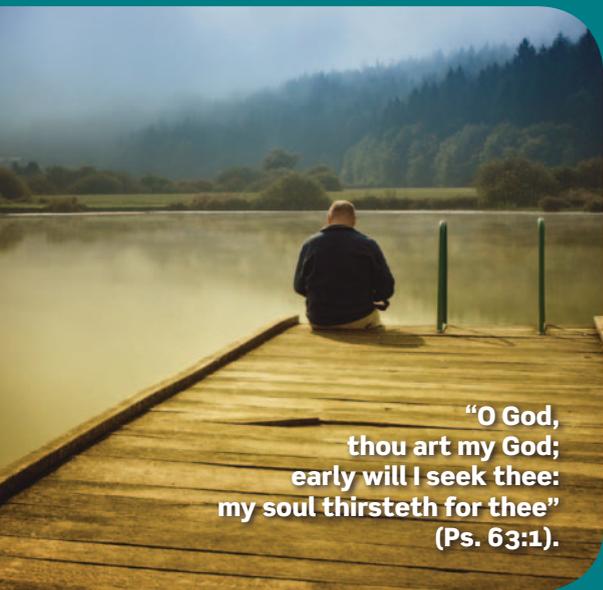


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INTERNATIONAL
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NOVEMBER 2010



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SATAN THE **DEVIL?**



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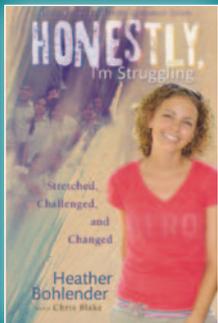
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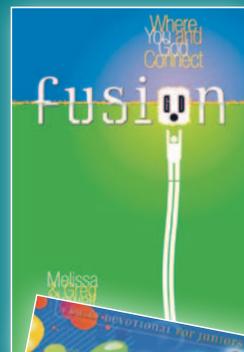
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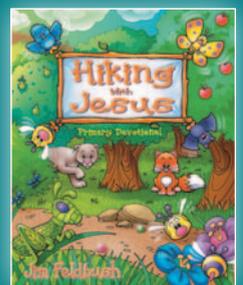


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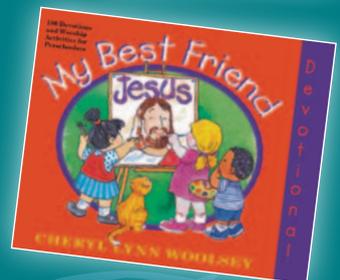
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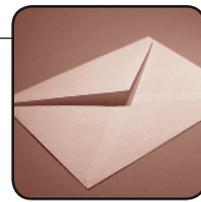
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“FOR THOSE WHO TAKE THEIR WEEKLY PREACHING EARNESTLY AND SINCERELY, READING THIS ARTICLE IS BOTH CHALLENGING AND EXCITING. IT ALSO INSPIRES PREACHERS TOWARD A GREATER HOPE OF THEIR TASK.”

Church discipline according to Matthew

Thank you for your September 2010 issue featuring student writers. I especially appreciate Luca Marulli's article (" 'Let Both of Them Grow Together': Church Discipline in the Gospel of Matthew").

I am an interim pastor, and have often found myself sent into conflictive situations. I rely strongly on Matthew in my work, especially using Matthew 18 as the core of seminars on conflict and reconciliation.

Marulli's work has given me a better understanding of passages I have studied for years!

—*Philip C. Olson, Livonia, Michigan, United States*

It seems Marulli thinks the parable of the wheat and the weeds is about the church and addresses issues of church discipline. In His interpretation of the parable, Jesus said the field is the "world" (Matt. 13:36–43). This parable never refers directly to the church at all and certainly does not teach local churches to tolerate weeds—or thorns or thistles—in their membership.

Further, the language in the parable and its interpretation does not mean the evildoers gathered "out of his kingdom" in the last day are now actually in it. Jesus' language looks forward, not backward. When

the wicked are removed and judged, only "his kingdom" remains.

—*Cecil Taylor, email*

Lifelong congregational ministry

Ivan Charles Blake's article ("Pastor For Life"—July/August 2010) spoke to my soul and challenged me as a pastor. Ivan Blake accurately described that "after-the-glory blues" feeling that so many of us feel when we have exhausted ourselves as a result of our Sabbath ministry.

While I applaud Pastor Blake for his outstanding article, I fear that serving as a pastor for life is left for the few idealists and strongly committed when the career path laid out by conferences and affirmed by members in our churches is "onward and upward."

—*Jim Lorenz, Pleasant Hill, California, United States*

I was delighted to read Dr. Blake's article. It was a very timely message and I believe the time has come for the church today to give our pastors the opportunity to maximize their leadership strengths by avoiding time-consuming and energy-depleting assignments—especially as we preach the everlasting gospel in this ever-changing world.

—*Justus Perez, Kampala, Uganda*

Biblical hermeneutics

Every preacher who dares to stand in the pulpit each Sabbath must join in one voice of thanks to Dr. Hans K. LaRondelle for this first part of a bridge ("Trends in Biblical Hermeneutics [Part 1 of 2]"—September 2010) across the centuries of hermeneutical history. The content was satisfyingly dense, requiring several readings to follow the careful logical progression of this treatise. To embrace a rendering of this magnitude required a scholar of Dr. LaRondelle's stature. For this we owe him our sincere gratitude and appreciation for his lifetime of intense commitment to this subject.

—*Ernest J. Stevenson, retired minister, Orlando, Florida, United States*

Credible preaching

David E. Thomas, in his article titled "The Internal Dynamics of Credible Preaching" (May 2010), both uncovered some of the disciplines I have practiced and revealed the wisdom of today's greatest preachers. For those who take their weekly preaching earnestly and sincerely, reading this article is both challenging and exciting. It also inspires preachers toward a greater hope of their task.

—*Manuel Tamayo, email* ✉



The pastor as theologian

Illustration 1: Riding home from church one Sabbath afternoon, my then four-year-old daughter asked me, “Daddy, does Jesus love the devil?” My wife and I looked at each other in amazement while quickly pondering her query. Although I knew the answer, I was stunned nevertheless. Stunned not only because I had never been asked that question, but because it came from a four-year-old.

Illustration 2: Early during my congregational ministry, young people often asked me why we are not supposed to attend movies. Their inquiries were often prompted because they saw a double standard that forbade attending theaters, while hardly anyone ever spoke against watching movies on television at home. They were not angry with what they felt was the church’s position; rather, they were seeking solid biblical support upon which to decide what to do and what not to do.

Illustration 3: Many churches have debated the use of various musical instruments in church—such discussions usually taking place within the context of wanting to liven up the worship services. While people often simplistically couch such conversations within the framework of older-versus-younger members or cultural background, these deliberations transpire across a broad spectrum of people groups.

One commonality

These three settings have one thing in common: each begs a theological response that differs from the customary answer we as ministers often give. Those who inquire seek scriptural principles upon which they can construct a philosophy that

governs their relationship with God and others.

For the average church member to contact some well-known theologian every time they faced a theological conundrum would be difficult, if not impossible. Indeed, it is impractical and, most of the time, unnecessary to do so. The answer to many of their questions already resides in their congregation: the pastor! Pastors serve as the resident theologians for their congregations.

While pastors understandably do not possess the answer to every question that comes their way, they are the ones who wrestle with divine revelation and place it in a setting where their church members can experience this for themselves. Indeed, pastors are ideally suited for such a task because they, more than most other ministers, live life in the environment of the day-to-day challenges people experience. They battle alongside their church members as the members face the daily issues that threaten their mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. And the person most accessible to the congregation is the pastor.

My own pastoral-theological journey

There were many questions I was forced to wrestle with early in my pastoral ministry. Among them were, When should we baptize a person (upon their acceptance of Christ as their Savior and Lord, or after a lengthy series of Bible studies)? Will a person who commits suicide be eternally lost? What should the church’s response be to those in the neighborhood who repeatedly come to the church for aid—especially monetary assistance? If Jesus says, “I come

quickly” (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20, KJV), then why hasn’t He returned yet? I do not doubt that as you read this editorial you can add many more queries to this list.

As pastors, we have quickly discovered that while we do not necessarily need to possess a doctorate in biblical studies, systematic theology, or ethics, we do need to capably perform the task known as *theology*. And such is a critical task to perform *because everyone does it*. Everyone develops their own understanding of how God wants them to think, speak, and act. And it is our job to do it in a responsible manner so that our preaching and teaching may remain informative and enlightening. Furthermore, pastors who invest the time in “correctly hand[ing] the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15, NIV) create, as it were, church members who develop a healthy respect for studying the Word for themselves and allow it to speak to their hearts without the presuppositional baggage that leads to false interpretations of what the Holy Spirit says to them.

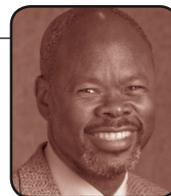
Ponder the possibilities

This issue features several theologians (here I use the term *theologian* in the sense that they are those who perform biblical theology and/or applied theology) who wrestle with questions that perhaps you yourself have pondered. But if not, their approaches are instructive in that we all, on a daily basis, address questions that others pose to us or we pose to ourselves.

May God bless us as we lead those to whom we minister into a better understanding of what God has revealed to us through His prophets. **M**

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Lael O. Caesar, PhD, is a professor in the department of religion and biblical languages, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Where in the world is Satan the devil?

Satan has almost completely lost his standing in the world of Christian theology. Consider, for example, the attitude of three writers in recent biblical and theological publications. First, celebrated New Testament scholar N. T. Wright, who is fully aware of the pervasive presence of evil in our world today. But in a recent monograph, he identifies evil in both the disruptions of our physical environment and through its control of human minds and spirits. The line between the good and the evil does not separate any one people or individual from another. Rather, it runs “through every individual and every society.”¹

Wright sounds more emphatic about the badness of human beings than he does about Satan himself. With regard to supernatural evil, he would warn that it “has a hidden dimension; there is more to it than meets the eye.”² His biblical “Satan” figure, however, is “a nonhuman and nondivine quasi-personal force”³; a “negative force,” or a “shadowy being or beings” over whom Jesus triumphs.⁴ As far as Wright is concerned, Satan is “important but not that important.”⁵ Wright, in fact, commits himself to distinguishing several *satans*—the Old Testament character, the figure in Jesus’ wilderness temptations, and the dragon of the book of Revelation.⁶

Further, Wright concludes that evil, Satan’s traditional province, should actually be described as

“the moral and spiritual equivalent of a black hole.”⁷ Thus Satan is “an uncertainty factor, *a je ne sais quoi*, in all our moral and spiritual equations, so that however well we organize, however much we pray, however sound our theology and however energetically we go to work, there will be negative forces, perhaps we should say a Negative Force, working against us and for which we must allow.”⁸

Second, according to Bart Ehrman, Satan becomes the devil only at some late stage in Israelite religion—when apocalypticism arises during the Maccabean revolt, some 150–170 years before Jesus’ birth. In his understanding, Jewish apocalypticism sees the world in dualistic terms, with God in charge of good, and His evil opponent, the devil, Satan, in control of evil.⁹

Third, Robert Alden’s concept of Satan is a much more important figure than that of Wright or Ehrman. But this does not mean that Alden accords him his deserved standing. Alden’s *New American Commentary* on Job describes Satan as one who inhabits a somewhat stranger country than does Wright’s work. And he is not alone in that intriguing place. Joining an illustrious line of exegetes, including Emil Kraeling and Marvin Pope, Alden posits that the roles and purposes of Satan and God are a scriptural unity.¹⁰ Indeed, Alden holds that Satan is part of a divine cabinet in which all the members are not good.¹¹ This

position on Satan as God’s partner contrasts with Wright for whom Satan is at first a lowercase figure, and later a sinister whisperer in Jesus’ ear but still not that important. Alden also decidedly contrasts with Ehrman for whom Satan, when he does come to be, is God’s opponent, rather than a member of the divine cabinet. Ehrman’s characterization thus appears to be closest to the traditional view, which does not mean that for Ehrman, Satan retains his traditional standing. Ehrman has, in fact, become known for his public and absolute repudiation of Scripture and its God. Says Ehrman: “I came to a point where I could no longer believe. . . . I realized that I could no longer reconcile the claims of faith with the facts of life. In particular, I could no longer explain how there can be a good and all-powerful God actively involved with this world, given the state of things. For many people who inhabit this planet, life is a cesspool of misery and suffering. I came to a point where I simply could not believe that there is a good and kindly disposed Ruler who is in charge of it. . . . After many years . . . I came to realize that I could no longer believe in the God of my tradition.”¹²

Ehrman’s statement, added to those of Wright, Alden, and others, shows that among Christian theologians and biblical scholars today, Satan stands, *inter alia*, as a fabrication of Jewish apocalyptic, a variety of unimportant figures at various points in Scripture.



SATAN'S DIMINUTION, OR TOTAL DISAPPEARANCE, CANNOT BE DISMISSED AS OF NO CONSEQUENCE EITHER TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OR DAY-TO-DAY HUMAN EXPERIENCE. FOR PEOPLE SUFFER EVERY DAY, AND LONG FOR SOME EXPLANATION OF THE PAIN AND INJUSTICE UNDER WHICH THEY MUST LABOR.

Other attitudes to Satan

Nor are these the only views available. There also seems to exist a perspective that relegates Satan to a quiet oblivion. For example, Clark Pinnock's entire chapter expounding on a "Systematic Theology" of Open Theism mentions Satan not once.¹³ Neither does Richard Rice, whose essay deals with biblical considerations related to Open Theism.¹⁴ It is difficult to understand how reflections on divine foreknowledge in context of creaturely choice could satisfactorily ignore the origin of temptation and the tempter's role in influencing human decisions.

An overall biblical view

This variety of perspectives on the biblical Satan character as "important, but not that important," "quasi-personal," a mere force, a fabrication of Jewish apocalyptic, or to be totally ignored, unmentioned in the context of theological discourse addressing the issue of God and evil, are very difficult to align with the biblical text. Scripture so focuses on this being that he is identifiable by a multitude of different names. Taken together, 1 Peter 5:8 and Revelation 12:9¹⁵ alone supply us with four of them: *the devil*, *the adversary*, *the ancient serpent*, and

the dragon—names which may be applied to this same being, Satan, the being who, defeated by Michael and his angels, "was thrown down to the earth," where he now actively attempts to get the whole world in trouble (Rev. 12:10, 9, 12). And though Elaine Pagels has contested this view,¹⁶ she is nevertheless capable of admirable insights into the nature of this adversarial being. He is, as she detects, the intimate who becomes the enemy, the one next to God, who becomes his archrival.¹⁷ The Old Testament pictures Satan as being present in the opening chapters of the human story, for

the Paradise garden snake is one more of his identities.¹⁸ Revelation 12 links him by name, “the ancient serpent,” to the Garden of Eden. It also links him to heaven in terms of his origins. And one of several biblical references, inclusive of vivid prophetic oracles by Isaiah and Ezekiel, alludes to his having been cast down to earth (Rev. 12:9; Luke 10:18; Isa. 14:12–14; Ezek. 28:12–19).¹⁹

Isaiah’s oracle

Isaiah’s oracle prefaces the casting out with a story of the birth of a great idea. The subject of the oracle communicates the new idea to himself; or, it occurs to him. The sense is that he, at first, becomes possessed of a private notion, something mental, secret, and personal, and which he comes to consider grand. His grand idea is one of ascent, “above the stars of God . . . above the heights of the clouds,” one of being equated with the Most High (Isa. 14:12–14).

“I will act,” he repeatedly insists. His intention is exclusive. He himself is the one who will do it, who will do it all, and do it alone. He will raise his throne (v. 13), suggesting that he may already have seen

himself as royalty, as occupying a seat of honor, since all but seven of 136 usages of this term for *throne* refer to royal or divine thrones.²⁰ Either he already possesses such a throne and is not contented, or he so visualizes his future that his words actualize it before history can confirm it; he will do something new, by such ascent; and also by enthroning himself, since, according to Scripture, generally God establishes rulers on thrones (Dan. 2:21; 4:17). By declaring that he will go up to heaven, he will ignore or defy the fact that it is God whose throne is in heaven (Isa. 66:1).

Ascent to heaven, it turns out, is not sufficient. The being must ascend above God’s stars (Isa. 14:13). The being here spoken of evidently sees himself as deserving of greater exaltation than the rest of the divine creation, indeed God Himself, given that ascent to God’s place is only step one in his five-step proposal toward greater elevation than he currently enjoys—something difficult to understand, given the importance of his status as covering cherub (Ezek. 28:14) in the very presence of God (Exod. 25:10–22). “The far north” to which he will ascend, refers to the farthest

reaches of the most inaccessible part of the mountain. Assyrian king Sennacherib emphasizes this sense with his blasphemous outburst against Hezekiah, Jerusalem, the kingdom of Judah, and the God of heaven: “‘Through your messengers you have reproached the Lord, and you have said, ‘With my many chariots I came up to the heights of the mountains, to the remotest parts of Lebanon; and I cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypresses. And I entered its farthest lodging place, its thickest forest’” (2 Kings 19:23).

Sennacherib and the ascending creature of Isaiah 14, expect to go as far as it is possible to go; where no creature has ever gone before, the highest height, the ultimate destination. Nor will Isaiah’s protagonist merely arrive there on a visit. No! He will sit, dwell, enthrone himself there, “above the heights of the clouds”—perhaps because God rides on clouds (19:1). So that his own getting on top of the clouds might give him, too, opportunity to ride “on the backs of the clouds,” as suggested in the New English Translation textual note.

This multistaged proposal will enable its architect, at its climax, to be equated with the Most High: “‘I will make myself like the Most High’” (Isa. 14:14). In light of which, his fate of expulsion (“‘thrust down to Sheol,’” v. 15) is entirely comprehensible. In fact, the only way to deserve the title “Most High” comes by deity, by membership in the Trinity. There cannot even be another single “Most High.” The Isaiah story is one of ultimate and misconceived rebellion. And the expulsion of Isaiah 14:15 will finally be accomplished when earth itself, to which he is cast in Revelation (Rev. 12:9), is turned into a smoldering cauldron at the end of time as Christ purifies His universe with the fires of hell (Rev. 20:14, 15).

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Master deceiver

In its characterization of his role as master deceiver, Revelation 12 well unites with and underlines studies on Satan's behavior in Job, a conduct impenetrable enough to baffle continuing generations of Job scholars, leading Marvin H. Pope, for example, to consider him as working in partnership with the Lord.²¹ Still, nothing gives him away so effectively as his violence, explicit both in Revelation 12 and Job 1 and 2. This violence is specifically directed against those whom God extols as virtuous, and would preserve and protect, those who represent what God is like and stands for, over against what he, Satan wishes to perpetuate (Job—see Job 1; 2; Joshua the high priest—see Zech. 3:1–7).

That Satan should be a mystery in biblical scholarship and Christian theology reminds us of John Baldwin's warning about "spiritual hermeneutical influences."²² Baldwin states, "It is difficult, if not impossible, for the natural mind to interpret the Bible correctly. Fallen spiritual powers, Satan and his angels, can influence the exegete. This is particularly true when the biblical interpreter denies that these fallen supernatural powers exist as real beings, able to influence the mind, and allegorizes them into mere symbols of evil. The attempts of Satan and evil angels to redirect interpretations of the Bible cannot be dismissed."²³

Baldwin's warning points to the astonishing reality that one element shared in common by classical atheistic evolution, Christ-believing theistic evolution, and radically conservative Christian fundamentalism, is a diminished view of the personal, supernatural being the Bible identifies as Satan. For while the Bible shows him to be engaged at every level possible, and by every means possible, in all out war against the God of Scripture and the people of God, many today, both in science and in Christian theology, find intellectual and spiritual satisfaction in

either relative or absolute denial of Satan's existence and operations.

If there's no Satan, so what?

But Satan's diminution, or total disappearance, cannot be dismissed as of no consequence either to Christian theology or day-to-day human experience. For people suffer every day, and long for some explanation of the pain and injustice under which they must labor. The Bible blames Satan directly for the misery of life today and through the thousands of years of death on earth. According to the Bible, death came to earth because of sin (Rom. 5:12), and sin is of the devil (1 John 3:8). The devil, the dragon, the ancient serpent, all these labels refer to one and the very same being (Rev. 12:9). He is the one who introduces chaos and the disruption of God's perfect order in the Garden of Eden so that all earth's disorder is his doing. Ignoring or denying his existence equals denying the unimaginable insanity and horror that human history has recorded in our own time.

Satan's continued havoc among us is not explainable by any single reason except it is his nature. But one major reason for his success must be his ability to do the worst and be continually exonerated because, ironically, many intelligent minds today attribute the worst of his work to the goodness of God.

Conclusion

Francis Collins's book *The Language of God* well focuses our dilemma with regard to the Satan character. Collins speaks categorically about evolution: "Evolution, as a mechanism, can be and must be true."²⁴ He tells of how he comes to faith, convicted of the universality of moral law.²⁵ He explains why he cannot accept the literal historicity of the Genesis story: "I couldn't take Genesis literally because I had come to the scientific worldview *before* I came to the spiritual worldview. I felt that, once I arrived at the sense

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that God was real and that God was the source of all truth, then, just by definition, there could not be a conflict."²⁶

Collins turns to a metaphysical reflection—on the social nature of God, as obligatorily relational, theist, as opposed to Einstein's deist²⁷; on his moral character, he had to be "the

no more committed to moral flawlessness than to physical, social, emotional, and every other type of wholeness (3 John 2). While here on earth, He worked as earnestly and tirelessly to heal the sick as He did to forgive people's sins. It is awkward and unnecessary for those who study His Word to be asked

or worse, who find it in themselves to attribute his mischief to the goodness of God. Maybe Satan is not lost, after all. Maybe the time has come for us to stop concealing him among us. ❖

IN THE END, OUR STRUGGLE TO
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embodiment of goodness; he would have to hate evil."²⁸ He reasons on the coming into existence of moral evil: "If at the beginning of time God chose to use these forces to create human beings, then the inevitability of . . . other painful consequences was also assured."²⁹

Christian theology has no need to struggle on in such a confused state. The unswerving biblical testimony about God, His nature and character of love, could not be more clearly revealed than it already has been in Jesus and at the Cross (1 John 4:8; John 3:16). And Jesus' revelation of God teaches that He is

to believe that He cares about our salvation while He Himself sustains and advances life through the brutal and endless horror that is the law of the jungle.

In the end, our struggle to reconcile life's inequities with the biblical testimony of a loving God will scarcely accomplish the good it should while we deny the Bible's own testimony as to the source of life's ills. The God of the Bible who speaks first in Eden's bliss, and later, in Jesus' gracious, healing, forgiving wholeness, is today opposed not only by Satan's evil, but by humans who turn a blind eye,

1 N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 43.

2 *Ibid.*, 107.

3 *Ibid.*, 109.

4 *Ibid.*, 114.

5 *Ibid.*, 71.

6 *Ibid.*, 72, speaking of the OT Satan: "We are still some way from the dragon of Revelation or even from the sinister figure whispering in Jesus' ear on the Mount of Temptation."

7 *Ibid.*, 113.

8 *Ibid.*, 114.

9 *Ibid.*, 215.

10 Robert Alden, *Job*, New American Commentary, vol. 11, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Broadman Publishers, 1993), 53. See also Emil G. Kraeling, "A Theodicy and More," in *The Dimensions of Job: A Study and Selected Readings*, ed. Nahum H. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 205–214; 8; Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1973).

11 *Ibid.*; see also Kraeling, Pope.

12 Ehrman, 3, 4.

13 Clark Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," in Clark Pinnock et al. *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 101–25; 112, 113.

14 Richard Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," in *Openness of God* (1994), 11–58. The outstanding exception, in recent years, to this diminution of or disregard for Satan, has been Greg Boyd. See his *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997); *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001); also, *Is God to Blame?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003). Unfortunately, Boyd's conspicuous consciousness of the reality of Satan does not save him from a different error. Boyd's blunder has been to diminish the Bible's God through denying Him His own claims to foreknow all things (Ps. 139:16; Matt. 10:30; Luke 12:7).

15 Scripture references are taken from *The New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

16 Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, Vintage Books ed., (New York: Random House, 1996), xviii.

17 *Ibid.*, 49.

18 *Diccionario de la Biblia* (Barcelona: Herder, 1981), s.v. "Diablo," cols. 465–467.

19 On these, see Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol II: *Isaiah to Malachi* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 1551–53.

20 *TWOT*, s.v. "ask."

21 Pope.

22 John Baldwin, "Faith, Reason, and the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, George W. Reid, ed. (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 15–26; 18.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Francis Collins, *The Language of God* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 107.

25 *Ibid.*, 21–30.

26 In Karl W. Giberson, "Evolution, the Bible, and the Book of Nature: A Conversation With Francis Collins," posted at *Christianity Today International* online, *Books and Culture* magazine, 7/10/09.

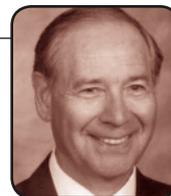
27 Collins, 29.

28 *Ibid.*, 30.

29 *Ibid.*, 45.

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Trends in biblical hermeneutics (part 2 of 2)

In the last century, many Protestant believers came to recognize that liberal theology had lost the concept of divine revelation in Holy Scripture.¹ At the same time, the one-sided view of Protestant orthodoxy that revelation consists exclusively of doctrinal propositions in a verbally inspired Bible was considered equally inadequate. Even Karl Barth's position that the Bible becomes the Word of God only through faith was, for many, tinged with subjectivism.

In this conflict situation arose a new type of theology of Scripture—evangelicalism that challenged both extremes of scholastic rationalism and liberal subjectivism. Evangelical scholars *correlate* the Word of Scripture and personal faith in it. The *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*² discusses 33 leading Bible scholars from a variety of Protestant traditions within the modern evangelical movement. Because all do not think alike, some tensions have risen among these evangelicals about different perspectives on the nature of inspiration and its purpose in the Bible. Sometimes theologians shift their own perspective on inspired Scripture after long reflections. The so-called new hermeneutic causes a fundamental change in meaning by acknowledging *two* dimensions of the problem of understanding: that of the historical context of the text, as well as that of the interpreter. This article will touch briefly upon some of the hermeneutical trends in evangelicalism today.

Variety of inspiration views

Strange as it may seem, evangelicalism fights the perennial battle for the Bible within its own movement.³ On the one hand, there is *inerrancy*. A passionate plea is made that the Bible in its entirety is *verbally* inspired, because of the self-testimony of the Scriptures ("Thus says the Lord") and ultimately on the basis that Jesus used the Scriptures this way (appealing to Deut. 18:18; John 5:46, 47; 6:45; 10:34, 35; 15:25). Subjection to the authority of Christ involves subjection to the authority of Scripture in its totality. The logical conclusion is "the words of Scripture, therefore, are the very words of God."⁴ This dogmatic confession motivated the formation of the Evangelical Theological Society (1949), which states as its doctrinal basis: "*The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.*" On the other hand, there is *interpretation*. M. J. Erickson (1982) states, "In the past few years, the emphasis in the ETS has been shifting from statements about the nature of Scripture (i.e., that it is free from error) to inquire about what it actually says and means."⁵ Thus the understanding of Genesis 1–11, on the one hand, is considered as presenting "factual" history; but on the other hand, it may be viewed as a different *genre* or nature of literature within Scripture.⁶

In the latter option, Genesis 1 need not be considered without factual error. The task of hermeneutics is no longer simply a set of rules for

interpreting Scripture but, "much more broadly," as involving "the means of bridging the temporal and cultural gap between the biblical situation and time and the one in which we currently find ourselves."⁷ Nevertheless, the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI), a coalition of Christian scholars who believe that a reaffirmation of biblical inerrancy is crucial to the vitality of the Christian church, insists on the dogma of inerrancy. In its published papers of Summit II,⁸ authors argued that the believer must accept the preunderstanding that the authors of Scripture were supernaturally protected from all errors, because "the Holy Spirit is not time-bounded in His knowledge," so that "His participation in the production of Scripture as co-author eliminates both willful deception, factual error, and doctrinal error of any kind."⁹ It appears that no consensus exists regarding the biblical "inerrancy" among evangelicals.

Millard J. Erickson discusses five different concepts of "inerrancy" before stating his own qualified view: "whatever statements the Bible affirms are fully truthful when they are correctly interpreted in terms of their meaning in their cultural setting and the purpose for which they are written."¹⁰ This carefully adjusts the more lapidary declaration of Francis A. Schaeffer: "The Bible without error in all that it affirms."¹¹

A problematic parallel

The traditional argument for biblical inerrancy requires special

attention: the assumed parallel of Scripture and the divine-human Person of Christ. James Packer uses this argument to support the inerrancy of Scripture even when he admits this can be “only a limited” analogy.¹² Nevertheless, he argues, “If the critics believe that Scripture, as a human book, errs, they ought, by force of their own analogy, to believe that Christ, as man, sinned.”

Word of God from its human form, the “clay jars” (2 Cor. 4:7).¹⁴

Donald G. Bloesch presents a more direct recognition of the human aspect of Holy Scripture. He rejects the fundamentalist claim that Scripture contains no discrepancy or flaws measured by modern scientific exactitude because the Spirit of God “accommodated the truth of the Gospel to the mind-set and language

“consistent literalism” for prophetic interpretation is expressed in the *New Scofield Reference Bible* (1967, rev. ed.). It states that Daniel’s end-time prophecies “overleap” the church age and centuries to concern themselves “only with history as it affects Israel and the Holy land” (Ref. on Dan. 11:36, p. 917).

The dispensational end-time scenario, popularized by the fictional

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He acknowledges that the “limited” parallel is “merely that human as well as divine qualities are to be recognized in Scripture,” which he later describes as “the element of mystery that confronts us in the Scriptures.”¹³

Other evangelical Bible scholars find, however, that this incarnation model of the mystery of Scripture is inadequate. G. C. Berkouwer brings this incarnation-inscription parallel under close scrutiny and finds it wanting, giving three reasons: (1) Scripture never uses the parallel of sinlessness (of Christ) and inerrancy (of Scripture), but rather relates Scripture to the wisdom of salvation (2 Tim. 3:15); (2) Scripture clarifies its own inspiration by pointing to the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21); and (3) it is a “confusing analogy use” and an illegitimate “rationalization.” Thus Berkouwer judges that the search for analogies of the mystery of Scripture is unnecessary and can be misused by human speculation. He warns against both extremes: humanizing Scripture and disconnecting the

of the writers.” “The doctrine or message of Scripture, which alone is infallible and inerrant, is hidden in the historical and cultural witness of the biblical writers.”¹⁵

The hermeneutic of dispensationalism tested

The hermeneutical principle of literalism was radically extended to the realm of prophecy by John N. Darby (1800–1882), one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren movement in England. Axiomatic for his dispensational divisions of biblical history is the thesis that a literal exegesis of the Old Testament prophecies demands an *absolutely literal fulfillment*.¹⁶ This hermeneutic of literalism led him to a separate future hope for Israel outside the church. Dispensationalism implies an *ethnic and geographic literalism* for all Old Testament prophecies ascribing to the symbolic portrayals of biblical prophecies, viewed as an essential aspect of their “inerrancy,” the exactness of a photographic picture of history in advance.¹⁷ This

novel series *Left Behind*, encourages ongoing speculations on how to fit current political events into God’s timetable.¹⁸ What troubled evangelical scholars particularly was the self-serving confidence of dispensationalists in their own immediate connection with God, which had led this kind of fundamentalism to its isolation and separation from the historic faith of Protestantism. Many evangelicals repudiated the dispensational doctrines of the *unconditional* nature of prophecy and its *compartmentalizing* of the Scriptures that avoids the ethical demands of God’s covenant. This protest led to the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, United States, in 1947. The New Testament scholar George E. Ladd demonstrates that “an evangelical understanding of the Bible as the Word of God written is not *per se* hostile to a sober criticism; rather an evangelical faith demands a critical methodology in the reconstruction of the historical side of the process of revelation.”¹⁹

Relationship between Holy Scripture and Holy Spirit

Already Calvin developed his doctrine of the “Inner Testimony of the Holy Spirit” to explain how faith in Scripture was not a purely rational consent to the reliability of the Bible in an impersonal relation to Scripture. Appealing to Isaiah 59:21, he explained that this “inner testimony of the Spirit” signifies the divine “sealing” of the gospel message in the believer’s heart: “Therefore the Spirit, promised to us, has not the task of inventing new and unheard-of revelations, or of forging a new kind of doctrine, . . . but of sealing our minds with that very doctrine which is commended by the gospel.”²⁰ Evangelicals resist, therefore, any claim to a new revelation, one that completes or even supersedes Scripture, as is claimed by various cults and sects. They recognize that Scripture intends to establish a personal relationship between the Revealer God and the believers through the Holy Spirit: a *covenant relationship*. They acknowledge that this relationship implies “that we listen to and accept the promises and commandments given to the people of that time as given to us. We experience them as liberating and direction-giving for our life today.”²¹

In this encounter with the God of Scripture, the Holy Spirit assigns to us the content of Scripture and leads us to appropriate to ourselves what is objectively given in Scripture. Jan Veenhof points to the Epistle to the Hebrews that appeals repeatedly to the deposit of revelation in the past and then makes it permanently relevant by stating: “the Spirit says” (Heb. 3:7; 9:8; 10:15). Kenneth S. Kantzer argues that the doctrines of inspiration and revelation need to be complemented by the doctrine of *divine illumination*: “With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the simple believer in Christ meets God immediately as the living God speaks to him personally in the pages of the Bible.”²²

Shifting emphasis in the theology of Scripture

Evangelical theologians gradually shifted from an abstract theory of divine inspiration to an emphasis on the *function* of Scripture as to how God relates to sinners through the Holy Spirit. In other words, they turned from a mechanical inspiration theory to that of an “*organic*” inspiration that recognized more the divine “accommodation” to men and the human mediation and historic, cultural background of each Bible book.²³ The authority, sufficiency, and clarity of Scripture are now qualified by the specific orientation of Scripture itself: “to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15; cf. Rom. 15:4; Ps. 19:8). Only in the light of faith in Christ will the true understanding of the Scriptures be disclosed (see Luke 24:25–27, 32, 44, 45; Matt. 11:25–27).²⁴ This theological-Christological guideline of the New Testament became the evangelical hermeneutic of Scripture interpretation. The attention is shifting from a focus on the formal authority of Scripture to the redemptive *content* of Scripture, that is, to a functional thinking of Scripture.

In this respect, Berkouwer developed his method of *correlating* faith and divine revelation. Faith in the Word of God is true faith only when it will not intend to contribute something but is solely *receptive* of divine revelation in Scripture.²⁵ In his critique on both Karl Barth and traditional Roman Catholic doctrine, Berkouwer insists that personal faith is of decisive importance for participating in salvation, yet, at the same time, that faith can never constitute grounds for our salvation in Christ.²⁶ This theological *correlation* method stresses the simplicity of Scripture and the boundaries of what Scripture reveals (appealing to 1 Cor. 4:6). Following his antispeculative guideline, Berkouwer came—to his own surprise—to a fundamental critique on the Calvinistic doctrine of “double” predestination,²⁷ and he was also led to a biblical confirmation of Calvin’s teaching on the Lord’s Supper over and against that of Luther’s.²⁸

Tensions in Creation theology

James Barr spoke of a certain misuse of the Bible in evangelicalism, stating: “The attempt to use the Bible as a final and unmodifiable authority on a scientific problem is a falsification of scripture.”²⁹ The tense relationship of the Bible and scientific history has been called a “crisis in Christian theology.” Some conservative Bible scholars struggled to find some sort of co-existence of faith and science as complementary approaches to the created reality. G. C. Berkouwer was willing to consider the possibility of a certain “clothing” or “imagery” in the Creation narrative of Genesis 1. He recognized that certain aspects of its account could be related to the polemical situation of Israel (against foreign cosmologies).³⁰ He insisted, however, that Scripture should not be explained by external standards.

Adrio König discerns five different creation concepts (of act, conflict, word, origin, birth) side by side in the Old Testament (OT), for the purpose of identifying Israel’s God as the Creator. Characteristic to him is “the enormously great similarity” of these representations “with those of the peoples and religions around Israel.” His basic conclusion is that the OT creation message does not intend to answer the theoretical question of where does everything originate, but the existential question, Are we safe, shall we survive, do we have hope for the future? The biblical Creation message is oriented to the future: “The doctrine of creation has too long made theology a theology of restoration or of conversation, instead of a theology of renewal, a theology of consolation and hope, a theology of the new acts of the mighty Creator-God. The message of creation is, first, that God can do this again, create new things. . . . Secondly: that God can do still more, greater things.”³¹

Bernard Ramm views Genesis 1–3 as belonging to a *poetic* genre of literature that weaves history and

theology inseparably together. He concludes that Scripture does not teach one particular cosmology, so that it does not compete with modern cosmological explanations of the universe. He accepts the ingenious proposal of Karl Barth, who distinguishes between the Creation account as sacred history (or “sacred saga” as a genre of real history) and modern historical science as profane history, and concludes that *both* are “true in their own way.”³² Ramm argues, “Both scientists and theologians are to be governed in their methodology strictly by the nature of the subject investigated.”³³ Thus, there should not be any conflict between Scripture and natural science, as long as theology and science stay within the limitations of their disciplines.

Other conservative Bible scholars challenge any accommodation idea as operating with a faulty hermeneutic and insist on a simple literal exegesis of Genesis. The main concern of these evangelicals, broadly referred to as “creationists,” is one of hermeneutics: *Scripture must interpret itself*. This implies that the Genesis account must be understood the same way as the New Testament interprets it, particularly Jesus and Paul, that is, as literal history.³⁴ Noel Weeks argues, “If the accommodation idea is to be allowed in the discussion then it must first be demonstrated that it is itself taught by Scripture.”³⁵ Francis A. Schaeffer emphasizes accordingly that not just Genesis 1–11 are involved, “but the authoritativeness of the New Testament as well, and especially the writings of Paul” (referring to Rom. 5:12–15; 1 Cor. 11:8, 12; 1 Tim. 2:13).³⁶ He calls this “strong view of Scripture” the “watershed of the evangelical world.”³⁷ Clark H. Pinnock points to the fundamental importance of the doctrines of Creation and the Fall, stating: “Hermeneutics collapses if Genesis 1–3 does not describe what happened historically.”³⁸ An accommodation of the creationist worldview to the

materialistic worldview of modern science seems therefore implausible.

Conclusion

Our sketch of hermeneutical trends in modern evangelicalism has alerted us to the relevance of the discipline of hermeneutics for the exegesis of Scripture. Ultimately, no particular hermeneutical “method” can guarantee a better understanding of and obedience to Holy Scripture. An openness of heart and searching mind remain essential, as the psalmist kept praying to God: “Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Ps. 119:18, NRSV). **M**

- 1 For an excellent literary survey, see chapter 5 of M. D. MacDonald, *Theories of Revelation* (London: Unwin, 1963).
- 2 W. A. Elwell, ed., *The Handbook of Evangelical Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993).
- 3 See C. F. H. Henry, “Conflict over Biblical Inerrancy,” in *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco: Word, 1973).
- 4 G. H. Clark, *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics* (Jefferson: Trinity Foundation, 1982), 44.
- 5 M. J. Erickson, “Biblical Inerrancy: The Last Twenty-five Years,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society [JETS]* 25, no. 4 (1982): 387–394; quote on 393.
- 6 See “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics,” *JETS* 25, no. 4 (1982): 397–401; articles 13 and 22.
- 7 Erickson, “Biblical Inerrancy,” 393. He refers to the landmark book of A. C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 10–17. See also Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).
- 8 E. D. Radmacher and R. D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).
- 9 J. S. Feinberg, *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, 15.
- 10 Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 1:238.
- 11 Francis Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977).
- 12 James Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958). See pages 30, 33, 38, and 129.
- 13 Packer, “Hermeneutics and Biblical Authority,” *Themelios* (1975): 3–11 (quote from 9).
- 14 See chapter 7 of G. C. Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). A. A. van Ruler analyzed specifically the “structural differences between the christological and the pneumatological viewpoints.” *Theologisch Werk* (Nijkerk, Netherlands: Callenbach, 1969), 1:175–190.
- 15 Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 1:67, 65.
- 16 For an examination of dispensationalism, see W. E. Cox, *An Examination of Dispensationalism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963); V. S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987).
- 17 For a critical evaluation of dispensational hermeneutics, see chapters 3, 4, 9 of H. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1983).
- 18 See the instructive analysis in chapters 2 and 3 of the Lutheran NT scholar Barbara R. Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed* (New York: Basic books, 2004).
- 19 George E. Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 215, 233. For a survey of the evangelical repudiation of dispensationalism, see R. Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 76–81.
- 20 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 1, chapter 9, section 2.
- 21 See the Reformed theologian J. Veenhof, *The Interpretation of Scripture Today* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1985), 6.
- 22 Kenneth S. Kantzer, *The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation*, ed. M. C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968), 79.
- 23 This shift to the modern “organic” worldview was introduced by the Dutch Reformed theologians A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck. See chapter 3 of the Dutch dissertation of J. Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie* (Amsterdam: Buyten, 1968); the English summary, 669–678.
- 24 For an instructive treatise, see H. N. Ridderbos, *Het Woord, het Rijk en onze Verlegenheid* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1968). “Feilloosheid, onfeilbaarheid, autoriteit” (57–77).
- 25 Instructive is G. W. de Jong, *De Theologie van Dr. G. C. Berkouwer: Een Strukturele Analyse* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1971).
- 26 See Berkouwer, “Evaluation,” in *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), part 2.
- 27 See Berkouwer, *Divine Election* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960).
- 28 Berkouwer, *The Sacraments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), chapter 11. For a critical evaluation of Berkouwer’s theology (until 1965), see H. Berkhof, “De Methode van Berkouwer’s Theologie,” in *Ex Auditu Verbi: Festschrift for Berkouwer* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1965), 37–55. G. L. Watts offers an instructive survey of Berkouwer’s theology in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, 193–208.
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- 30 Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), chapter 10. Compare with G. L. Watts *Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, 205–206.
- 31 Adrio König, *New and Greater Things: Re-evaluating the Biblical Message on Creation* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1988), 78.
- 32 Bernard Ramm, *After Fundamentalism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 82–87. See chapter 7 for a clarification of Barth’s defense of the “full theological integrity of Holy Scripture.”
- 33 Ramm, *After Fundamentalism*, 154. See also A. E. McGrath, *The Foundations of Dialogue in Science and Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998).
- 34 See Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, 59–61.
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- 36 Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict*, 33.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 38 Clark H. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 204. See also his treatment of the trustworthiness of Scripture, 203–207. For an illuminating clarification of the scientific, creationist method, see Leonard Brand, *Faith, Reason, and Earth History* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997).



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Jesus leadership: A model for ministry

Numerous experts throughout the years have claimed to have the secrets to successful leadership. Whether in religion, business, or politics, leadership is a pertinent topic, with opinions (all claiming statistical data to prove their arguments) varying from essential characteristics to new breakthrough techniques. Famous leaders are cited as models; but is there a better example of leadership than we can find in Jesus?

Many have searched His parables and sayings for insight on leadership; rarely, however, are His actions examined for His actual leadership style. By focusing on Jesus as a Person (through reading the black rather than red print), we can learn the essential principles of our Lord's leadership style.

Jesus as Leader

Chronologically, the first key aspect to Christ's leadership was His *calling*. Centuries of prophecies were fulfilled in a small Babe,¹ who grew in "wisdom and stature" (Luke 2:52, KJV), and had His calling supernaturally confirmed at His baptism.² This teaches us that upbringing and affirmation are vital to the formation of leaders. Their talents and characteristics are nurtured and encouraged by others.³

Next, leaders require followers, and Jesus had plenty, which leads to the second aspect of Jesus' leadership—His disciples. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He not only gathered a crowd of followers,

He called specific individuals in order to mentor them in a smaller setting. This discipling apprenticeship involved private instruction and question-and-answer sessions as well as on the job observation and delegation. He *empowered* His followers through this instruction and leadership, both encouraging and disciplining them.

Empowering others is a part of Jesus' servant-leadership model. Through His miracles, Jesus freed people from their infirmities and empowered them to start a new life, physically and spiritually.

Jesus also led with *integrity* by His example. Respected leaders live what they preach, relying on *principles*, not popularity. Jesus could have won the nation through popularity. He did not. Effective spiritual leaders should do the same.

Texts on leadership speak of leaders requiring a *vision* they can "sell" to their followers.⁴ Jesus passionately believed His message, and, with integrity, He taught with authority. He was so committed to His vision that He died for it. Vision with commitment is a winning combination,⁵ which inspires others to action.

Love and action

Action is the key; a true leader wants to draw others to act upon the vision and see it to fruition.⁶ Jesus set the vision, preached the message, and demonstrated the vision through miraculous healings. Once people caught the passion, they were inspired to sacrifice everything

for it. If leaders today could inspire such passion for service, the miraculous church growth of the Day of Pentecost would be repeated.

Jesus had charisma⁷ and a perfect character⁸ that resisted all forms of temptation⁹ and weakness. He faced the hard issues of inequality, power, and suffering head on, and rebuked His followers when they did not do the same. Jesus' character was revealed through His consistency: He refused to advance Himself and publicly maintained often unpopular teachings.

Personally upholding the highest principles, He commanded His followers to do likewise. What higher principles exist than those outlined in the Sermon on the Mount, which embodies true love? (How interesting, too, that love is absent from even Christian lists of leadership qualities.) Love was behind every aspect of Christ's life. It was central to His vision and His mission. Love drove His service and led Him to His death.

Jesus' compassion flowed from this love. In humility, He met people where they were. He met their immediate needs. When crowds followed Him, though tired, He was moved to heal them, feed them, and teach them. Christian leaders must have compassion¹⁰; yet some prestigious voices in leadership training omit it from their lists of "indispensable qualities."¹¹

There can be misconceptions that compassion and humility are signs of weakness.¹² Christ, however, personified love and encouraged

everyone to embrace compassion and humble servant leadership as the only Christian leadership style.¹³ Modesty is both admired¹⁴ and negatively viewed as a self-effacing weakness.¹⁵ The key to Christ's humility was the source of His confidence. It was based in God, not ego, thus He remained competent, powerful, yet approachable (approachability is a prerequisite for pastoral leadership).

to obey God's will and glorify His Father. Continual time spent with God enabled Him to maintain His focus on His ultimate purpose and prevented Him from being distracted or tempted. Jesus led with authority in that He believed, not so much in Himself, as in God's power to work through Him.

Jesus taught His followers to have faith and confidence in God's power to work through them. Only

From His actions to His words, every aspect of His life was marked with incredible wisdom. Jesus not only lived His life for His personal calling, He led others to fulfill theirs. Jesus gave purpose to the lives of His followers. He gave them a message, a task, and a hope. Jesus was people-focused. He lived for others and yet His esteem was based in God, and not in pleasing humans.

LEADERSHIP IS LONELY, BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE LEADER MUST WORK ALONE. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES BENEFIT BOTH LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS.

Balance

Jesus not only taught, demonstrated, and delegated,¹⁶ but also took time out for Himself and His disciples. Leaders need time to recharge, particularly if their personality types become drained by interaction.¹⁷ Rest time is not only healthy, but also allows time for planning, dreaming, and reflecting on problems. Jesus took time out of His ministry to stop, rest, recharge, and pray, particularly during times of stress or anticipated difficulties. Examples include Jesus' withdrawal following the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:13, 23; 15:21), times of prayer before important decisions (Luke 6:12), and before His death (Luke 22:39-41).¹⁸

Leading with confidence

Jesus was called by God to be a Leader. His only purpose was

through faith and prayer could they receive the power to heal and receive healing. Peter provided a tangible example of a faith slowly growing, then faltering, only to grow stronger than before. When faith was exercised and a job was well done, Christ did not hesitate to offer praise.

Independent learning, which has a risk of failure, is a necessary requirement to attaining leadership skills. When this occurred, Jesus did not hesitate to offer feedback on essential aspects of leadership.¹⁹ Leadership is lonely, but this does not mean the leader must work alone. Shared responsibilities benefit both leaders and followers. A true leader is not afraid to ask for help; it is a sign of humility. Leaders also benefit from feedback on their leadership, even as Jesus, the perfect Leader, asked those He trusted for personal feedback.

Conclusion

Christ came, transformed, and expanded leadership beyond the humanistic figure often depicted in textbooks. He was the Model of perfection in every area, including Christian leadership. Any leadership author will tell you to model yourself on the best.

Hence, who else should be that Model but, of course, Jesus? 

- 1 J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992), 44.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 66-72.
- 3 Michael Jones, "Servant-Leadership and the Imaginative Life," in *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the 21st Century*, eds. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 37-40.
- 4 John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 86, 87; Andrew J. DuBrin and Carol Dalglish, *Leadership: An Australasian Focus* (Milton: John Wiley, 2003), 5.
- 5 See Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2005).
- 6 Warren Bennis, "Become a Tomorrow Leader," in *Focus on Leadership* (see note 3), 101, 105.
- 7 Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities*, 10, 11; DuBrin and Dalglish, *Leadership: An Australasian Focus*, 73-75.
- 8 Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities*, 4, 5.
- 9 Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 19.
- 10 Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 230.
- 11 Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities*, 1-3.
- 12 Amanda Sinclair, *Doing Leadership Differently* (Carlton South, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 94, 95.
- 13 Charles C. Manz, *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999), 70.
- 14 Bill George, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 20.
- 15 Sinclair, *Doing Leadership Differently*, 94, 95.
- 16 John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 99-101.
- 17 Marti Olsen Laney, *The Introvert Advantage: How to Thrive in an Extrovert World* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2002), 252-260.
- 18 Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 207.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 145.

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Ministry in a diverse society

Donald McGavran, the “father” of the church growth movement, in his foundational work, *Understanding Church Growth*, concluded that evidence indicates that homogeneous unit churches grow faster than multiethnic churches.¹ His conclusion, though, did not address any ethical dimensions inherent in a homogeneous principle of church growth. When C. Peter Wagner assumed the mantle of leadership for the church growth movement, he embraced the homogeneous principle of his colleague. However, realizing the ethical implications of the principle, he sought to make a distinction between the evangelistic mandate and the cultural mandate. He acknowledged that the cultural mandate of the Bible called for a commitment to multiethnic/multi-cultural ministry. At the same time, however, he argued that the evangelistic mandate to win people to Jesus Christ made the homogeneous principle ethically permissible.² Whether such a distinction can be made is debatable because one thing is certain in the twenty-first century—the coming demographics are going to change everything.

Ethnic changes

By the year 2050, demographers predict that in the United States there will be no single majority ethnic group. By that time, ethnic minorities will make up almost 50 percent of the population.³ Experts calculate that the Hispanic-American population will have grown by approximately 21 percent, to a little more than 80 million; the Asian American/Pacific

Islander population by nearly 22 percent, to approximately 35 million; and the African-American population by about 12 percent, to around 52 million. In contrast, in the same period, the Anglo-American population is estimated to grow by only 2 percent, to roughly 200 million.⁴

Additionally, the postmodern world has brought in its wake a new worldview regarding ethnic and cultural distinctions. For most postmoderns, racial diversity is both the norm and celebrated, echoing the biblical worldview: “There is neither Jew nor Greek [no ethnic divisions], there is neither slave nor free [no social class divisions], there is neither male nor female [no gender divisions]; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28, NKJV).

The changing demographics and voice of postmodernity make some social scientists predict that “the twenty-first century holds the potential to be the century of the multiracial congregation. . . . [Thus] a movement toward more multiracial congregations must be the cutting edge for ministry and growth in this century.”⁵ The church will no longer be able to artificially divide the evangelistic mandate and the cultural mandate. Instead, it will need to live out its evangelistic mandate in the light of the cultural mandate.

This poses a challenge for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in many parts of the world because often Adventists have developed ethnic-specific churches. For postmoderns, racial inclusivity in the postmodern world and racial exclusivity in the church suggest that something is amiss.⁶ In order to

minister effectively to postmoderns, racial diversity needs to become the norm in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Until then, the church will risk losing those in emerging generations who are turned off by any appearance of exclusivity. In order to be relevant to postmoderns, the church must listen to the voice of postmodernism, which is calling it to the principles of the gospel within the boundaries of multiethnic/multicultural ministries.

The response

What are the keys to reversing this trend? Acts describes a revelation that the apostle Peter received following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the entire household of Cornelius, a Gentile and centurion in the service of Rome. “Then Peter began to speak: ‘I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right’ ” (Acts 10:34, 35, NIV). Peter was embracing the concept of multiethnic/multicultural ministry. In Antioch, Peter’s newly held doctrine was tested. While there, some Jewish Christians pressured him to stop eating with the Gentile converts. Under their influence he separated himself from the Gentile believers (Gal. 2:11–13). Faced with a crisis, he quickly abandoned his belief in multiethnic/multicultural ministry. The implication of this incident is that for Peter, oneness was a doctrinal belief but not yet a core belief. This had not moved from a mere philosophical acceptance into the depths of his soul as a nonnegotiable stance.⁷

Paul's actions were in sharp contrast. As soon as he arrived in Antioch, he confronted Peter about his behavior (Gal. 2:14). For him, multiethnic/multicultural ministry was a core belief that drove all his thoughts and actions. He reacted strongly because Peter had violated not just a doctrine, but a fundamental core belief that, for Paul, was inseparable from the gospel.⁸

If multiethnic/multicultural ministry will become a reality, it necessitates pastors/preachers who embrace oneness in Christ, not as a mere doctrine, but as a core, non-negotiable belief. Ultimately, for the long-term success of multiethnic/multicultural churches, the entire congregation must embrace this core belief as well.

A key starting point in a movement towards multiethnic/multicultural ministry is racial reconciliation. Pastors must be able to discern that all too often racism exists in society, in the hearts of some of those under their care,

and perhaps in their own hearts. Until racism is seen as a real issue, reconciliation cannot take place. Dealing effectively with racism means examining the four levels on which racism exists: personal, interpersonal, institutional or systemic, and cultural.

1. *Personal racism* refers to personal ideas, feelings, and behaviors of an individual. This can manifest itself in feelings of superiority over another race, stereotyping other ethnic groups or cultures, being fearful of others because of their skin hue, and/or outright hatred of another ethnic/cultural group. Personal racism can also include individual behaviors that mistreat someone of another ethnic/cultural group.⁹

2. *Interpersonal racism* refers to behaviors rooted in conscious or unconscious assumptions about us or other people.¹⁰ These assumptions often spring from people living out false identities. Any one of these false identities limits the ability to

relate interpersonally across ethnic and cultural boundaries. These false identities include, but are not limited to: (a) the *Self-Hatred Identity*, as characterized by the desire to belong to another ethnic/cultural group; (b) the *Rage-Filled Identity*, as typified by hatred toward the group seen as the cause of suffering; (c) the *Victim Identity*, as understood in the belief that you are not responsible for any of your problems and that only others can fix them;¹¹ (d) the *Model Minority Identity*, as taken on by some minorities who experience success; the primary symptom is sense of shame when around family and friends who act too ethnic; (e) the *Hip White Person Identity*, as exemplified by whites who, in an effort to prove their sensitivity to other ethnic/cultural groups, become very critical of their own culture and identity (see self-hatred identity) and immerse themselves into the cultural identity of another group; (f) the *White Superiority Identity*, as characterized by making judgments



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about people of color without any personal knowledge of the person and the assumption that your culture is superior and every other one is inferior; and (g) *The Color-Blind Identity*, as typified by Anglo-Americans who do not think of themselves in ethnic terms.¹²

of a particular ethnic/cultural group perceive that their way of doing things is the best approach. The actions, thoughts, and expressions of other groups are seen as inferior. It is important to acknowledge the fact that all groups have a tendency towards ethnocentrism.

recognize the pain and resultant anger that exist in minority communities. Thus, it is highly insensitive to suggest that the past is irrelevant.¹⁹ Second, this view is based on an individualistic view of sin that ignores its corporate nature (Neh. 1:6, 7; Dan. 9:5, 6). Corporate

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3. *Institutional or systemic racism* refers to manipulating societal institutions to give preferences and advantages to one group while simultaneously restricting the choices, rights, mobility, and access of other groups.¹³ In America, since Anglo-Americans make up the dominant ethnic group, this is reflected in any manipulation of societal institutions that gives preference to Anglo-Americans over minorities. Tragically, American history is replete with examples of institutional racism toward minority groups. However, institutional racism is not just a relic of the past; it remains a current reality in America. Studies continue to suggest a large disparity between the occurrence of a certain phenomenon (poverty, imprisonment) in the African-American community and the frequency of the same phenomenon in the general population. This sizable disparity suggests that the social force of institutionalized racism is still at work.¹⁴

4. *Cultural racism* refers to the subconscious or even conscious sense of ethnic or cultural superiority.¹⁵ This means that the members

The path to racial healing

Racial healing begins by acknowledging the core reality of racism. Racism is not a problem of skin; it is a problem of sin.¹⁶ Because people of all ethnic/cultural groups share the same sinful nature, they all engage in the sin of racism. Until the problem is recognized as an issue rooted in sinful human nature, the answers offered will always be partial.¹⁷ Once duly recognized as such, then it must be addressed as other issues of sin are—confessed, repented of, and renounced on any and all of its four levels. In addition, there is a need for new hearts and minds, which makes it clear that racism can be eliminated only through the power and work of the Holy Spirit in human hearts.¹⁸

The dominant Anglo culture, of which I am a part, struggles with this last issue. Of what are Anglos to repent? It does not seem fair to hold us accountable for slavery, murder, and oppression of minorities. We cannot be held accountable for the sins of our ancestors. Is it not better to just forget the past and move on?

This view is problematic on two fronts. First, this view fails to

repentance comes from a sorrow for the historic and contemporary mistreatment of minorities and grief at the recognition that some have benefited from racism, although they themselves may not be racist.²⁰

The record indicates that positive steps were made towards racial reconciliation through the resolutions passed by the Southern Baptists (1995) and the Presbyterian Church Overture 20 (2002). These major denominations confessed, repented, and renounced their corporate sin of supporting slavery, establishing segregated churches, and creating denominational policies that discriminated against members based on race.²¹ It should be noted that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has passed no official resolution. However, at a summit on race relations convened in October of 1999, the late A. C. McClure, who was then president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for North America, made the following statement:

To our African-American brothers and sisters with whom I and all my Anglo colleagues have assumed a special relationship

because of that abominable scourge of slavery, I want to say to you, I apologize, I'm sorry. (Long applause). I'm sorry for the way you've been treated by our church—almost from the time of our birth. For example, here in Washington [DC], as was recounted yesterday, where we had a unique opportunity to exercise leadership in race relations, to take a lead in desegregation—we ran away from it. I don't know all the circumstances. I did not participate there, I wasn't old enough. But I want to say on behalf of your church, "I'm sorry." I don't know if any other president has said that publicly, it doesn't matter. But I do want to say it today. Now, I've done my best to launch this conversation and I pledge to do all that I can to see that we do not lose the momentum of this event, the momentum that we've gained. I want to see the ship sail so far out to sea [that] it cannot reverse course.²²

McClure's statement was a courageous one that pushed us in the right direction, towards corporate repentance. Unfortunately, more than a decade later, it appears that the ship McClure envisioned sailing out to sea remains moored at the dock. In order to unmoor the ship, we need to follow the example of others and issue a denominational resolution renouncing the denominational policies and practices that have discriminated against members based on ethnicity. Some, in the dominant culture, would like to forget about these abuses of the past. However, failing adequately to address the injustices of the past makes it easier to overlook the inequities of the present.

The path to racial healing begins when the dominant culture embraces the concept of corporate repentance and has the courage to

seek forgiveness. The responsibility then rests on racial minorities to have the grace to offer corporate forgiveness. Without repentance and grace, racial alienation will be no better a decade from now than it is today.²³

I believe that corporate repentance and corporate forgiveness would make a huge impact on race relations in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, this is only a first step. It must be followed by an ongoing educational process that seeks to bridge differences, heal wounds, and develop a vision for the new culture that Christ desires to establish.

Conclusion

The combined forces of postmodernity and the changing demography in the United States reveal that multiethnic/multicultural ministry will be at the cutting edge of ministry. Heterogeneity will be the new homogeneity of the twenty-first century. The churches that will make the biggest impact will be those who live out an evangelistic mandate within the parameters of the cultural mandate.

A movement towards multiethnic/multicultural ministry must begin with a clear commitment to racial reconciliation. For this to occur, pastors must be proactive leaders in rooting out racism in any of its forms. In doing so, they must embrace the fact that at its core, racism is a sin problem. As such, this sin must be dealt with like any sin—through confession, repentance, and renunciation. The successful leaders in a multiethnic/multicultural movement will be those who embrace the need for racial reconciliation as a core commitment and strive to make it a reality on both the local and national levels.

I agree with Pastor McClure: I want to see the ship sail so far out to sea that it cannot reverse course. As a church, are we willing to see what God can do through corporate repentance and corporate

forgiveness? As individuals, are we willing to step out in faith into uncharted waters and allow God to bridge differences, heal wounds, and give us a vision for the church that Christ desires where "[t]here is neither Jew nor Greek [no ethnic divisions], there is neither slave nor free [no social class divisions], there is neither male nor female [no gender divisions]; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NKJV)? 

- 1 Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).
- 2 C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 110.
- 3 Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell, *American Becoming: Racial Trends and the Consequences*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001), 1.
- 4 U.S. Bureau of the Census, "U.S. Ethnic Groups: Population Projections, 1992-2050" (Washington, DC: Census Bureau, 1991). While these figures reflect the projected changes in the United States, other countries will also experience major population shifts.
- 5 Curtiss Paul DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as the Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 74.
- 6 Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in the New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 394.
- 7 DeYoung et al., 158.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 "Helpful Perspectives on Race and Racism," <http://www.anti-racismonline.org/html%20pages/Helpful%20Perspectives%201.html> (11 December 2009).
- 10 Tony Campolo and Michael Battle, *The Church Enslaved: A Spirituality of Racial Reconciliation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 128, 129.
- 11 This is not meant to deny the fact that we live in a society where people are systematically victimized. The tragedy is when groups begin competing for victimization status to gain political or other types of advantages. See Brenda Salter McNeil and Rick Richardson, *The Heart of Racial Justice: How Soul Change Leads to Social Change* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 80–81.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 77–88.
- 13 Jerry V. Diller, *Cultural Diversity: A Primer for the Human Services* (Boston: Brooks/Cole, 1999), 28.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 15 Arthur F. Glasser et al., *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 37.
- 16 Clarence Schuler, *Winning the Race to Unity: Is Racial Reconciliation Really Working?* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 170.
- 17 George Yancey, *Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 70.
- 18 Campolo and Battle, 121; Yancey, 26, 77–81; Scott Roley with James Isaac Elliot, *God's Neighborhood: A Hopeful Journey in Racial Reconciliation and Community Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 164; and James Earl Massey, "Reconciliation: Two Biblical Studies" in *A Mighty Journey: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation*, ed. Timothy George and Robert Smith Jr. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 211–222.
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- 20 McNeil and Richardson, 109, 110; Yancey, 95.
- 21 Peart, 82–84.
- 22 "Church in North America Holds Summit on Race," *The Atlantic Union Gleaner*, December 1999, 4, 5.
- 23 Yancey, 87.

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Pastors and life in the public square

Many of my Christian friends identify themselves as social conservatives and promote their chosen political organization. I also care about issues and politics, and believe we should be informed, engage in the issues that impact human life, and vote. Christians should change their world. But when pressed by some who are the most fervent in their political alignment, I suggest that keeping faith means we follow Jesus' example of active concern for human well-being without allowing political organizations to form our worldview. After all, Jesus acted out of a worldview formed through a relationship with God, not the arguments of political organizations or the pronouncements of religious communities endeavoring to serve partisan interests.

Understanding the worldview of Jesus requires that we first note His concern for the well-being of society. Asked for instruction on how to pray, Jesus articulated the Lord's Prayer, a model that has found a place in the liturgy of the church as much for its rhythmic formulation as its piercing content. The invocation within the third line of His prayer challenges thoughtful Christians regarding their social responsibility: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, NKJV). Seeking the dominion of God in the present, the prayer resembles the literary structure and invocation of the Qaddish, an ancient Aramaic prayer generally

used to conclude the synagogue service. As a Jew of the first century, Jesus had likely often recited the Qaddish, which says, "Exalted and hallowed be his great name in the world which he created according to his will. May he let his kingdom rule in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon."*

Jesus' reinterpretation was controversial. Offered in a context of oppression, slavery, injustice, inequality, abuse, and indifference, Jesus' words "Your will be done on earth" present a radical petition. For Israel in the time of Christ, to offer that God's will be done on earth could be interpreted to mean the overthrow of oppressive and ungodly Roman rule. Messianic hopes were entangled with political dominion, and He could have been easily understood to advocate political solutions. However, Jesus intentionally removes the national identity of Israel in the Qaddish and, instead, appeals to the will of God throughout the entire earth, inclusive of all nations and peoples.

What did Jesus mean? And why was Jesus asked by His followers how to pray? First-century Jewish life was filled with prayer. People of Jewish faith, like Jesus and His disciples, had morning and evening prayers, recited psalms as prayers, recognized the temple as a place of prayer, and recited prayers in the synagogue. What need was there for a new pattern of prayer? The answer is partly that, as disciples,

they expected instruction in prayer. But it was also Jesus' intention to reinterpret the community of faith through prayer. Jesus addressed what was most important to God in the community, and sought to embed these values within His disciples. What He meant is affirmed in His subsequent living.

Jesus demonstrated social compassion

The will of God on earth invites reflection regarding service to others. A pastoral theology guiding the church's engagement with human need in society begins with the experience of Jesus. Though given a relatively short time for mission, He demonstrated social compassion throughout His ministry. He did not ignore suffering in the present in deference to His eschatological purpose. The following five such demonstrations of social concern provide insight into both His worldview and His activism.

Jesus advocated for children. When children were brought to Him, He affirmed their importance. "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14, NKJV). In a culture that offered only selective education to children, He said, "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42, NKJV). On at least two occasions, He taught that service

to a child was service to Him. For Jesus, the business of the kingdom was not antithetical to worry for the education, protection, and welfare of children.

Jesus promoted health and healing. "When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them" (Luke 4:40, NKJV). The sick were

subsequent empowering of this woman's ministry was a remarkable contrast to the inequalities woven throughout the cultural experience of His time. And Jesus' disciples, launching the first-century church, knew well the will of God on earth for equality. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NKJV).

the judgment and the accusers: " 'He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first' " (John 8:7, NKJV). In one act, Jesus defended the defenseless, advocated justice for all, and linked redemption to justice. When He cleared the temple of those who transformed the public place for prayer to a marketplace, He expressed His concern for universal rights (all ought to have access) without regard to power or position.

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Jesus, righteousness, and political structures

If "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means human society should be governed by theistic law in order to establish religious norms, it is not apparent in Jesus' life and teaching. He did seek change in the here and now. He advocated for children, promoted universal health and healing, demonstrated His belief in equality, helped the poor, and sought justice; all moral causes reflecting righteousness in society, but He largely declined the power of ruling authority to accomplish these ends. Jesus knew of the stain of humanity and the abuse of power that inevitably accompanies structures in human society, be they political or religious.

constantly His concern. He interrupted the agenda of His activity to minister to persons seeking healing. Often physical healing expressed spiritual restoration. But frequently, as at Simon's house, Jesus simply ministered to the sick because their need was at the heart of His ministry. His concern for health and healing was universal, without digression for wealth, education, social status, or faith.

Jesus demonstrated equality. He fostered relationships with people who did not bear His own identity. No Jewish rabbi would openly engage a woman in personal conversation, let alone a Samaritan. Resting at Jacob's well in Samaria, "A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink' " (John 4:7, NKJV). The

Jesus helped the poor. Forsaking His livelihood for the ministry, He had no riches to share. But those in poverty received His respect. The gift of a poor widow was extolled as an evidence of great character (Luke 21:3, 4). He preached salvation to the poor (Matt. 11:5), disdained the hoarding of wealth in the presence of poverty (Luke 18:18–25), and fed the hungry. In the first beatitude, the poor in spirit (regardless of material possessions) are blessed. The church, founded by His witnesses in the first century, obviously learned compassion for the poor from Him, for they shared their possessions (Acts 2:44, 45).

Jesus sought justice. Presented with a woman accused of acts demanding death in Jewish law, Jesus confronted the nature of both

Ambition corrupts. Jesus warned those who would form the framework of the early Christian church of their own temptations to power: " 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant' " (Matt. 20:25, 26, NKJV). Jesus faced this temptation when His disciples reasoned that His powers to relieve disease and feed the hungry would advance national interests. "Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone" (John 6:15).

It was not that Jesus had nothing to say about political matters or

shunned public action. You have to look no further than His sermon on the mount to note His advocacy and activism, positioned by Matthew as the climax of His early ministry. The sermon indeed identifies Jesus to Matthew's readers. The genealogy, birth, announcement of John the Baptist, healing, all contribute to the growing popularity of His ministry. Jesus is launching a movement accompanied by mounting interest. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria. . . . Great multitudes followed Him" (Matt. 4:23–25, NKJV).

Then comes the sermon. With remarkable courage He overturns the hierarchal ideas of both the political empire of the Romans and religious elite of the Jewish world. The truly blessed are not the elite and powerful, but the common people, the poor, meek, persecuted, and peacemakers. It is their kingdom, not organized from the top down, but empowered among the least.

Not lacking for clarity, Jesus corrects the superficiality of technical approaches to the law while ignoring its spirit. He envisions a pluralistic world where we love not only our neighbors but those who differ with us and even our enemies, where purity of heart is the measure of fidelity, where we give rather than loan for our own interest, where true treasure is in the heart, and we refrain from judgment. Jesus issues His clearest ethical precept with the words, " 'Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets' " (Matt. 7:12, NKJV).

He inserts in the midst of His sermon instruction in prayer with the invocation "Thy will be done on earth." We cannot ignore it. The Sermon on the Mount announces His wish for creation of a just order on earth.

In a world where politics and religion merged in governing structures, Jesus asked for a change of heart, rejected personal political power, and demonstrated compassion. Jesus served others disinterestedly; that is, He often relieved human suffering for no other reason than because it was human suffering. Knowing the human condition, He wisely stopped short of assigning responsibility for righteous behavior in society to political structures.

Doing as Jesus did

How then should we who follow Jesus keep faith in a political world?

The first observation is our calling to serve others without reference to religious belief. Issues like the education, protection, and rights of all children; health care for everyone; equality; relieving poverty; and assuring justice should be integrated within our Christian worldview simply because we are followers of Christ.

The second observation is the risk of assigning responsibility for behaviors rooted in religious beliefs to political structures. Many of us readily note the inherent dangers of theistic societies where government and religion have merged and the population welcomes government enforcement of religious institutions. However, democracies are also subject to righteous and unrighteous preferences of their religious majorities. When people resort to political influence to enforce religious viewpoints in matters of culture, they, without intention, misrepresent the worldview of Jesus, and the nature of God. God grants and honors the freedom of choice. Political organizations inevitably seize on specific issues in the interest of political expediency while ignoring other important issues. Clergy should preserve a prophetic voice calling society to righteousness without the bias inherent within political and religious institutions.

Does that mean our political structures always ignore, or should

ignore, a vision for a righteous world? No. The education, protection, and rights of all children; health care for everyone; equality; relieving poverty; and assuring justice should be the interests of our society and its governing institutions. Clergy, like so many in the past have, should advocate and sacrifice for the public good. Our public institutions are vital and can serve humanity. But those interests are necessarily pursued in a pluralistic society disinterestedly, without preference, bias, or interest in matters of faith.

Christians, especially clergy, should use their influence positively in public life. Act compassionately, and support the issues that reflect Jesus' concern for all people. Take positions on critical issues. Seek righteousness in society like so many have before us. Encourage people to exercise their civic duties responsibly. Serve the community. But remember that Jesus never used political power to enforce religious beliefs. Be certain your heart and mind are under the control of Christ, not political institutions. We are serving in His name. **M**

* R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew, New International Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2007), 243.



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Transforming prayer

Current popular interest in prayer and meditation shows that there exists a great yearning for spiritual experience and meaning among today's youth. At the same time, many are turning dangerously to various forms of Eastern meditation in the name of Christianity. Christian spirituality offers the joy, tranquility, and power that today's world seeks, but Satan places his most effective snares close to the genuine.

Prayer and meditation offer the power and wisdom needed to meet today's challenges. But how does the pastor experience and teach genuine spirituality? How does one keep from crossing dangerous boundaries? How does the pastor find time for empowering dialogue with God when overwhelmed by so many demanding human challenges? What is the proper balance between prayer, Bible study, and ministry?

The Protestant Reformation took place amid a flood of spiritual chaos, but prayer broke through strong barriers. Karl Barth says, "The Reformation appears to us as a great whole: a labor of research, thinking, preaching, discussion, polemic, and organization. But it was more than all that. From what we know, it was also an act of continuous prayer."¹ Speaking of the Reformers, he writes, "It was not by the brilliance of their virtues, wisdom, or piety that He (God) accomplished His work with them. It was by prayer."² Martin Luther also attributed the success of the Reformation to prayer.³

The Protestant Reformation was also a watershed that separated

between true and false forms of spirituality. Men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others were spiritual giants. They struggled with challenges similar to ours; yet they found a solid anchor in Scripture that empowered their prayers and guided them through bold attacks against faith. A brief look at their experience and teaching concerning prayer will prove insightful as we face today's tide of evil.

You think society is corrupt today

When the elector of Saxony (Germany) surveyed the religious scene in 1527, he observed a muddle of ignorance and moral decadence. Many of the monks and priests who joined the Reformed movement were ignorant of Scripture. A number were living in "wild wedlock," others had married and then abandoned their families. One report declared that all but 10 out of 200 clergymen were living in open fornication. Some congregations complained that their pastors made alcoholic beverages during the week and explained the art on Sunday, others that their ministers were seen too often in the gambling dens and beer chambers.⁴

Martin Luther's friend and fellow reformer Philip Melancthon was deeply moved by this. He penned, "My heart bleeds when I regard this misery. Often when we have completed the visitation of a place, I go to one side and pour forth my distress in tears."⁵

Prior to this, Melancthon seemed to depend more upon intellectual thought than prayer. The survey helped him to realize his need

for greater dependence upon God.⁶ In an essay on prayer (1543) Melancthon wrote, "That we may know our need of God's help we should reflect upon our enormous inadequacy . . . Surely all wise men are amazed that human beings are by nature so strong yet so weak."⁷

Joy in the battle

Prayer and meditation are not only the source of power but also of joy and comfort. Gerard Groote (1340–1384) laid the foundation for the devotional life. Writing of Groote, Albert Hyma reports, "It was his habit to withdraw himself several times a day from the busy life of the outer world for prayer, surrendering himself wholly to God, saying: 'Here I am Lord; teach me to do thy will, make mine conform to thine.'"⁸ There were times when he was conscious of contact between himself and God and his "soul would leap with joy. Songs of thanksgiving would escape from his fervent lips, for at such moments, that wonderful peace promised by Christ would settle upon him."⁹

Labor to enter into rest

Pastors should realize seeking spiritual renewal has never been easy. Martin Luther regarded prayer as "The hardest work of all . . . a labor above all labors, since he who prays must wage a mighty warfare against the doubt and murmuring excited by the faintheartedness and unworthiness we all feel within us."¹⁰

Luther spent up to three hours in prayer and meditation in the evenings.¹¹ He wrote, "Whatever good may be done is done and brought

about by prayer . . . against force there is no help but prayer alone.”¹²

A research project in 1995 indicated that those who built their day on a firm foundation of prayer, meditation, and Bible study enjoyed the ministry, experienced transformation in the lives of their members and were less subject to pastoral burnout than were those who gave primary attention to solving problems.¹³

The Reformers and the mystics

One mystic, St. Theresa, is said to have had such an encounter with God that she did not need Jesus to be a Mediator.

Karl Barth, on the other hand, characterizes Luther’s prayers as distinctly different than that of the mystics:

“Luther’s vigorous, healthy, and cheerful type of devotion forms the opposite pole to Teresa’s art of mystical prayer. . . . His freedom from medieval mysticism springing out of neo-Platonism, and his exclusive relationship to biblical religion, gave rise to a creative renewal of the prophetic and primitively Christian type of prayer.”¹⁴

Intellectual versus subjective wisdom

The Reformers combined prayer and meditation with Bible study. Yet they recognized prayer as a source of wisdom beyond mere factual knowledge. Groote said, “When Christ enters with His sweet conversation then the wisdom from heaven will fill

that human temple with the peace which passes all understanding.”¹⁵

Brokering says that Luther’s interpretations were “rooted and strengthened and nourished in prayer.” He says that “doctrine was the topic for each of his prayers”; and that “A creedal statement was always in need of meditation and devotion. It was no end in itself.”¹⁶

A RESEARCH PROJECT IN 1995 INDICATED THAT THOSE WHO BUILT THEIR DAY ON A FIRM FOUNDATION OF PRAYER, MEDITATION, AND BIBLE STUDY ENJOYED THE MINISTRY, EXPERIENCED TRANSFORMATION IN THE LIVES OF THEIR MEMBERS, AND WERE LESS SUBJECT TO PASTORAL BURNOUT THAN THOSE WHO GAVE PRIMARY ATTENTION TO SOLVING PROBLEMS.

Luther did, however, recognize a supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit beyond mere human reason. He says he has often learned more in one prayer than he could have gotten out of much reading and writing.¹⁷

Prayer was also the chief exercise of faith. Luther saw faith as an appropriation of Christ’s righteousness by repeating “Jesus died for

me.” This appropriation was objective assurance apart from depending upon divine feeling or good works for assurance, which Luther considered to be heretical.¹⁸ His primacy for objective faith, however, did not exclude the necessity for the petitioner to experience assurance. In his instruction to Peter the Barber concerning prayer, he tells Peter,

“And do not give up praying until you have said or thought: ‘Well, I surely know that this prayer is heard of God. This is what ‘Amen’ means.”¹⁹

Regarding faith and reason, Melancthon says, “One may develop meekness, temperance, and other virtues by the use of reason, but faith comes only from a divine revelation of God’s love for man.”²⁰ “Natural reason does not know whether God loves man, whether God hears our prayers. Natural reason does not know the Mediator Christ and the promises of God.”²¹

Continuing in the tradition of the Reformers who found prayer a source of wisdom and power, Calvin bathed his theology in prayer. R. D. Loggie qualifies this faith

as a “firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us.” This is not simply an empirical knowledge, but the “knowing” that Paul refers to in Ephesians 3 and in the final verses of Romans 8. Calvin clarifies, “We do not regard the promises of mercy that God offers as true only as outside ourselves, . . . rather we make them ours by inwardly embracing them.”²²

Cutting through the tangle of time

Where does today's pastor find time for the kind of prayer and meditation that empowered the reformers?

Computer meditation. Why not use computers as a devotional tool? Try writing emails to God. Luther's time of prayer consisted primarily of meditation on Scripture and correlating it with the situation of the times.²³ Most of Luther's written works were products of this kind of prayer and meditation on Scripture.

As one pours out one's heart to God in writing, one can quickly access multiple translations of the Bible, commentaries, and inspired writings accessible on the Internet. These can be copied and pasted into "letters" that become a spiritual diary. Re-reading such a spiritual diary often renews devotion. Appropriate portions from one's spiritual diary may be emailed to meet specific needs of members in the congregation. The diary also becomes a seedbed for sermons.

Some stay in prayer contact with members through an "e-prayer network." Members with Internet access can print prayer requests and pass them on to those who do not have computers.

Nature. Combine outdoor exercise with devotions. Sermon thoughts may come together while hiking or riding a bicycle. I enjoy going to a hill not far from my home, spending time talking to God with green fields and valleys stretched out below.

CDs and tapes in the car. The Bible and inspirational books are available on tape or CDs. While listening in the car, these can flood the soul with Spirit filled devotion much more than talk shows and news.

Implications for pastors today

As pastors, we either take forceful action in our devotional life or suffer defeat. The Lord will uphold our efforts if we follow the example of the Reformers and apostles.

Ministers will experience blessings if they make prayer and meditation a number one priority. Clear understanding of Scripture is dependent upon divine illumination, which takes place through an encounter with God by meditating on His Word and asking for wisdom. Sermons, counseling, and leadership should be the product of this form of prayer. Our prayer and meditation should be followed by complete dedication to the truth as

it is in Jesus, by obedience to His Word, and actions that carry out our petitions. Then we can expect true reformation and the triumph of the kingdom of Christ as predicted in His Word. 

- 1 Karl Barth, *Prayer According to the Catechism of the Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 146.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 3 Martin Luther, *introduction to the Large Catechism*, as quoted in Karl Barth, *Prayer*.
- 4 Clyde Manschreck, *Melanchthon the Quiet Reformer* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), 137.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Clyde Manschreck, "Melanchthon and Prayer," *Archive of Reformation History*, 51 (1960): 148.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 149, quoting *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 10:21:955.
- 8 R. Rier de Muiden, *Scriptum*, 6, 7, cited by Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance* (New York: The Century Co., 1924), 21.
- 9 P. Horn, *Vita Gerardi Magni*, 365, cited by Hyma, *Renaissance*, 21.
- 10 Sr. Deanna Marie Carr, *A Consideration of the Meaning of Prayer in the Life of Martin Luther*, Concordia, vol. 42, 622.
- 11 Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer, a Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 107, 115.
- 12 Ewald M. Plass, compiled, *What Luther Says* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1094.
- 13 James R. Kilmer, "Stop the Burnout, Enjoy the Ministry," *Ministry*, June 1996, 19.
- 14 Karl Barth, *Prayer*, 130.
- 15 G. Groote, *Sermo Se Paupertate*, 438, cited by Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance*, 21.
- 16 Herbert F. Brokering, *preface to Luther's Prayers* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 29.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 18 Bengt R. Hoffman, *Luther and the Mystics*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 29.
- 19 Brokering, *Luther's Prayers*, 40.
- 20 Manschreck, "Prayer," 150.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 R. D. Loggie, "Calvin's Doctrine of Prayer," *The Hartford Quarterly*, 5 (Winter 1965), 70.
- 23 Gustav K. Wiencke, *Devotional Writings II*, vol. 43 *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 198.

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RESOURCES



Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible

by Manfred T. Brauch,
Downers Grove, IL:
InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Manfred T. Brauch wrote *Abusing Scripture* with evangelicals in mind. Within this tradition, the author identifies, in every chapter, misinterpretations of Scripture along with their negative consequences centered on three matters: (1) the use and justification of force and violence in human affairs; (2) the relationship

between men and women in home, church, and society; and (3) the concern for justice and sanctity of life in human relationships, institutions, and cultures.

Chapter 1, "The Nature of Scripture," presents the *intention* of Scripture and its *incarnational* character as the backbone of



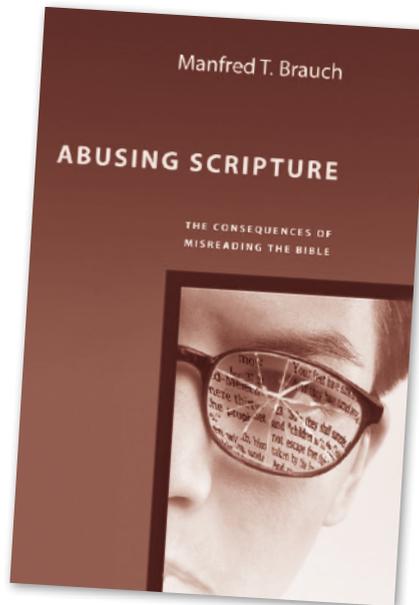
trustworthy interpretation. According to Brauch, the purpose of the Bible is to proclaim Jesus and His good news, whereas its nature is fully human and fully divine. He appears to use the terms *gospel* and *Scripture* synonymously (45). I find his Christological hermeneutic to be problematic, for I believe not all texts can be read through Christocentric lenses—opening the door to Scripture reduction and eisegesis.

Chapter 2, “The Abuse of the Whole Gospel,” speaks of abuse when the two dimensions—personal and social—of the gospel are not accomplished: the first is the proclamation of Jesus as Savior, the second is the social engagement in ministries and acts of compassion.

Chapter 3, “The Abuse of Selectivity,” discusses the misuse of particular texts to justify abusive actions or behaviors linked to submission to governing authorities, the hierarchical model of men over women, and the relationship between obedience and prosperity/blessing.

Chapter 4, “The Abuse of Biblical Balance,” deals with the overemphasis of certain biblical doctrines or teachings: among these are the sins of the flesh, the quest for correct beliefs, and the passion for truth and ethical enthusiasm.

Chapter 5, “The Abuse of Words,” studies words or expressions that have been misunderstood, such as the woman as the man’s helper (Genesis 2), the meaning of “Adam,”



the cursedness of pain and toil (Genesis 3), the use of “head” and “flesh” in Paul’s writings, etc. In my opinion, this chapter represents the greatest contribution of the book. As a New Testament scholar, Brauch presents a sound and comprehensive analysis of these difficult terms.

Chapters 6 and 7, “The Abuse of Context” from various perspectives,

explore several passages (e.g. Matt. 26:52; Zech. 2:8) that have been misread to justify war or the death penalty in our present time as well as support a theological view (cf. Prov. 29:18; Isa. 61:10; Hos. 4:6; Acts 2:4; etc.). On the other hand, the author attempts to define which Old Testament laws are historically and culturally relevant and irrelevant for the Christian practice today. For instance, he argues that Jesus relativized the observance of the Sabbath law, the ingestion of clean and unclean foods, and retributive justice. Brauch, trapped by his Christological hermeneutic, cannot provide an objective and solid discussion here.

In general, the volume appeals to the evangelical community to rethink their reading of Scripture and agenda focusing on social matters. This book could have been written in fewer pages; it is dense, often redundant. In the same way, I find his suggestions to avoid scriptural abuse in every chapter excessive. For someone interested in how to understand polemical biblical texts, this book can be a starting point.

— Reviewed by Richard W. Medina, graduate student of Semitic languages at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, Italy.

What Your Son Isn't Telling You: Unlocking the Secret World of Teen Boys

by Michael Ross and Susie Shellenberger, Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2010.

Navigating one’s developmental tasks, and especially being an adolescent, presents its own set of challenges, but being a boy compounds the struggle. *What Your Son Isn't Telling You* seeks to acquaint its readers with real-life accounts of the ways boys think. The authors have done a good job in exposing the thoughts of boys through their own voices.

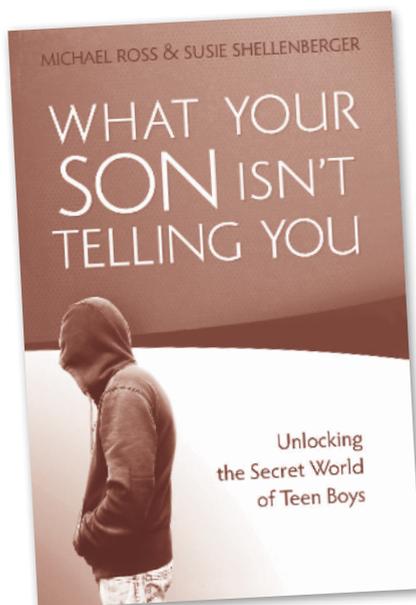
Ross and Shellenberger chronicle 15 challenges that raising boys

present and conduct an open discussion on helpful ways to confront them. Among the intrigues that often seem puzzling is the notion that boys engage in bullying, yet many of them are being bullied. The authors suggest some of the warning signs a boy may demonstrate when being bullied, for example, loss of interest in friends, school, and relationships; and expressions of tiredness, depression, self-loathing, and negativity.



When these behaviors are observed, parents and caregivers are encouraged to empower the boy to feel good, exit the threatening environment, and surround himself with supportive friends. If the boy is the bully, speak to him about the harm he is doing. Explain to him the hurt he inflicts on others. Help him to dream of a positive and bright future, and see himself as a possibility with limitless potential.

According to the authors, boys engage in high-risk behaviors such as (but not limited to) gambling, smoking, pornography, and drinking. Consequently, youth leaders, parents, pastors, and others must be intentional on establishing clear boundaries. Every effort must be made to underscore that moral values cannot be compromised. Encourage them to choose to avoid



the temptation and/or the peer pressure. Explain the consequences and outline the effects of maladaptive and antisocial behavior.

I admire the courage and the character of the authors in addressing sensitive topics such as homosexuality and the clarity and honesty employed in the discussion, with biblical conclusions drawn throughout.

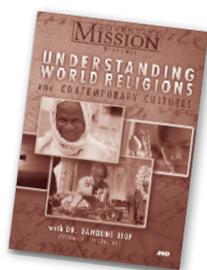
One limitation of the book is that the authors seem to link all boys together, not giving credence to the impact of culture and socialization. I believe, however, that *What Your Son Isn't Telling You* makes for good reading and brings the voices of boys to the surface. I recommend this book to all youth leaders, pastors, family life directors, and parents.

—Reviewed by Alanzo H. Smith, DMin, EdD, family ministries director, Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Manhasset, New York, United States.

What others believe: Helping us understand the faith and practices of others

For all clergy, an understanding of the beliefs, values, and practices of major religious traditions is an important component of ministry. An understanding of various world religions helps bridge the gaps among all faith groups and assists in reaching out to people of differing faiths.

According to Gary Krause, director of the Office of Adventist Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters, research indicates that many Christians do not understand



non-Christians in their communities. One study showed that in North America, 35.6 percent of Buddhists, 22.7 percent of Hindus, and 67.8 percent of Muslims say they do not know even one Christian.

In order for clergy to understand other faiths, Adventist Mission has made a new resource available. Ganoune Diop, director of the Global Mission Study Centers, has recently produced *Understanding World Religions*, a set of four DVDs that opens the door to comprehending the beliefs, values, and practices of major religious traditions. By identifying areas of common understanding—such as respect, honor, family relationships, justice, love, cooperation, and supporting one another—the series can help build bridges between faith groups.

Diop shares simple yet sensitive ways to understand, appreciate, and reach out to people of differing

faiths. Topics include the history, philosophies, values, rituals and taboos, and symbols of each major world religion.

Lectures and interviews with experts filmed throughout the world offer a wealth of useful information about the world's major religions. Dr. Diop and other experts give practical advice for navigating through new friendships with people of other religious cultures without offending them, while at the same time being truthful to our identity, mission, and message. Perhaps one of the biggest surprises will be not what we can do for others, but how our lives can be enriched in ways we could never imagine, simply by reaching out.

The four-disc set is the first in a series and covers Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and postmodernism. To purchase a set, visit www.AdventistMission.org, or call 1-800-648-5824. [Nancy Kyte]

Jina Kim, MPH, is wellness program coordinator, Adventist Risk Management, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

Depression affects pastors too

It is no secret that happiness is a choice. When you wake up in the morning, does your mind tell you, “I choose to be happy today”? To achieve happiness, negative emotions, such as fear, anxiety, sadness, and depression, need to be faced and turned around to a positive experience by coming to terms with them, learning from them, and moving on.

Count your blessings. Give thanks for what you have. Cultivate the attitude of gratitude. Learn to appreciate the people and things around you, from your family and friends to the smell of spring and nature, or simply that you are alive and, particularly, if you are well.

Take time for activities that enhance your mood. Get pampered; do something special for yourself; take care of your health by eating right and exercising. Mentoring young people and volunteering also creates feelings of well-being and adds meaning to life, as well as blessing others.

Laugh. “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones” (Prov. 17:22, NIV). Laughter is good medicine. Spend time with positive people and laugh a lot. Laugh at your mistakes and get over them. Twenty seconds of heavy laughter equals three minutes of hard rowing and will burn up to 400 calories per hour.¹

State of mind versus status. Failing is not catastrophic unless you allow it to be. Many successful people learn from their failures and succeed beyond their first attempts. Focus on the positive. Step out of your comfort zone and be an optimist!

Depression, a common mental disorder, affects 121 million people worldwide.² Some of the signs and symptoms include the following:

- Irritable or anxious mood
- Poor appetite and weight loss or the opposite—increased appetite and weight gain

- Sleep disturbance: insomnia or sleeping too much in an irregular pattern (difficulty in waking or not wanting to get out of bed to face the day)
- Loss of energy: excessive fatigue or tiredness
- Change in activity level: extremes of either increased or decreased activity
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Decreased sexual drive
- Physical aches and pains with no significant organic cause
- Crying spells for no apparent reason
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt that may reach grossly unreasonable or delusional proportions
- Other psychotic and delusional thinking
- Recurrent thoughts of death, dying, or self-harm³

Depression affects people in different ways and not everyone will experience the same symptoms. Often people with depression may seem normal, so you might be oblivious to their pain as you pass by. Many people with depression may be reluctant to accept or even ask for the help they need. These symptoms may not go away on their own and could get worse if they are not treated.⁴

Matt Rogers discusses depressed people in the church setting in a blog and describes this by saying, “Depressed people in the church often feel isolated, as if no one in the world understands their pain. Quite often they also feel spiritually weak, or even sinful, for their lack of joy. And perhaps most tragically, few have any clue what great company they are in.”⁵



“My doctor says I need to relax more and take in the smells of spring and nature. Which spray should we use first, Country Meadow, or Summer Pine, or...”

God gives renewed strength. Isaiah 40:29 states, “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak” (NIV). Some people in history and in the Bible have been affected by depressive conditions and disorders. We can be assured that God uses us even in our weaknesses.

When we are depressed, we can turn to and have hope in the Lord. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13, NKJV).

If you are reluctant to seek treatment, talk to a friend, faith leader, health professional, or someone that you trust.

The World Health Organization states that “[d]epression can be reliably diagnosed in primary care. Antidepressant medications and brief, structured forms of psychotherapy are effective for 60-80% of those affected and can be delivered in primary care. However, fewer than 25% of those affected (in some countries fewer than 10%) receive such treatments. Barriers to effective care include the lack of resources, lack of trained providers, and the social stigma associated with mental disorders including depression.”⁶

Depression may be reversed. However, when your depression starts to become chronic or recurrent, remember the importance of receiving the help you need. Major depression, a serious disorder, is something you cannot “snap out of”

or get over on your own. Although no exact known cause for depression exists, certain factors, such as some life events (i.e., death of a loved one), hormonal changes, neurotransmitters, genetics (heredity), and childhood trauma, may contribute to the illness.⁷ Appropriate medication is often lifesaving and life changing, and should be taken when needed and on professional advice. Counseling and psychotherapy from Christian psychiatric and psychology health professionals can be very beneficial and can make a difference.

Take care of yourself and follow a healthy lifestyle. Eat a healthy and balanced diet, take a walk or participate in a favorite exercise, reduce and manage your stress, meditate upon God's healing words, and get adequate sleep. Surround and connect yourself with friends and family so that you will not be isolated. 

Medical consultants: Allan Handysides, MB, ChB, FRCPC, FRCSC, FACOG; and Peter Landless, MB, Ch, MMed, FCP(SA), FACC, FASNC.

¹ "Laugh Your Way to Wellness With Yoga Trend,"

ScienceDaily, accessed September 8, 2010, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080505225405.htm>.

- ² "World Health Organization: Depression," World Health Organization, accessed August 25, 2010, http://www.who.int/mental_health/management/depression/definition/en/.
- ³ Demetri Papolos and Janice Papolos, *Overcoming Depression: The Definitive Resource for Patients and Families Who Live With Depression and Manic-Depression*, 3rd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 8.
- ⁴ Mayo Clinic staff, "Depression (Major Depression)," accessed September 8, 2010, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression/DS00175/DSECTION=symptoms>.
- ⁵ Matt Rogers, "Coping With Depression in the Church With Matt Rogers—Part IV," *JR Woodward* (blog), August 21, 2009, <http://jrwoodward.net/2009/08/coping-with-depression-in-the-church-with-matt-rogers-part-iv/>.
- ⁶ "World Health Organization: Depression," World Health Organization, accessed August 25, 2010.
- ⁷ Mayo Clinic staff, "Depression (Major Depression)," accessed September 8, 2010, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression/DS00175/DSECTION=causes>.

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DATELINE



Jerry N. Page: New ministerial secretary

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—Jerry N. Page is the new ministerial secretary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters, having been elected on July 1, 2010, by the General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Previously, he was the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in central California. He succeeds **James A. Cress**, who died in November 2009.

One of his key responsibilities as ministerial secretary will be overseeing the support for more than 16,000 Seventh-day Adventist pastors around the world. In order to offer this support, he and other members of the Ministerial Association will be working closely with their ministerial colleagues in the various organizational units of the church.

The Ministerial Association provides various services to ministers, including support for pastors' spouses and families through the



[Photo: Robert East]

Shepherdess International program, which will be led by Page's wife, **Janet Page**, who was elected as an associate ministerial secretary.

The editors welcome this new team and pray that God will bless them in their new roles.

The church in the city: A new Doctor of Ministry program

Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States—Chicago, Illinois, United States, serves as the

backdrop for a new Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree program, with churches in the heart of the city providing the context for case studies. Students will immerse themselves in the life of Chicago—including interaction with city administration, transportation system, hospitals, schools and universities, and housing authorities.

Modules of this DMin program include Urban Community Development, Spiritual and Theological Foundations for Ministry, Field Research for Ministry, Urban Church Growth and Discipleship, and Urban Church Leadership and Management.

Participants will experience an in-depth study of key biblical, theological, and contemporary insights into the church in Chicago. A compassionate vision for the city will be fostered, and issues in urban life and corresponding systems explored. The program includes an emphasis on strategic planning that contributes to economic and community development.

For more information, visit www.andrews.edu/sem/dmin. [*Rita Pusey*] 

Is your mission vision 10/40?

The 10/40 Window
(10° north latitude to
40° north latitude)
includes North Africa,
the Middle East,
India, China
and the Philippines.



TWO BILLION PEOPLE in the 10/40 Window have not heard the story of Jesus' love for them. This is by far the largest concentration of unreached people in the world. Yet only

2 percent of Christian mission giving goes to help spread the Gospel in this region.

"Go ye into ALL the world," Christ said. Is your church fulfilling His Great Commission?



GOSPEL OUTREACH

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