to qualify for Medicaid under the new law. Meetings are occurring with key congressional leaders in the hope of ensuring that any ambiguity will be decided in favor of those who systematically give to their churches. "There is a provision in the bankruptcy code that ensures tithe payers are not penalized, and we hope to get the clarification needed to ensure we get the same kind of protection for tithe payers who apply for Medicaid," states **James Standish**, an attorney who represents the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Capitol Hill.

To keep up to date on this and other legislation important to churches, visit <www.religiousliberty.info>.

North American ministerial leaders meet

Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States—On January 29, 30, 2006, the ministerial directors of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in North



Russell Burrill

America met at **Andrews University** in **Berrien Springs, Michigan**, to consider how the needs of the North American Division (NAD) pastors might be better served. **Russell Burrill**, newly elected

NAD ministerial secretary, led the discussion.

Among the topics discussed were revitalizing the continuing education curriculum for pastors, providing special events for pastoral spouses, reigniting pastoral evangelism, and reappointing a special ministerial advisory to assist the NAD in keeping current with the needs of pastors. Additionally, significant time was spent with **John K. McVay**, dean of **Andrews University Theological Seminary**, discussing the revising of the curriculum for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree.

According to **Duane Schoonard**, an associate ministerial secretary for the NAD, "facilitating the dialogue between undergraduate theological education, masters and doctoral levels, internships in the field, and continuing education across the life span, will assure a progressive life-long development of those serving in ministry." **Tom Lemon**, ministerial director for the **Oregon Conference**, added, "Opportunities for creative evangelism will be multiplied" and "pastoral support will take on a more practical emphasis" as a result of the organizational changes that are taking place.

National Prayer Breakfast

Washington, D.C., United States—The **National Prayer Breakfast** each year brings several thousand religious, national, and international leaders together in Washington, D.C. During this year's final session, on February 2, one of the main presentations dealt with the current conflicts in the Middle East. Presentations were made by a former prime minister of Norway and a business leader from Lebanon.

Dr. R. Leslie Holmes, senior pastor of Saxe Gotha Presbyterian Church, Lexington, South Carolina, United States, also participated in the 2006 National Prayer Breakfast. *Ministry* readers will recognize him as the author of articles in the journal and as a speaker at two satellite broadcasts. He spoke during the broadcast from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and also at one that originated at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California, United States. Holmes, along with his wife, Barbara, participated in a number of local Professional Growth Seminars in several European countries.



Dr. R. Leslie Holmes visiting with Ruth I. Satelmajer, wife of the *Ministry* magazine editor, following the last meeting of the 2006 National Prayer Breakfast

Holmes states that this was the 20th National Prayer Breakfast he has attended. He finds that "it is an experience that allows one to be encouraged to find out that there are many people in leadership who are serious about prayer and the study of God's Word." He also sees the event as an opportunity to meet individuals from other faiths and to share the message of Jesus Christ with others. ■

clear passages of Scripture that present God's ignorance of evil? It is very easy to use a definition of a word to build an argument. No one would argue that the inexplicable can be explained. However, we need to be very careful how we take a human logical idea and apply it, in light of our limitations, to One who claims to know the end from the beginning.

So God doesn't really know what evil is when He answers it, when He provides the solution, when He forgives sinners, when He judges, when He destroys Satan and his followers, when He makes such an end of evil that it will never rise again?

Evil is only inexplicable in the sense that Lucifer had no excuse for rebelling. God created him perfect in every way. But at some point of time Lucifer began to deceive himself. Goldstein has avoided talking about the issue of freedom of choice, which is an essential element in dealing with the issue of the origin of evil.

—James Fletcher, Pastor, Greater Sydney Conference, Australia

Resolutions for the new year

I read "A Pastor's New Year's Resolutions" (January 2006) with interest, and believe some of these 16 points will work to keep a congregation below 400 in attendance. It will not be possible to learn the names of all the children in the congregation.

If a lot of pastoral visits take place, there will not be much time left for vision casting, leadership training, and proper message preparation.

—Pastor Robert D. Shaw, Lancaster, PA, U.S.A.

The list of "A Pastor's New Year's Resolutions" (January 2006) left out the most important foundational part of being a pastor: growing spiritually.

How about experiencing the Word in a new way (such as a different translation or by audio or by video), being a man/a woman of prayer, developing a habit of praying for ten church families on a typical day, or joining or continuing in an accountability/prayer group?

Then, there are other things a pastor could resolve: praying and thinking carefully before adopting any Christian fad, never forgetting that the flock consists of individuals, preaching what people need to hear, not just what they want

to hear, and praying regularly for God's blessings for other pastors who seem more successful than I am.

—Jim Swindle, Spring, Texas, U.S.A.

A refreshing view of forgiveness

Dr. Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson's article, "A New Evangelism: Forgiveness" (January 2006), is right on the money. I agree with her that there are two types of forgiveness: *pure* and *impure*. These two aspects of forgiveness can clearly be seen in several passages of Scripture. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

In Colossians 2:13 we learn that God already forgave us of all trespasses, past, present and future. When did He forgive us? He forgave us before He quickened us. But how did He quicken us? The text says we were quickened together with Him. When Jesus was quickened, so were we.

Another text that teaches this *pure* type of forgiveness is Luke 7:42.

These two debtors were not just Simon and Mary, but they represent all of us. All have sinned and come short. All were frankly forgiven. How? Jesus paid the penalty.

For some this poses a dilemma. If all of our sins (trespasses) were forgiven when Jesus died, why does 1 John 1:9 say they will be forgiven if we confess? If all of these texts are speaking about one aspect of forgiveness, we clearly have an inconsistency in the teachings of Scripture. But if some texts are dealing with *pure* forgiveness and the others are dealing with *impure* forgiveness, the difficulty is resolved.

The Greek word translated *forgiven* in Colossians 2:13 and Luke 7:42 is *charizomai*. But, the word translated *forgive* in 1 John 1:9 is *aphiemi*. The most common meaning of *charizomai* is one of pardoning, graciously remitting a person's sin (see *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D.). But *aphiemi* has the meaning of sending forth from or sending away from. It carries

the idea of two entities being separated. First John 1:9, then, actually says, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to 'put away' or 'separate us from' our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We were already pardoned (*charizomai*) at the Cross, but our hearts need to be cleansed (*aphiemi*) of sin.

Dr. Morales-Gudmundsson is correct when she speaks of the gospel beginning and ending with God's pure forgiveness. Proclaiming the *aphiemi* without the *charizomai* leads to insecurity and legalism. Proclaiming the *charizomai* without the *aphiemi* leads to universalism. In this sense, I agree with Dr. Morales-Gudmundsson that "Pure forgiveness and transactional forgiveness are inseparable; you cannot have one without the other."

—Earl Peters, Pastor, Salt Lake Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A.

Avid reader of Ministry

I am an 82-year-old pastor active in my local church and an avid reader of *Ministry* magazine. Thank you for the new feature entitled "Dateline." I think our pastors will appreciate the articles under this title.

May the Lord bless your leadership in this important facet of the church.

—Lawrence Davidson, retired pastor, Beaumont, California, U.S.A.

Restored pastors: a moral threat?

I don't receive *Ministry* magazine now because I'm a "fallen pastor," but a church employee gave me a November 2005 issue to read. I wish to comment on statements by Patrick Boyle appearing in the "Letters to the Editor" of that issue, under the heading, "The Apple Rotten at the Core?"

I find God to be more merciful, forgiving, trusting, and accepting than His church, at least some administrators. I received an invitation from the members of a church where I committed my sin to come back as their pastor, and a conference executive committee member appealed to the committee for me to be invited back into ministry. So there are members who can trust again.

continued on page 28

RESOURCES

Available from Women's Ministries Department: A Ministry for every woman—Touch a Heart, Tell the World

Focusing on the combination of evangelism and ministry, the Women's Ministries Department of the world Seventh-day Adventist Church has resources available for the six challenge issues that impact women.

"We have been involved in evangelism and in ministry but to combine the two will result in even more souls brought to God," claim the leaders of the new evangelism suggestion.

The six challenge issues that impact women around the world are abuse, poverty, illiteracy, work loads, health risks, and lack of training and mentoring. These issues tie in with the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals and with the challenges women face as noted by the Committee on the Status of Women at their Beijing Conference in 1995.

This ministry was featured in *Mosaic*, a publication of the Department of Women's

Letters continued

Boyle says that fallen pastors, if allowed to reenter ministry, would constitute a moral threat to wives and children in the church. Does anyone know what the recidivism rate is in such cases? Is it more or less than that for nonpastors? Can the pastors with moral lapses who are members in their local church still be just as much a moral threat in that capacity to the wives and children? If so, should they then be allowed to attend at all? Could a man be trusted who experienced a moral lapse before he became a pastor? What about the male lay members of the congregation who have broken the seventh commandment; do they constitute an ongoing moral threat to wives and children?

en's Ministries of Seventh-day Adventists, vol. 5, no. 1. For more information, see <<http://wm.gc.adventist.org>>.

Adventist Mission DVD available—a free resource to churches

An exciting new resource will soon be available to Adventist churches in the North American Division. Beginning in March, a complimentary *Adventist Mission DVD* will be sent directly to each church address for use in their programs. A complimentary DVD with new stories and features will be sent automatically after that.

Each DVD will have approximately 12 to 15 stories, varying in length from two to ten minutes. The stories are up-to-date accounts of real Adventists doing their best to "Tell the World" about Jesus. You'll see and hear about little-known people and places, how seeds of hope are planted, and how miracles spring from simple faith. These inspiring true stories are gathered from areas around the world that will benefit from a portion of the mission offering. For additional stories

CORRECTION: Photographs in January 2006 *Ministry* featuring Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, should have been credited to Shades of Gray Photography, by Ludmila G. Leito.

I don't know the answers to my questions, but I ask them to illustrate that the issue is not as simple as, and is bigger than, Boyle appears to think. While there aren't satisfying answers to the above questions, I believe there is a solution: Jesus' way. Simon the Pharisee was having trouble accepting the loving actions toward Jesus of a woman who was a sinner (Luke 7). Jesus accepted her attention. Maybe a fallen pastor, because his sins are great, could love Christ more than the unfallen pastor who hasn't needed to be forgiven for so much.

While we wouldn't have trusted some of the individuals Jesus had in His leadership team, He was grooming them to be the future leaders of His church.

and photos about what Adventists are doing to "Tell the World" about Jesus, visit <www.AdventistMission.org>. Together, we can make a difference.

Available from the Biblical Research Institute, Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters:

Brochures: *Interpreting the Beast of Revelation 17, a Suggestion* by Ekkehardt Mueller; *In Christ: Union with Him as Savior and Lord in Paul* by Ivan T. Blazen; *Israelite Festivals and the Christian Church* by Angel Manuel Rodriguez; *The Nature of Christ: The Soteriological Question* by Kwabena Donkor; *The Time Prophecies in Daniel 12* by Gerhard Pfandl.

New publication: *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, edited by George W. Reid with Gerhard Pfandl as associate editor. Written by seventeen international Adventist scholars, the publication includes important questions related to the nature and authority of the Bible, its revelation and inspiration, and the proper method for interpretation.

Available through Web site: <<http://BiblicalResearch.gc.adventist.org>>. ■

I don't see how the reentry of a pastor to ministry is modifying the absolute moral value expressed in the seventh commandment as Boyle suggests. God told us how to live like Him, but He didn't tell us to never trust again the violator of one of His moral principles. And Boyle mentions the effects of David's sin, but God did not remove him from the number one leadership position of his people. David of course repented genuinely, but he continued to live in an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba by continuing to have her as his wife. The church today would not approve. ■

—Name Withheld

BOOK REVIEW

Lutherstaedte—A Reformation Travel Guide, *Stimme Der Hoffnung*, copyright 2005. North American sales at <www.adventsource.org>, US \$9.95. European sales at <www.stimme-der-hoffnung.de/shop>, Euro 9.95.

Should you ever have an opportunity to visit the Reformation sites in Germany, the 96-page booklet *Lutherstaedte—A Reformation Travel Guide* (plus mini CD) would be a valuable companion. The information provided, as well as the features, will help make your visit more enjoyable.

While this booklet does not function as a travel map, the traveler will be able to locate these sites on a road map. For instance, a map of Germany showing the location of the various sites can be found on page 96, and a listing of tourist information centers for the Reformation venues including addresses, telephone numbers, and Web sites, is on page 95. The traveler will receive additional information by contacting each office.

Containing pictures and helpful descriptions of each location, the booklet has German on one side and English on the other side. It contains information about each city as well as an explanation of the significance to Luther and the Reformation.

Although the reader will find, for the most part, the text accurate, on page 47

of the English text, it incorrectly states that Friedrich the Wise died in 1515. However, the German text (p. 46) correctly states that he died in 1525. Friedrich the Wise played a significant role and created an environment in which Luther could develop his principles of the Reformation. Since Luther started his public drive for reformation in 1517, the reader needs to know that Friedrich supported him for the next eight years until his death in 1525.

While the text would have benefited from additional editing, the reader of the English text will, for the most part, understand it. If you have an opportunity to travel to Germany, take this guide and enjoy the experience of visiting important Reformation sites.

—Nikolaus Satelmajer, editor, Ministry

Uncorked! The Hidden Hazards of Alcohol By John F. Ashton and Ronald S. Laura (Victoria, Australia; Signs Publishing Company, 2004; 134 pp.; paperback). ISBN: 1-876010-70-3

A recent *Time* magazine (August 29, 2005) article titled “How bingeing became the new college sport: and why it would stop if we lowered the drinking age,” underscores the runaway abuse of alcohol among young people. Some argue that their parents drank and are successful, so how harmful can drinking be? *Time* magazine’s strange solution, embodied in the article title, is to lower the drinking age.

John Ashton and Ronald Laura, in *Uncorked! The Hidden Hazards of Alcohol*,

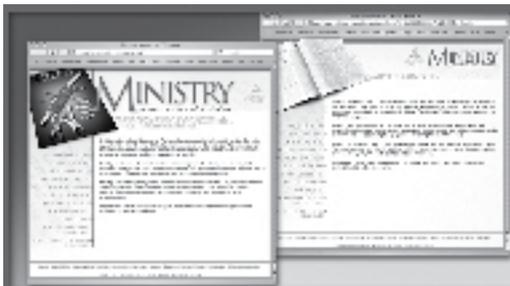
approach the alcohol problem from a different perspective, persuasively arguing that contrary to its imagined harmlessness, alcohol is indeed dangerous and that lowering the legal age for consuming alcohol is clearly not the answer. Instead, they argue that drinkers should be licensed to drink as the solution to the problem, and licenses should be granted only to those who demonstrate knowledge and responsibility about the dangers of alcohol. Whether or not this goal can be achieved in society today is highly debatable, but it is a fascinating idea, anyway.

Ashton and Laura have assembled a wealth of authoritative information from numerous studies in several countries that thoroughly document the dangers of alcohol. While we have long known the hazards of alcohol, the strength of *Uncorked!* lies in the depth, breadth, and specificity of information. What I also found interesting was that it showed why women, even the ones who don’t drink, are at risk from the problems caused by alcohol.

I would urge readers of *Ministry* to obtain copies of *Uncorked!* for group discussions. This way, participants will not only become informed regarding the down side of alcohol consumption but will also be better positioned to help others who face this insidious temptation.

Uncorked! is not a fun book, but actually quite grim, depressing, and infuriating. At the same time, it has the potential to prevent many from falling into alcohol’s grasp. ■

—Reviewed by Henry Zuill, retired biology professor, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, residing in Norman, Arkansas, United States.



Visit our Web site:
www.MinistryMagazine.org

Believers behaving badly—Part II

Last month we bemoaned our tendency to disconnect belief from behavior, noting that some of our worst moments as believers occur when we mistakenly believe we are performing our best service.

Our orthodoxy (correct belief) is only as valuable as our orthopraxy (correct behavior). Remember, Jesus' description of the judgment (Matthew 25) rejects many outwardly orthodox believers.

In addition to "abuse of platform," in which we noted how some misguided believers think that publicly broadcasting their opinion guarantees virtue regardless of their behavior, other types of believers also behave badly.

Abuse of advantage. The note that the church organist delivered delineated her demands in a "take no hostages" stance that could have tutored a terrorist. "I'd rather that kid not come to church than to endure another instance of today's trashy music. If you permit a repeat, I'll leave this church and never return. What will you do then?"

In fairness to the organist's outrage, the youngster who had assaulted the special music was untrained, unkempt, and unaccomplished. The choice of music was poor and the delivery was worse. The only positive aspect I could muster from the whole ordeal was that the youngster's parents, rarely in attendance, were both present and blessed by their child's participation.

From a pastor's perspective, enduring a less than satisfactory rendition was compensated by the whole family having worshiped and the youngster having felt good about making a contribution to the service.

True to her threats, our organist marched her outstanding talents to another congregation, which she also held hostage to her own superior musical training and taste. Of course, we suffered from her loss, but we gained a number

JAMES A. CRESS



of families who were grateful that their mediocre talents now had opportunity for worship participation.

Abuse of position. Then there was the administrator who commanded compliance with his personal counterinterpretation of polity procedures. When a subordinate leader demurred, citing page and paragraph of established denominational policy, discussion turned to demand and the administrator threatened revenge at the next constituency nominating committee.

Phrases such as "I am in charge," "you don't comprehend authority," and "because I said so" did little to change either mind while the role of the leader was belittled to that of a bully.

Abuse of influence. "Kick him out," an elder demanded of the church board about a relatively new member (carefully distinguish this designation from "relative church member" whom almost no church board will discipline, regardless of infraction) who had been spotted using tobacco just a few weeks after baptism. As the board was about to vote, another elder requested a delay. "Please, permit me time to get close to this individual. I'm a former smoker, myself, and I'm embarrassed that none of us have become close to this new member. I would like to help."

Within a couple of months, our church had three new converts—the smoker who had reformed, the help-

ing elder who learned to mentor new believers, and even the elder who had previously rushed to removal.

We began stop-smoking clinics, offered Alcoholics Anonymous in our facility, and started new small-group ministries for those who needed fellowship in other twelve-step programs.

Abuse of knowledge. Imagine the tragedy if that one leader's abuse of influence had not been countermanded by the elder who determined to aid a weaker brother! And speaking of such, I'm neither impressed nor intimidated by those who demand compliance by resorting to misinterpretation of "weaker brother" terminology.

If I have sufficient knowledge to make the claim for myself, I am ineligible for the appellation. Superior knowledge that claims spurious position as "weaker brother" removes me from such status and places me in need of a constant reminder of Jesus' story about the prodigal's "stronger sibling."

Abuse of legality. Jesus constantly strove to distinguish between law's demands and love's constraints without compromising either.

For example, Jesus validated legal technicalities concerning divorce while narrowing the terminology of sufficient grounds. He said, "because of your hard hearts, Moses permitted you to divorce, but I affirm that even if you lust in your heart, you have committed adultery" (cf., Matthew 19:8; 5:28).

Likewise, Jesus never compromised the claims of justice while He encouraged ongoing virtue in new life. He told badly behaving believers, "If you are without sin, cast the first stone to implement the deserved death penalty." But to the guilty sinner, he affirmed, "I do not condemn you, go and sin no more!" (cf., John 7:7, 11).

Now that's a believer behaving boldly! ■

HERE WE
GROW
AGAIN!

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006
1:00-4:30 P.M. U.S. Eastern Time
[Repeat broadcast March 22, 2006]

Participating Organizations



MINISTRY
International Journal for Pastors



COLUMBIA UNION COLLEGE

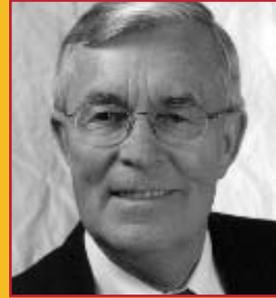
MINISTRY | PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SEMINARS



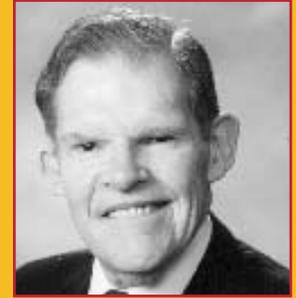
Roy Adams, an associate editor of *Adventist Review*, hails from the Caribbean nation of Grenada, and was the first candidate to finish a doctoral degree in systematic theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. His pastoral ministry began at the West Toronto Seventh-day Adventist Church, 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 associated 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, Michigan, 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.

For broadcast information, please contact us or visit www.ministerialassociation.com

REGISTER IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS:



PHONE:
301.680.6508

FAX:
301.680.6502



E-MAIL:
MINISEMINARS@gc.adventist.org

WEB SITE:
www.ministerialassociation.com

LIVE BROADCAST

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006
1:00-4:30 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time

REPEAT BROADCAST

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006

Available at no cost to you.

live by satellite



IT IS WRITTEN PRESENTS

Revelation Speaks Peace

UNLOCKING THE SIGNS

PLAN NOW TO Participate!



This month, Pastor **Shawn Boonstra** will present the truth of Revelation in a new, full-message, satellite evangelistic series, *Revelation Speaks Peace—Unlocking the Signs*.



Shawn Boonstra
SPEAKER / DIRECTOR
IT IS WRITTEN

This "graduate course" for **The Appearing** will be presented live from the Celebrity Theatre in Phoenix via the ACN/Esperanza Channel. March 10–April 8, 2006 at 7:00 pm EST/PST, 7:30 pm CST (Mountain times will vary).

This live satellite series will be available in both English and Spanish.

Churches

Sign up as a host church at www.unlockthesigns.com/host or by calling: **1-800-ACN-1119**

Church Members

Explore the *Unlocking the Signs* dynamic website and find a host church near you at: www.unlockthesigns.com or find a church near you by calling: **1-888-96-SIGNS**

Plan to bring your friends!

Register your church TODAY to receive your FREE event resource kit!

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
MINISTRY
1350 N. KINGS ROAD
NAMPA, ID 83687-3193

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nampa, ID
Permit No. 147