

Ministry[®]

JULY 2013

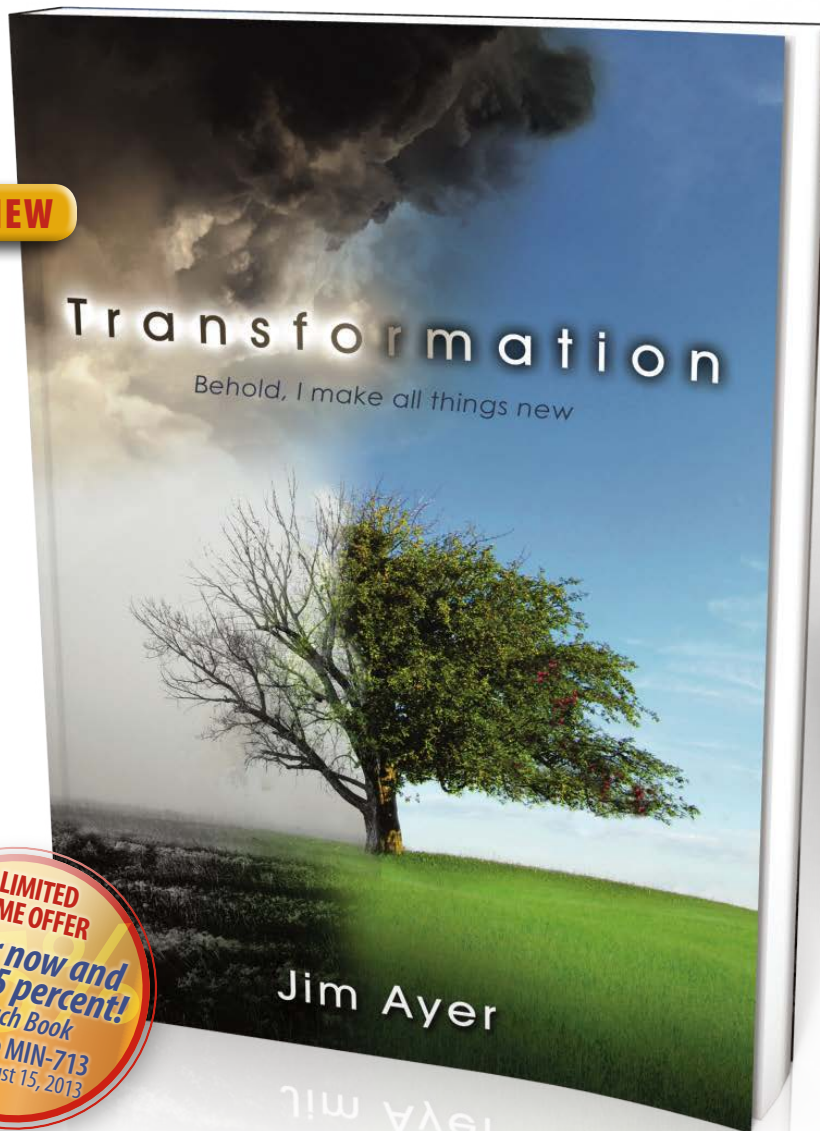


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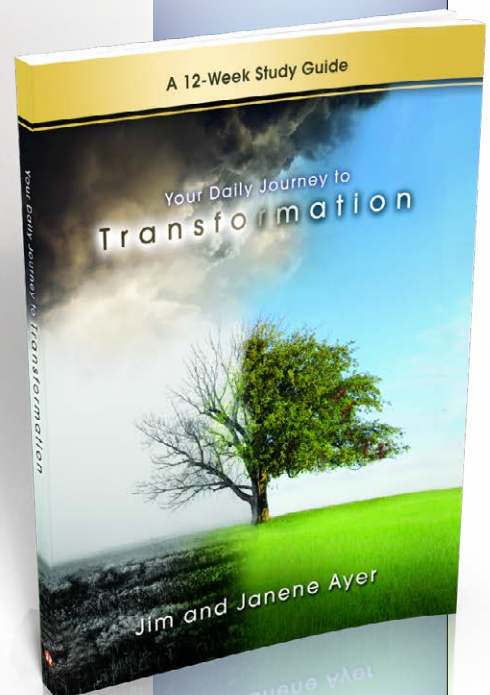
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"I wish I had followed my own counsel in my earlier years of ministry."

Mission to the cities

I just want to tell you how pleased I am with the May 2013 issue and its cluster of articles on "Mission to the Cities." The international diversity of the writers was excellent as well as their direct experience with the topic. I have, since the 1960s, written about the priority that must be given to the reality of urbanization in pursuing the mission of Christ, and it is gratifying to see the church embrace this need in recent years.

I am praying that this issue of *Ministry* will be used [by] small groups of ministers around the world for reading and discussion. There is much packed into these relatively few pages and it needs careful consideration, unpacking, and discussion of how to apply the principles to the local setting. Really impacting the cities, as Ellen White envisioned, requires that clusters of pastors come together in these cities and talk about how to reach them; gather the best information about the attitudes, beliefs, and needs of the residents; and structure pilot projects to learn what will work best in their context and time.

Monte Sahlin, director of Research and Special Projects, Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Mount Vernon, Ohio, United States

Spending time with pastoral families

I recently read the editorial in the March 2013 issue entitled "Misguided Devotion," by Derek J. Morris. I must admit that his article triggered some painful memories.

I found that in the first 15–20 years of my ministry I invested much of my time in "pastoral duties" to the detriment of my family. The pressures to produce and succeed in the cause of God, imposed by the "brethren" and self-imposed, took precedence. I naively believed I could be all things to all people. I very quickly discovered that was impossible. How could I be an administrator, counselor, evangelist, conflict consultant, grief specialist, church builder, and orator and also give quality and quantity time to my family?

I was absent from home, all too often, during the important times when my wife and children needed me. My children no longer attend church. My wife went to her death praying that our children would return. Yes, it is true, I place some blame on insensitive parishioners and teachers and their attitude toward pastors' kids. But I am more greatly pained when I consider what part my absence played in their lack of a relationship with Jesus today. I am so grateful for my wife's heroic efforts to fill the role as mother and father.

Later in my ministry, I became wiser. I would not allow anything to interfere with my family day. Only in dire, dire emergencies would I break the custom. Once a quarter my wife and I would take a long weekend off for quantity and quality time. The congregations were aware of our custom and were delighted to support us. One of those weekends was our anniversary. When we returned, a large number of

members showed up at our home with an evening meal and celebrated our anniversary with us.

I have shared with many a minister, young and older, "Don't allow your church to become your mistress." I wish I had followed my own counsel in my earlier years of ministry. I also wish someone would have directed me to the statement in *The Adventist Home*, page 353: "The minister's duties lie around him, nigh and afar off; but his first duty is to his children. He should not become so engrossed with his outside duties as to neglect the instruction which his children need."


A retired minister

Some labels are good

I greatly appreciated Dr. Hardinge's article, "Should We Love People More Than the Health Message?" (March 2013). Do we have a health message? Yes! Do relationships come first? Absolutely! Dr. Hardinge's story helps to emphasize how important that relational connection is.

However, signs or labels at potluck aren't just about pride or grace. For some of us, they are life and death. I hope some churches that provide absolutely vital labels don't read this article and think, *Oh no, our labels are going to drive people out of the church*. Some labels are good. For example, at one shared meal at church we had the following allergies: corn, strawberries, chocolate, dairy, peanuts, cheese, and egg whites. Don't forget the label for sugar free for our diabetics.

Allergies are becoming a much bigger part of daily life for more Americans than we would like. If someone is nervous about a label, a church can simply state, "We do this for those who have allergies because we want everyone to feel included."

Sharon Leukert, Jefferson, Texas, United States 



The pastor as resident theologian

While seated on an hour-long flight, I could not help but overhear a nearby conversation between a young woman and an older man that lasted the entire duration of the flight. The respect she had for him became apparent as I observed her attentively paying attention to everything he said. Their conversation dealt with a variety of spiritual themes; and undoubtedly she was a willing student, desiring to soak in the wisdom he was sharing. She would usually start with the words “What do you think about . . . ?” He would then respond, “Well, I believe . . .” They were engaged in what I have often referred to as *performing the theological task*.

At its core, theology is the study of God. But in developing that definition, I describe the pursuit of the aforementioned task as one in which a person attempts to understand who God is, how He relates to His creation (especially His created beings), what His expectations of us are, and what His short-term and long-term plans are for each of us as well as humanity and His church as a whole.

Real-life “theologians”

We all *do* theology. I recall my daughter, only three years old at the time, asking her mother and me one Sabbath afternoon as I was driving home from church, “Does God love the devil?” Another example, during my younger years, was a time when I, like others, questioned the logic espoused that if people were to enter a movie theater, the angels would not accompany them; rather, the angels

would remain outside until the people came out. Such questions beg a solid theological explanation. We were “theologians” seeking answers to what were, for us, the big questions of life.

And this is where pastors (and let me add elders, youth leaders, and others with spiritual influence) enter the picture. We are the resident theologians in whatever setting the Holy Spirit has placed us. And performing this responsibility should not be limited to the preaching event. More often than not, it involves the often unexpected one-on-one encounter with church members who approach us with their recent musings—desiring solid biblical guidance so they can make sense of their own personal world.

Pastors live in three worlds: the Bible, the congregations they serve, and the communities in which the church buildings stand. We interact with Scriptures on a daily basis for our own spiritual growth and daily living; but in so doing, God may also use that interaction to speak to others through us. We relate to and with our church members and communities to better understand their worldview and then assist them in interpreting Scripture for themselves. A primary role we operate within consists of aiding them in responsibly performing the theological task and equipping them to properly think through the ramifications of God’s Word to and for them without engaging in eisegesis. I can personally attest to the reality that I did my best theology—both for myself and others—during my years

of congregational ministry; for it was there where I faced the harshest realities of the great controversy between Christ and Satan both personally and professionally.

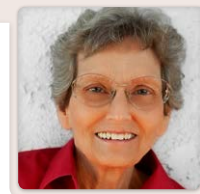
Questions, questions

This issue of *Ministry* contains several articles that ask a number of questions—again, responsible theology applies a hermeneutical rigor to the Scriptures as the inquirer analyzes the meaning(s) therein. In the lead article, Nancy Vyhmeister asks the question *Who was Junia?* After answering it, we then should want to know, *What difference does it make for me in my life and ministry?* In the ministry of the church? Sigve Tonstad, in examining John 4, asks the question, *Why did Jesus have to go through Samaria?* That He chose to travel a noncircumlocutory route must say something to us. Skip Bell examines the necessity of performing theology in the parish rather than treating it merely as a “scholarly enterprise.” He argues that pastors should be “interpretive theologians.” But beware! Performing such theology can be uncomfortable. This could create a significant degree of critical thinking that shakes people out of their status quo—their “this is the way we’ve always done things” approach to life.

I challenge each of us to be the theologians within and among our circles of influence that God has called us to be. Far from destroying our faith and the faith of others, this will build us into what Christ calls us to be: a people who “correctly handle” the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15, NIV). ▮

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine.

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Junia *the apostle*

The name *Junia* appears only once in the New Testament (NT). She is mentioned in a list of friends and coworkers in Rome to whom Paul sent greetings recorded in Romans 16. Through the years, questions have been raised about her identity, occupation, and especially her gender. In this article, we will look at some of these questions and also the implications of the answers.

Junia

The Greek of Romans 16:7 reads as follows: “Greet Andronicus and *Junia* who are my relatives and fellow prisoners, who are recognized *in/by/ among* the *apostles* and were in Christ before me.”¹ I have placed *Junia*, the phrase *in/by/among*, and the word *apostles* in italics because the identity of Junia is found in the interpretation of these words.

In Greek, all nouns take on recognized endings to show their case, that is, their function in the sentence. Here both Andronicus and Junia appear in the accusative case, as objects of the active verb “greet.” A masculine noun, the object of a verb, makes the form *Andrónikon*, which appears in this verse. The other name, *Ioulian*, also in the accusative, is problematic.

The difference between the masculine *Iouliān* and the feminine *Iouliān* is only an accent. In truth, the oldest manuscripts, the uncials, are written in capital letters, without accents. Hence both genders would be given as IONIAN, leaving the reader to decide which gender Junia was.

To elucidate the gender of Junia, we will consider the use of the name in antiquity, the references to Junia by early Christian writers, and the name in ancient Greek NT manuscripts as well as in Greek New Testaments.

The name *Junia* in antiquity

In spite of the statement by Wayne Grudem and John Piper that Junia was not a common female name in the Greek-speaking world,² Junia was a commonly used female Roman name; it meant “youthful.” Derived from the goddess Juno, the name appears more than 250 times in Rome in first-century records alone.³ There Junia is often found on tombstones.⁴ The name also appears in first-century inscriptions in Ephesus, Didyma, Lydia, Troas, and Bythia.⁵ The best-known Junia is the half-sister of Brutus and wife of Cassius.⁶

Were the name masculine, it should have been *Junias* in Greek, or *Junius* in Latin. The name *Junius* is well attested. However, no attestation for *Junias* exists in any “inscription, letterhead, piece of writing, epitaph or literary work of the New Testament period.”⁷ Some have suggested that *Iouniās* would have been a short form of *Ioulianós*, but that name is not evident either.⁸ According to Linda Belleville, “*Iouniās* as a contraction of *Ioulianós* originates in the English-speaking world with Thayer” in 1885.⁹

Early Christian references

In his commentary on Romans, Joseph Fitzmyer listed 16 Christian

Greek and Latin writers of the first millennium who understood Junia in Romans 16:7 to be a woman. Among these, the earliest is Origen (ca. 185–254), whose commentary on Romans was translated by Rufinus (ca. 345–410) into Latin, and quoted by Rabanus Maurus (ca. 776–856).¹⁰ In his *Liber de Nominibus Hebraicis*, Jerome (ca. 345–419) lists the name as *Junia*.¹¹

From John Chrysostom (ca. 344–407) to Peter Abelard (1079–1142), Greek and Latin commentators on the Epistle to the Romans used the feminine name *Junia*. The only exceptions: Ambrosiaster (late fourth century) and Atto of Vercelli (925–960) used *Julia*, a female.¹²

Those who want Junia to be a male have made much of the *Index Discipulorum*, attributed to Epiphanius (ca. 315–403), where the masculine *Junias* appears. However, Belleville notes that Epiphanius also calls Priscilla a male and makes her a bishop of Colophon, while her husband Aquila was bishop of Heraclea—two very different locations. “Both the gender confusion and the disparate locations call into question the overall reliability of the document,” Belleville concludes.¹³

Aegidius of Rome (1245–1316) was the first church writer to make Andronicus and Junia “those honorable men.”¹⁴ Interestingly, this corresponds to the time when Pope Boniface VIII, well remembered for his difficulties with Dante, decreed in 1298 that all nuns were to be permanently cloistered.¹⁵

Junia in ancient Greek NT manuscripts

Whether the scribe of an uncial manuscript meant to write *Iounían* or *Iouniān* would be immaterial. The letters would be capitalized and unaccented: IONIAN. The gender of this person must be found elsewhere.

Minuscule manuscripts began to appear after the seventh century. In fact, uncial manuscripts were recopied in minuscule, forcing the use of accents.

with Jesus would certainly put her as a Christian before Paul. Andronicus was either a second husband or a Roman name taken by Chuza.¹⁹

The name in printed Greek New Testaments

According to Epp's table, 38 Greek New Testaments, beginning with Erasmus (1516) through Eberhard Nestle in 1920, use the name *Iounian*, indicating feminine gender for Junia.

Living Translation (1996), 21 English translations have the masculine, while 10 have the feminine.²² Of this tendency, Scot McKnight notes ruefully: *Junia Is Not Alone*; women, he says, have not taken or been allowed their proper place in ministry.²³

Some recent English translations still have the masculine, no doubt because their parent translations did so, and the masculine form was in the Greek NT from which these versions were translated.



Paul recognized her as one of the apostles, a woman who was willing to suffer for the gospel she was busily spreading.

These manuscripts had *Iounían*, making Junia feminine. According to Eldon Epp, no Greek minuscule manuscripts used the masculine *Iouniān*.¹⁶

The UBS *Greek New Testament* notes at least 20 minuscule NT manuscripts that use the feminine *Iounían*. Among them, the oldest are 081 (from 1044) and 104 (from 1087). The latest is 2200 from the fourteenth century.¹⁷

More than once, in NT manuscripts and writings about this chapter, the name in verse 7 is given as *Julia*, who appears later in Romans 16:15. This can be seen in P46, an uncial manuscript from about the year 200.¹⁸ In any case, *Julia* is a feminine name.

Richard Bauckham surmises that Junia of Romans 16:7 is Ioanna of Luke 8:3 and 24:10. Her Roman name would be easier to pronounce, and her relation

During those centuries, there is only one exception: Alford in the nineteenth century uses the masculine form but puts the feminine in the apparatus.²⁰

From the Nestle version of 1927 through the UBS *Greek New Testament* of 1993, only the Hodges-Farstad New Testament of 1982 uses the feminine; the other 14 versions use the masculine, often without an alternate explanation in the apparatus. This trend is reversed with the 1994 Kurt Aland and the UBS 1998 versions, which return to the feminine with no alternate reading.²¹

Junia in modern language translations

The seven earliest English versions, from Tyndale (1525–1534) to the KJV (1611), all have Junia as a woman. From the Revised Version (1881) until the New

Such are the French Louis Segond, the Spanish *Biblia de las Américas*, the 1995 revision of the Spanish Reina-Valera, the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), the Contemporary English Version (CEV), and *The Message*, among others. One wonders, however, how much the translator's bias is shown in such a translation.

Notable among or noticed by

The Greek phrase *episēmoi en* has been problematic to some. Is Junia one of the apostles? Or is she recognized by the apostles? The Latin Vulgata has Junia as "notable among the apostles (*nobiles in apostolis*)."

John Chrysostom wrote the following on Andronicus and Junia in his comment on Romans 16:7:

Who are of note among the Apostles. And indeed to be apostles at all is a great thing. But to be even amongst these of note, just consider what a great encomium this is! But they were of note owing to their works, to their achievements. Oh! how great is the devotion (*philosophia*) of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation apostle!²⁴

Very little discussion on the issue of Junia's apostleship appears until late in the nineteenth century. William Sanday and Arthur Headlam noted in their 1895 commentary on Romans:

or person who is eminent or worthy of attention.²⁷ The word could also be translated "notable." The *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* has this definition: "Pertaining to being well known or outstanding, either because of positive or negative characteristics—'outstanding,' 'famous,' 'notorious,' 'infamous.'"²⁸

Beginning around 1900, the idea that the name was *Junia*, a woman, esteemed by the apostles, was circulated in commentaries by several authors.²⁹ Since it was understood that only a man could be an apostle, Junia could not be an apostle, but she could be esteemed by the apostles.

In 2001, Michael Burer and Daniel Wallace presented a reexamination of Romans 16:7. They proposed that Junia was a woman and that she and Andronicus were admired by the apostles. After noting what they perceived to be an error of those who took the inclusive position, they found evidence for their own exclusive position in the study of ancient documents.³² *Episēmoi en tois apostólois* must mean "notable to the apostles."

Three major responses to their paper came from Bauckham, Belleville, and Epp.³³

Bauckham analyzed the study by Burer and Wallace and challenged their findings.³⁴ Belleville replicated

Whatever the specific meaning of the word, apostles makes up a special group of people who carried out Christ's mission, much as Paul did.

Junia is of course a common Roman name and in that case the two would probably be husband and wife; Junias on the other hand is less usual as a man's name. . . . If, as is probable, Andronicus and Junias are included among the apostles . . . , then it is more probable that the name is masculine.²⁵

The adjective *episēmoi* refers to something that has a distinguishing mark, as in stamped precious metal. The word may be used to signal that a thing or person is considered very good, as in Romans 16:7, or very bad, as when it is applied to Barabbas in Matthew 27:16 where the NRSV translates "notorious."²⁶

According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, the word refers to something of note, a thing

In 1994, the *Textual Commentary* to the UBS *Greek New Testament* noted the following: "Some members [of the UBS Committee], considering it unlikely that a woman would be among those styled 'apostles,' understood the name to be masculine."³⁰

It is immediately apparent that the crux of the issue is the understanding of the preposition *en*, which can be variously translated as "in," "among," "on," or even "with" or "by."³¹ The word denotes location and means and is normally followed by a word in the dative case, as is *tois apostólois* here.

Which meaning does *en* have here? Are Andronicus and Junia recognized as being apostles? Were they notable among the apostles? This is the *inclusive* view. Or are they recognized by the apostles as notable outsiders, not as apostles? This is the *exclusive* view.

the study of Burer and Wallace and gave biblical evidence to show their error. She showed that the preposition *en* plus the dative is normally inclusive. For example, Matthew 2:6: Bethlehem is by no means least "among the rulers of Judah" (NRSV). She also found Hellenistic parallels of the phrase *episēmoi en tois*, which clearly are inclusive. In Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* 438, she found one exact parallel to Romans 16:7: "Most distinguished among whom were our rich countryman Ismenodorus and. . . ." ³⁵ Further she found instances of poor research techniques and mistaken reporting.³⁶ Belleville's conclusion was clear: Junia was a woman and one of the apostles.³⁷ In 2002, Eldon Epp wrote an extensive article that became the basis for his 2005 book, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*.³⁸ In it he made a

well-documented case for Junia as a woman and one of the apostles.

The apostles

The question of who are these apostles arises. Obviously, these are not the Twelve. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul makes reference to the spiritual gift of apostleship. Had Andronicus and Junia received this gift? We know very little except the meaning of the word *apostolos*: “one who is sent.” If Andronicus and Junia were sent or commissioned, who sent her?

Whatever the specific meaning of the word, *apostles* make up a special group of people who carried out Christ’s mission, much as Paul did. Richard Bauckham suggests that Paul refers to apostles of Christ, like himself, who have been commissioned by the risen Christ, and who, together with the Twelve of the Synoptics, form a larger group.³⁹ Origen stated that Andronicus and Junia were among the seventy-two sent out by Jesus.⁴⁰

John of Damascus (ca. 675?–749) noted about Junia: “To be called ‘apostles’ is a great thing. . . . But to be even *amongst these of note*, just consider what a great encomium this is.”⁴¹

Ute Eisen points out: “In the *Liturgikon*, the missal of the Byzantine Church, Junia is honored to this day . . . as an apostle, together with fifty-six male apostles and the two ‘like to the apostles,’ Mary Magdalene and Thecla.”⁴²

Craig Keener observes the following:

It is also unnatural to read the text as merely claiming that they had a high reputation with “the apostles.” Since they were imprisoned with him, Paul knows them well enough to recommend them without appealing to the other apostles, whose judgment he never cites on such matters. . . . Paul nowhere limits the apostolic company to the Twelve plus himself, as some have assumed (see especially

1 Cor. 15:5–11). Those who favor the view that Junia was not a female apostle do so because of their prior assumption that women could not be apostles, not because of any evidence in the text.⁴³

Conclusion

It is difficult to complete this study without finding that Paul is referring to a woman named Junia, who, together with Andronicus (probably her husband), was part of the NT group of apostles. Paul recognized her as one of the apostles, a woman who was willing to suffer for the gospel she was busily spreading. ❏

1 Author’s translation.

2 Wayne Grudem and John Piper, “An Overview of Central Concerns,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 79–81. Grudem and Piper claimed they found only three occurrences of this name in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database, whereas Linda Belleville found seven. See Linda Belleville, “*Iouanian* . . . *episēmoi* ‘en tois ‘apostolois: A Re-examination of Romans 16.7 in Light of Primary Source Materials,” *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 231–249.

3 Joyce Salisbury, *Encyclopedia of Women in the Ancient World* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), s.v. “Junia.”

4 Linda Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Ronald Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 117.

5 Ibid.; see also Belleville, “Re-examination,” 241.

6 Belleville, “Re-examination,” 234.

7 Belleville, “Women Leaders,” 117.

8 Eldon Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 26–28.

9 Belleville, “Re-examination,” 239.

10 Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans*, vol. 33 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 737, 738.

11 Jerome, *Liber de Nominibus Hebraicis*, *Migne Patrologia Romana*, column 895, accessed May 14, 2013, www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02m/0347-0420,_Hieronymus,_Liber_De_Nominibus_Hebraicis,_MLT.pdf;

there Junia is wrongly listed under the epistle of James, but the footnote indicates that the name really appears in Romans.

12 Ute Eisen, *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity: Epigraphical and Literary Studies*, trans. Linda Maloney (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 47.

13 Belleville, “Re-examination,” 235.

14 Bernadette Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding Among the Apostles,” in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed. Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), www.womenpriests.org/classic/brooten.asp.

15 Eisen, *Women Officeholders*, 47, who footnotes Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding Among the Apostles,” 141–144; Elizabeth Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: “Periculoso” and Its Commentators, 1298–1545* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1999); Dianne McDonnell, “Junia, a

Woman Apostle,” *The Church of God*, accessed August 26, 2012, www.churchofgodfw.com/monthly/junia.shtml.

16 Eldon Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 45.

17 United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 564.

18 Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1971), 539.

19 Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 109–202.

20 Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, 62, 63.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 66.

23 Scot McKnight, *Junia Is Not Alone: Breaking Our Silence About Women in the Church Today* (Englewood, CO: Patheos, 2008), e-book.

24 John Chrysostom, *Homily 31 on the Epistle to the Romans*, on Romans 16:7, in Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, n.d.), vol. 11, accessed August 26, 2012, www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf111.pdf.

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28 Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988–1989), vol. 2, no. 28.31.

29 See the list in Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, 106n1 to chapter 4.

30 Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 322.

31 *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. “*en*.”

32 Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7,” *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 76–91.

33 Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women*; Linda Belleville, “Re-examination,” 231–249; Eldon Epp, *Junia*.

34 Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 172–180.

35 Ibid., 246.

36 Belleville, “Re-examination,” 242–247.

37 Ibid., 248; see also, Belleville, “Women Leaders,” 119, 120.

38 Eldon Epp, “Text-Critical, Exegetical and Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Junia/Junias Variations in Romans 16, 7,” in *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Festschrift J. Delobel*, ed. A. Denaux, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* 161 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 227–291; Epp, *Junia*, 45.

39 Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 179, 180.

40 Pederson, *The Lost Apostle: Searching for the Truth About Junia* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 36.

41 Belleville, “Re-examination,” 235, quoting John of Damascus, *Paul’s Epistles* 95.565.

42 Eisen, *Women Officeholders*, 48; Rena Pederson, likewise, indicates that Mary Magdalene and Thecla were both considered apostles; see *The Lost Apostle*, 48, 49, 61–75.

43 Craig Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 242, quoted in Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 195.

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Theology in parish life

Theology has distanced itself from the issues of daily life, but this was not always so. The Protestant Reformation sought to transform lives through theological reform by proclaiming God and His ways to common people with evangelistic fervor. Theology changed political, economic, and social life. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment altered that influence, seeking to reform society through reason and science. Universities multiplied, sciences formed their divisions, and theology was assigned to the academy.

In the European Enlightenment, especially in Germany, a new kind of university arose and with it came the notion that a university is organized by its “sciences”; that is, by discrete, corporate bodies of knowledge and inquiry, each with its jargon, methods of research, and distinctive subject matter. Given these developments, it was inevitable that if theology were to have a place in the universities, it, too, would have to be a “science” in this new sense of the word.¹

By the twentieth century, theology was recognized as a scholarly enterprise for universities and clergy rather than for Christians or their parishes. This narrowing of theology was at first inclusive of clergy, then the notion of special science led to a professionalization and gradual distancing of professional theologians from pastoral life.

As an academic field, it existed in contrast (and sometimes competition) with biblical studies, ethics, history, and practical theology. In this sense it was part of the minister’s education. However, the actual exposure of the student to this very specific and sometimes formidable subject tended to be limited to one or two introductory courses. “Theology” is officially part of what clergy study. Unofficially, it has become distant and marginal.²

In the modern age, the pastor is introduced to theology in the seminary and expected to disperse a survey knowledge, while theology itself is the property and function of the theologian. Thus, a linear view of theology to practice has been established for pastoral ministry.

This linear view of theology to practice and the consequent distancing of theology from parish life is both untenable and unbiblical. Parish life demands an organic approach to theology among Christian believers. Edward Farley offers, “Theology is a deliberate, focused, and self-conscious thinking that has its origin in faith’s need to interpret itself and its situation. Theology is stirred into existence as believers struggle for clarity and understanding.”³ I agree. Theology is as essential and universal to the Christian experience as is prayer, worship, and service.

I am suggesting the term *interpretive theology* as a means for representing theology in parish life. Interpretive theology is the reflectively

acquired wisdom of God formed in a particular life situation. Reflection in interpretive theology describes a process that seeks meaning through Scripture, faith, narrative, and a spiritually grounded experience. Special revelation providing truth about God in inspired Scripture is primary and central to the integrity of interpretive theology. By *faith*, I mean the merged expression of our Spirit-led personal hope in God with the beliefs of our faith tradition. By *narrative*, I mean the larger story that provides the framework for meaning making. By *spiritually grounded experience*, I mean prayerful reflection in the midst of a particular situation, characterized by seeking God in prayer, dialogue with others who share faith, critical thinking, and pleading for God’s understanding.

The term *wisdom of God* in interpretive theology suggests that theology is more than knowledge. Theology transforms the way one goes about living.

What is distinctive about interpretive theology? Engaged in interpretive theology, every believer is called to find meaning through theological understanding. That distinction is also its promise. A Christian movement remains healthy only when believers seek theological understanding in the process of their daily lives.

Interpretive theology does not detract from the centeredness of inspired Scripture. To declare that Scripture expresses its meaning within human experience is not to limit it by human experience. Interpretive theology does not remove the center of our atonement

from Christ but identifies the importance of hearing the gospel in the moment. Thus, the Gospel writers interpret the life of Jesus so that we, those who accept Christ, might believe and follow in the context of our situations.

The sources of interpretive theology

Scripture is the starting point and center of interpretive theology. Truth exists apart from human experience. Our human efforts to understand truth, however, are flawed and dependent on divine guidance. Thus, a high view of

examination of the power of narratives to form human experience, relates, “The contexts that make sense out of human action are stories or narratives. To explain an action is simply to provide the story that gives the act its context.”⁴

Throughout redemptive history, God has revealed Himself to His creation within the narrative of a specific historical context, transforming the narrative into a vehicle for inspired truth. The primary Scripture narrative is the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. At other times, narrative is more humble and limited from a human perspective; it

history, and practices. Over time, these divisions formed distinct definitions and hardened their boundaries. An underlying inference accompanying this departmentalization was the idea that theological education is a linear progression from theory to practice.⁵

A more organic vision for ministerial development is needed. Why? Because the theory to practice assumption and concurrent departmentalization is a reflection of the ever-present division of life itself into the realms of spiritual and practical. We accept these premises precisely because they fit our common

A Christian movement remains healthy only when
**believers seek theological understanding in the
process of their daily lives.**

Scripture does not confine interpretation to merely transporting ancient meanings. The Scriptures do not dissolve thinking in the present like the wave of a magician’s wand. A high view of Scripture as an inspired source coexists with a reflectively acquired wisdom of God formed in the midst of common life.

The faith of our community, though not normative, contributes to the formation of our lives. Interpretive theology is bound up with the redemptive initiative of God in our shared lives and will thus have something to do with the history and tradition that have formed our faith community.

The traditions of our Christian faith arose through the narratives, symbols, and events of those who moved through the spaces of their history. The traditions may be seen as earlier acts of interpretation. They live in the rich ambiguities and temporal meanings of human experience and summon us to reinterpretation in the time and place we experience.

Interpreting meaning within a situation requires placing it in the context of a larger narrative. Brad Kallenberg, in his

can be seen as formative in the process of meaning making but not normative.

Spiritually grounded experience is respected as a source for theological understanding—not apart from Scripture, faith, and narrative but merged with those sources. Experience is spiritually grounded when we submit our lives to what God seeks to communicate to us within a situation. That happens in prayerful reflection with Scripture, dialogue with the faith of others, critical thinking characterized by pleading for God’s understanding, and listening for God in prayer in the midst of the experience.

These four sources—Scripture, faith, narrative, and spiritually grounded experience—represent the sources of interpretive theology but are not a closed-end list. The varied sources of interpretive theology underscore the complexity of making sense in life.

Pastors as interpretive theologians

Preparation for professional ministry in the modern age evolved into four areas: Bible, theology, church

human perspective. If one believes life is thus divided, the prevailing premise in preparing ministers for ministry in the church works. But if one reflects seriously on the question of meaning within life’s experiences, as one inevitably must, this requires an organic interpretive theology.

Training pastors for the engagement of interpretive theology takes on an urgent tone when culture is critiqued. Especially in Western culture, humans today are looking outside of religious institutions for spirituality. Meaning making captivated by compartmentalized theology distinct from life experience is approached with suspicion.

Why does the church resist the idea of the pastor as theologian? Because we tend to form the idea of the minister around specific practices: preaching, counseling, leading, organizing, or teaching. The minister is defined by doing certain things. We imagine the theologian differently: scholars and professors, papers and discourses, and books with peculiar sounding titles.

Another explanation is the broadly accepted distinction of professional

ministry from the church membership. In Protestant Christianity, this characteristic is especially disturbing; a theology of “every believer a minister” is espoused while in practice a separation is maintained.

Understanding the pastor as an interpretive theologian is made easier if we contrast the attributes of the pastor who has denied this characteristic. The first attribute of such denial is reflection of secular culture. Apart from theological engagement, pastoral ministry becomes a reflection of life made relevant in secular culture.

The second attribute is the captivity of the church to bureaucracy. Institutions of our society (government, business, schools, and the church) take on necessary and orderly bureaucratic roles. Without interpretive theology, a pastor interprets success around the definitions these institutions provide: statistics, meetings, stewardship, or buildings. This captivity can lead a minister to abandon the meaning making role of the interpretive theologian and still be considered a success in ministry.

The third attribute is moralism. A pastor may define what should and should not be done to establish esteem as a good citizen in a specific society. One becomes a standard bearer, fulfilling one’s obligation to the congregation and community. In such moralism the definitions of civility formed by culture replace the more spiritually grounded characteristics of Christlike living.

The fourth attribute is individual salvation marked by isolation. In the absence of interpretive theology, personal salvation is seen as separate from reflection on public issues such as education, health care, justice, and the environment. In such separation, the witness of the gospel in public life is hindered.

Henri Nouwen calls for the restoration of theology inseparably woven into the life of the minister.

Without solid theological reflection, future leaders will be little more than pseudo-psychologists, pseudo-sociologists, pseudo-social

workers. They will think of themselves as enablers, facilitators, role models . . . , and thus join the countless men and women who make a living by trying to help their fellow human beings cope with the stresses and strains of everyday living.⁶

A pastor cannot fulfill responsibly his or her calling without engaging in interpretive theology. Ministers are people themselves who experience illnesses, their families, economic challenges, justice, grief, and other life issues. They must interpret their lives. Faithfulness demands theological thinking. But there is more.

Attaining interpretive theology in parish life

The sources of interpretive theology must be engaged within the present moment of life experience by the one living the life, not by professional proxy. Faith develops when the Word finds a hearing in the events of life and the believer engages in the interpretive process.

The idea of interpretive theology thus repudiates the theology-believer distinction. To remove interpretive theology from the life of the believer would be to ask him or her to assign his or her thinking to pastors or scholars in the university. Craig Dykstra defines theology in parish life as “wisdom, which includes, in my view, not only insight and understanding, but also the kind of judgment, skill, commitment, and character that full participation in practices both requires and nurtures.”⁷ Those matters in life itself are the dialectic of interpretive theology in the experience of the believer.

Tools of interpretive theology

How is interpretive theology attained in parish life? Obviously, time with Scripture and learning the accompanying hermeneutical skills are primary and the first tools. Pastors, and indeed all who believe, are called to develop appreciation for the Word

of God among those who would be disciples. Pastors develop theological understanding among those they serve.

Listening is the second powerful tool exercised by the professional minister and developed as an attribute of the believer in the parish. Within every faith community are stories that carry the values, beliefs, and practices of the people. These must be heard and interpreted. In her extensive work on the art of listening, Nancy Ammerman calls these narratives “the building blocks of individual and collective religious identities.”⁸

Rituals are among the important narratives in a faith community. Edward Farley asserts the theological process of parish life through examining ritual in the following:

Sacramental activities include not only the typical Protestant sacraments of divine presence in the church (baptism and Communion), but ritual and liturgical activities occurring in the dramas, perils, crisis, and turning points of human life (marriage, burial, sickness, departures, and so forth). Caring activities are conducted not simply toward individual members of the community of faith (of pastoral care), but include the church’s postures, agendas, and strategies toward all social corruption and oppression. . . . Any adequate account of the nature and agenda of these activities would involve the exercise of the dialectic of theological understanding toward each one.⁹

The common rituals not bound up with doctrinal experience, such as the manner of arrival for worship, greetings, governance, or fellowship and displays of hospitality, take on a narrative in themselves of the values and beliefs of a parish. They provide a ground for interpretive theology.

Conversation is a third tool. Interpretive theology acknowledges that people come to faith through judgments of their conscience shaped through open and free dialogue in the context of their life situations.

Faithfulness is an understanding of life, not a mere expression of loyalty to the institutions of the church. Conversation thus must be reckoned within influencing matters of ecclesiology; the idea of faith being formed in our conversations around our situations eschews a strictly authoritarian view of the church. Belief is formed through examining experience and testing sources within a context of community with conversation a part of that examination.

Critical thinking is a fourth important tool of interpretive theology. When a person decides not to shop where clothing produced by child labor is sold, that is critical thinking in a life situation. For a pastor, the leadership challenge of meaning making in such life issues is expressed in example and exhortation. The goal in exhortation is that critical thinking along the lines of interpreting the gospel becomes a part of reflective life in the parish.

Conclusion

Interpretive theology is the reflectively acquired wisdom of God formed in a particular life situation. The reflection necessarily assumes and claims an interpretive process that seeks meaning and illumination through the joined sources of Scripture, faith, narrative, and spiritually grounded experience.

This requires an organic approach to theology that defines the life of one engaged in pastoral ministry. Identifying ministry as a practice becomes inadequate. The linear idea of theology to practice is rejected. Both pastors and parishioners are called to be theologians who live in relationship with God and recognize His saving work in the midst of the common events of their daily lives.

Serving a parish competently implies forming the interpretive process that seeks meaning and illumination within the life of the believer. Tools in the process of interpretive theology are first the engagement with the Word, then

listening, conversation, and critical thinking. Rather than approached as a distinct element, theological formation is integrated throughout the life of the parish.

Theology and ministry are joined. 

- 1 Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 4.
- 2 Ibid., 5.
- 3 Ibid., 3.
- 4 Nancey Murphy, Brad J. Kallenberg, and Mark Thiessen Nation, *Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition: Christian Ethics After MacIntyre* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 23.
- 5 Farley describes specialization in theological education and the theology to practice assumption with its influence on theological understanding in chapter 7 of *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 151–174.
- 6 Henry J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1989), 86.
- 7 Barbara G. Wheeler and Edward Farley, eds., *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological Education* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 65.
- 8 Nancy T. Ammerman, "Religious Identities and Religious Institutions," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 216.
- 9 Farley, *Theologia*, 189.

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The power of united prayer

We are seeing the young and old falling in love with prayer and experiencing revival as they experience united prayer at our ARME Bible camps. We have often seen young people coming back to the prayer meeting room, saying, "I can't stay away. I'm addicted to this place."

Allyson, a 14-year-old, visited the prayer meeting room one day, then she came back the next day and spent eight hours there. This is her testimony: "I was raised a Seventh-day Adventist and have always attended meetings and Bible camps. I grew up knowing our doctrines and professing to have a relationship with

God. However, something was always missing, it was never real for me. After coming to the prayer meeting room, I realized why I had no power in my life. I was missing prayer; I was missing a genuine and powerful prayer life."

In another prayer meeting room, an individual anonymously left a watch and a note behind that read: "This watch is not considered lost but surrendered. I should not have purchased it, and I confess it has become an idol to me. I knew better than to have bought it when I did, and I no longer can keep it. God has revealed to me it is only one layer

between Him [and] me . . . and now I have one layer less."

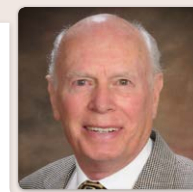
People are experiencing revival and reformation through the power of united prayer.

— MARTIN KIM IS THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR FOR ADVENTIST SOUTHEAST ASIA PROJECTS AND SERVES AS PRAYER DIRECTOR FOR ARME MINISTRIES.

- 1 ARME is an acronym for Adventist Revival Movement for the End Times.
- 2 For more information about united prayer, please visit www.unitedprayer247.com.

Revival
and
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The Bible, the ecosphere, and us: *Ten key concepts*¹

The Lord would have us treat the earth as a precious treasure, lent us in trust.²

Fifty years ago, U.S. marine biologist Rachel Carson published the book *Silent Spring*, which focused on the harm caused by widespread use of chemical pesticides on the planet and its living organisms, particularly on birds.³ Her book, which was widely read and discussed, launched the modern environmental movement.

A few years later, in 1967, the journal *Science* published the text of a conference lecture by medieval historian Lynn White Jr., titled “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” where he stated that “Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.”⁴

Although both Carson’s and White’s theses have been criticized,⁵ the environmental movement has nevertheless continued to grow, and, at times, has assumed quasi-religious characteristics. Some Christians, for their part, believe that since this world will be destroyed at Jesus’ second coming, we should not be overly concerned about what happens to our earthly home and its creatures.

How should Bible-believing Christians respond to environmental degradation? What do the Scriptures teach us about our responsibility toward our earthly home and its inhabitants? Adventist pastors, teachers, and others

involved in Christian ministry and education are frequently asked to respond to these questions. In doing so, we need to remember that the Bible presents a worldview outlining the origin, meaning, purpose, and destiny of God’s creation and, in particular, human beings.⁶

Worldview implications for our approach to the environment

Because ideas have consequences, the biblical worldview has clear implications for the way we relate to our natural environment and its creatures. As philosopher Douglas Groothuis stated, “The Christian worldview neither deifies nature nor denigrates its worth. According to the Bible, creation is not divine and should never be worshiped. Yet it is neither intrinsically evil nor illusory, so it should be treated with respect.”⁷ Thus the best approach to environmental responsibility is theocentric—not anthropocentric or ecocentric—and firmly anchored in the Bible.⁸

A careful reading of the Scriptures reveals that humans were placed by God in a dual relationship with the animals He created. On the one hand, we are expected to care for them as God cares for us. On the other hand, we share our creatureliness with them. We are distinctive among the other creatures but have a degree of kinship

with them since we all depend on Him for our existence and sustenance and share the planet with them.⁹

The more significant concepts, based on the biblical worldview, on how Christians should relate to the natural environment and enhance human well-being can be outlined as follows:

1. *God brought into existence, remains involved in, and cares about His entire creation.* Like an accomplished artist who steps back to contemplate his masterpiece-in-progress, at each stage during the first week of human history, the Creator regards the results of His work as “good” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25).¹⁰ And after He forms and gives life to the first man and woman, placing them in a perfect habitat surrounded by luxurious vegetation and living creatures of all kinds, He surveys “all that he had made” and declares it “very good” (v. 31). In fact, God twice blesses the living organisms He created on the fifth and sixth days (vv. 22, 28).

God later gives specific instructions regarding the sabbatical rest that the soil requires to recover its fertility; provides directions regarding the care of trees, birds, and beasts of burden (Lev. 19:23; Deut. 20:19, 20; 22:6, 7; 25:4); and ensures provision for the food and rest needed by both domestic and wild animals (Exod. 23:10–12; Job 38:39–41; Pss. 104:10, 11, 14, 21, 27, 28; 145:15, 16; 147:8, 9). He affirms His

sole ownership of everything that exists (Job 41:11; Ps. 50:9–11) and submits the orderly cosmos as incontrovertible evidence of His creative and sustaining power (Isa. 40:25, 26, 28; 45:12, 18). God’s concern encompasses not only the well-being of the people of a large metropolis but also their cattle (Jon. 4:10, 11). For those reasons, we should not wantonly destroy that which He created and sustains. In fact, according to the Bible, at the end of time God will bring severe judgment against those “‘who destroy the earth’ ” (Rev. 11:18).

2. *God created the cosmos and life on this planet as an integrated and dynamic system.* The orderly sequence of events that took place during that first week reveals the Creator’s amazing intelligence and power, as can be seen in the interconnectedness of the earth’s ecosphere and the interrelation of our planet with the broader cosmos (Acts 17:24, 25; Rom. 1:19, 20; Heb. 11:3). The first six days witnessed the appearance of light; the separation of the waters on the earth from the waters in the atmosphere; the emergence of the dry land; the genesis of all types of vegetation; the appearance of the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars; and the creation of birds and the water creatures as well as of the land animals.¹¹ In Job and Psalms, God poetically describes His sustaining role in the regular operation of the universe and of life on this planet, and clearly indicates the interdependence of the global ecosystem He designed (Job 38:4–41; see also Pss. 65:9–13; 104:1–33). This means that when humans seriously damage one aspect of the created order, another facet may suffer the consequences, at times irreversibly. In view of the delicate balance and resiliency with which God endowed His creation, we have the privilege to foster and maintain it.

3. *God gave humans the ability to make choices and assume responsibility for their consequences.* On the sixth day of the first week, as the crowning act of creation on this planet’s ecosystem, God brought into existence Adam and Eve, fashioning them in the divine “‘image’ ” and “‘likeness’ ” (Gen. 1:26,

27; 2:21). Not only were they endowed with rationality, moral awareness, and the ability to speak but also with the capacity to plan, choose, and otherwise act. In addition, God communicated to them the limits of their freedom and warned them of the dire consequences of disobedience (Gen. 2:16). We still possess the ability to reason from cause to effect, to make decisions, and act upon them (Deut. 30:15, 19; John 6:66, 67; Rev. 3:20; 22:17). Some of the choices we make have an impact on fellow human beings, our natural environment, and its living organisms

and subdue it’ ” (Gen. 1:28).¹² As the descendants of the first couple, we are also expected to manage carefully that which has been entrusted to us, ensuring that we develop it wisely and pass it on enhanced to future generations.

5. *Human disobedience and rebellion resulted in harm for the ecosphere.* Although God had created a harmonious habitat for Adam and Eve and surrounded them with beautiful creatures, their disobedience resulted in a dramatically altered natural environment. As a consequence, the first couple’s inner peace, mutual relationships, and well-

In view of the delicate balance and resiliency with which God endowed His creation, we have the privilege to foster and maintain it.

(Isa. 24:4–6; Zech. 11:1–3). Thus, we are accountable before the Creator.

4. *God entrusted to humans the use, care, and expansion of the human domain of this planet’s ecosphere.* The words of the Creation record are clear: “‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground’ ” (Gen. 1:26). God then “took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Gen. 2:15; see also Ps. 8:3–8). These statements suggest three principles. First, the bountiful resources of creation were made available to humans for their sustenance and well-being. Second, humans should relate to the ecosphere with sensible care and concern (Deut. 11:11–15; Prov. 12:10; Hosea 2:18; Luke 13:15). Third, humans would expand this inhabited ecosystem eventually to include the entire planet: “‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth

being were fractured and the suffering extended to the entire created order (Gen. 3:1–23). The list of the resulting fallout is poignant: dysfunction, pain, illness, cruelty, predation, decay, and death. A few generations later, human moral degradation prompted God to cause a catastrophic global flood that eliminated most living organisms and drastically altered the earth’s surface (Gen. 6–8). But following this massive disaster, God established a gracious covenant with Noah, his descendants, and even the animal groups that survived in the ark (Gen. 9:8–10).¹³ Thus, what we observe today in humans and nature does not reflect God’s original creation, but is instead a steadily decaying,¹⁴ defaced reality.¹⁵

6. *Jesus Christ—the Divine Agent of creation—came to this world to redeem, teach, and heal.* The Second Person of the Deity, who brought the world and its ecosphere into existence (John 1:1–3, 14; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2), came to this earth as a human twenty centuries

ago in order “to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10) and to respond to human need (John 5:17; 10:10). By taking on human nature and living on this earth, Jesus dignified the entire creation.¹⁶ In fact, He was born in a manger, accompanied by some of the animals He had originally created (Luke 2:7, 8, 12, 16). In His parables and illustrations, He revealed a thorough understanding of the natural world, from which He drew spiritual lessons, for example, from the farmer working on different soils, the mustard seed, the lost sheep, the fig tree, and lightning (Luke 8:4–8; Matt. 13:31, 32; Luke 15:3–6; Matt. 24:32; Luke 17:24). Jesus called the attention of His hearers to the delicate beauty of the lilies of the field and reminded them that not even the sparrows “will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father” (Matt. 10:29). Yet He stated that humans are “much more valuable” than “the birds of the air” (Matt. 6:26; see also Luke 12:7). Jesus also acknowledged, through a parable and a miracle, the actions of an evil agent that had distorted the original harmony and wholeness of creation (Matt. 13:24–28).¹⁷ Thus, Jesus Christ modeled for us how to interact both with our fellow human beings and the rest of creation.

7. *God endowed men and women with rationality and inventiveness to study, utilize, and enhance His creation.* Since humans were designed in the Creator’s image and likeness, we are endowed with similar but limited abilities to observe, plan, and act within our environment (Gen. 2:15, 19, 20). Adam and Eve’s immediate descendants, for example, raised cattle, worked the soil, fabricated tents, built cities, composed music, and manufactured tools (Gen. 4:2, 17, 20–22). Solomon, gifted by God with special wisdom, achieved renown for his careful study of the flora and fauna of his time and place (1 Kings 3:5–15; 4:29–34). By observation, trial and error, and ingenuity, the progeny of the first couple developed the mechanical, scientific, and technological innovations that characterize modern civilization. Regretfully, some of these advances have had a negative impact on the

environment. Thus, when we study and also responsibly use natural resources to meet human need and promote sustainable development—enhancing human and animal well-being—we are utilizing our God-given talents for the benefit of His entire creation.

8. *God instructed humans on the principles that foster wellness, even in a fallen, imperfect world.* God designed Adam and Eve’s diet to consist of seeds and fruits: “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food,” while the animals were to feed on plants (Gen. 1:29, 30). After the Fall, herbs were added to the human diet (Gen. 3:18, 19); and following the Flood, God specified the types of animals, birds, and fish whose flesh humans could eat with the proviso that their lifeblood should be drained off (Gen. 9:3, 4; Lev. 17:10–14).¹⁸ Later, He specifically identified the animals whose flesh was suitable for human consumption¹⁹ but stipulated that the fat should be removed from the meat (Lev. 3:17; 11:1–47; Deut. 14:3–20). The Bible also recommends simplicity, regularity, and economy in eating and drinking (Eccles. 10:17; John 6:10–13; 1 Cor. 10:31) as well as a trustful attitude based on God’s assurance that He cares for us (Matt. 6:25–34). In addition, contact with the natural environment can enhance our physical and mental health. Ultimately, the way we treat our bodies is important because God created us as integrated units (Luke 10:25–28; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 10:15, 16), chooses to dwell in us through His Spirit, and through our brain perceptions He interacts with us (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). Thus, God encourages us to follow those wise principles and enjoy their benefits.

9. *God set aside the seventh day of the week as a special time to rest, renew, and remember.* After completing His creative work on planet Earth, God rested on this day not because He was tired but to provide a healthy pause in the weekly cycle for the benefit of humans and animals (Gen. 2:2, 3; Exod. 20:8–11; 31:17). This occurred thousands of

years before the Israelites emerged as a nation. In fact, Jesus declared that this day was specially designated to promote the well-being of men and women, regardless of their religious convictions (Mark 2:27), as well as of His entire creation. Above all, when we rest on the seventh-day Sabbath, we acknowledge the Creator.

10. *God will bring about a total renewal and restoration of this planet and its ecosphere when Jesus returns to earth.* As indicated above, the current condition of the planet and its inhabitants is not what the Creator designed and intended at the beginning. The Bible states that, because of the Fall, “the whole creation has been groaning . . . up to the present time” (Rom. 8:22) and that our decaying environment will reach a point of no return (Isa. 51:6; 2 Pet. 3:10–13). The Scriptures also predict a future time where harmony between humans and animals will be restored (Isa. 11:6–9) and a “new heaven and a new earth” will be their habitation (Rev. 21:1, 3–5). This planet, then, will be our habitat for eternity, once God re-creates what was damaged and lost by human disobedience, carelessness, and abuse. Such a perspective, while maintaining our responsibility toward other humans and the natural environment, gives us hope in an imperfect world.

Conclusion

The Scriptures offer clear guidance for those who wish to cooperate with God and be responsible caretakers of this planet’s ecosphere.²⁰ We are to interact creatively with nature, using our resources frugally, promoting balanced conservation and health, restoring wherever we can, and making our planet thrive while we await the total re-creation and *shalom* that God has promised. ▮

1 For a more extended version of this article, see Stephen Dunbar, L. James Gibson, and Humberto M. Rasi, eds., *Entrusted: Christians and Environmental Care* (Montemorelos, Mexico: Adventus International University Publishers, 2013).

2 This quotation is part of a letter Ellen G. White wrote from Cooranbong, Australia, on August 27, 1895. The context reads as follows: “Pure, practical religion will be manifested in treating the earth as God’s treasure-house. The more intelligent a man

becomes, the more should religious influence be radiating from him. And the Lord would have us treat the earth as a precious treasure, lent us in trust." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), 245.

3 Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

4 Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207, www.zhi.zeu/~kalevi/lwhite.htm.

5 For example, on Carson, see J. Gordon Edwards, "The Lies of Rachel Carson," *21st Century Science & Technology* (Autumn 1992), www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/articles/summ02/Carson.html; on White, see Lewis W. Moncrief, "The Cultural Basis for Our Environmental Crisis," *Science* 170, no. 3957 (December 30, 1970), 508–512; Ben A. Minteer and Robert E. Manning, "An Appraisal of the Critique of Anthropocentrism and Three Lesser Known Themes in Lynn White's 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,'" *Organization & Environment* 18, no. 2 (June 2005): 163–176.

6 On worldviews, see Humberto M. Rasi, "Why Do Different Scientists Interpret Reality Differently?" *Ministry* 83, no. 9 (September 2011): 16–20.

7 Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 113.

8 See Andrew J. Hoffman and Lloyd E. Sandelands, "Getting Right With Nature: Anthropocentrism, Ecocentrism, and Theocentrism," *Organization & Environment* 18, no. 2 (June 2005): 141–162.

9 See Richard Bauckham, *Living With Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 4, 5, 223.

10 All Bible quotations are from the New International Version.

11 This intricate interdependence of the global ecosystem makes it less likely that the functional components of the ecosphere were added one at a time over long ages. See, e.g., Henry Zuill, "Ecology, Biodiversity, and Creation: A View From the Top," *College and University Dialogue* 12, no. 3 (2000): 7–9, 32. For the interdependence of processes at the cellular level, see Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

12 The original Hebrew word *radah* translated in verse 26 as "rule over" could also be translated as "have dominion" or "reign." In verse 28, the original word is *kabash*, meaning "to subdue, to bring into submission."

13 The extensive fossiliferous layers of the earth's surface seem to provide evidence of this cataclysmic event, which rapidly buried huge masses of vegetation and countless living organisms. See, e.g., Ariel A. Roth, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1998), 147–232; and L. James Gibson and Humberto M. Rasi, eds., *Understanding Creation: Answers to Questions on Faith and Science* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2011), 123–166.

14 Geneticist John C. Sanford provides strong evidence that deleterious genetic mutations accumulate through time and that the overall fitness of the human race is decreasing by about 0.00001 percent with each generation. See his book *Genetic Entropy and the Mystery of the Genome*, 2nd ed. (Lima, NY: Elim Publishing, 2005), 149, 150.

15 Recognition of the terrible effects of the Fall and the Flood on this planet's ecosphere is essential to understand adequately the natural world as we observe it today. Charles Darwin did not take this factor into account as he proposed a naturalistic explanation for the origin and development of living organisms. See, e.g., his statements in *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859), 200, 201, 243, 244. Darwin was even more explicit in a letter to Asa Gray on May 22, 1860: "There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent & omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. On the other hand I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe & especially the nature of man, & to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that

this notion at all satisfies me, I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton.—Let each man hope & believe what he can." Darwin, C. R. to Gray, Asa, "Darwin Correspondence Project," accessed May 13, 2013, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-2814>. It is also possible that the death of Annie, Darwin's beloved ten-year-old daughter in 1851, may have confirmed his suspicions regarding an indifferent or nonexistent God. See Randal Keynes, *Annie's Box: Charles Darwin, His Daughter and Human Evolution* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001). Richard Dawkins has proposed that the evidence of design in nature reveals an evil creator. See his book *Climbing Mount Improbable* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).

16 Mark mentions an intriguing detail of Jesus' experience during His forty days in the desert, just before He triumphed over Satan's temptations and began His ministry: "He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him" (Mark 1:13). Was Jesus there in the peaceable company of some of the animals He had created, even protected by them?

17 It is also possible that Satan may have further damaged the earth and its creatures by manipulating some aspects of the natural world, whose operation he has observed and understands.

18 The change in diet after the Flood apparently was a factor in the considerable reduction of the human life span. Compare the hundreds of years that men (and women) lived before this catastrophe and after, contrasting Gen. 5 and 9:28, 29 with Gen. 11:10–26, 32; 23:1; 25:7; 35:28; Ps. 90:10.

19 God had already distinguished between the clean and unclean animals prior to the Flood, directing Noah to bring into the ark seven pairs of the former and two pairs of the latter (Gen. 7:2, 3).

20 The seventh fundamental belief of Seventh-day Adventists, addressing the nature of human beings, closes with the words, "Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment." *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 91.

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Igniting my heart again

There was a time in my life when I had a fire for outreach that, in time, faded out. But in December 2012, Cruise With a Mission rekindled my passion. Going in, I did not know what to expect. I understood our mission trip would be at various ports, but I did not realize it would include worship on board.

In Jamaica, some of us went to a Christian school, where I was given a class of 50 three-year-olds. I told and retold the story of Baby Jesus then got them to sing songs. When snack time arrived, the kids gobbled up their food. I was famished and dizzy

from the heat, and a boy offered me a plantain chip with his dirty hands. I graciously ate it. Then, one after another, students lined up, giving me their food. All this time I was talking God to them, yet their giving showed me that they were walking God. As I said goodbye, I crouched down and told each one, "Jesus loves you. Never forget that."

Back on the ship, a fire started to burn within me. There was a young adult, Paul, not associated with our group, whom I had met earlier. I prayed that I would see him again. Indeed I did see him and invited him

to church on Sabbath. I was shocked when he sat next to me. During the sermon appeal to "get out of the boat," Paul dedicated his life to God. With tears in my eyes, I joined him.

My mission has not ended. My fire continues to burn. Watch out! A wildfire may be headed your way!

—RICARDO BACCHUS SERVES AS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT FOR THE CQ BIBLE STUDY GUIDE, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES.

Revival
and
REFORMATION

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The art *of the* pastoral visit

A recent social media post by a friend asked whether or not people would be offended by a visit from their pastor. Within a short time, more than 100 responses uniformly agreed that some of their most meaningful spiritual moments came from caring pastors during a pastoral visit. Most went on to deplore the fact that pastors today do not visit them at home anymore.

Pastoral visits were incredibly influential in shaping my own Christian experience; and now, as a pastor, I see them as essential for staying in touch with the heartbeat of my congregation. Having pastored a three-church rural district as well as a larger, metropolitan multipastor staff, I have found that in both instances developing a regular visitation plan resulted in some of my most influential time in the pastorate.

In this article, I want to share what I have learned about the art of the pastoral visit.

What is a pastoral visit?

For starters, a pastoral visit should be defined as a meaningful point of contact, which creates an intentional spiritual moment, most notably outside of the immediate confines of the church and/or church school. For many people, this may look very different. I have had such moments attending a sporting event for a youth group, going on a Sabbath afternoon hike, or meeting people in the hospital or in their homes. When we had a smaller congregation, we used to love inviting the entire

church over to our home, but later on, with a larger church, this became much more difficult. Not every pastor is in a position to entertain, but I am continually amazed when we have someone over and people discover that a pastor is a normal human being.

Yet whatever situation this occurs within, I would suggest that every pastoral visit have a couple of key parameters:

1. *Relationship building.* One of the great advantages of the pastoral visit is bonding with your church members before a crisis occurs, so that when there is a problem they do not view you as someone who came to “beat them up,” but rather as someone there to help.
2. *Spiritual moment.* Again and again, I am surprised when I ask people the simple question, “How is your walk with Jesus?” and how much this impacts those whom I visit. The question can take a variety of different forms, but at its core is the intent to find out in a non-judgmental way where they are spiritually. Sometimes I will share a Bible promise or something that jumped out to me that day in my devotions.
3. *Connection with the church.* I like to ask people how they are doing at staying connected with the church. This is a great opportunity for feedback. Are they getting our church email or print newsletters? How can I, as a pastor, improve and

become more effective? By focusing the conversation on how I can improve, I have learned a lot about how to become more effective in my church and as a pastor.

4. *Prayer.* Never leave without having a meaningful moment in prayer. At times, this has been awkward because there may not be a good place to pray, but just stopping where you are for a brief prayer can mean a great deal to the person with whom you are spending time.

Developing a visitation plan

The most effective pastors do not just wait for church members to call them but instead develop a proactive plan for reaching out. I have run across several ways that help make this possible in both small and large congregations.

Set a goal of visiting each of the families in your church once a year. Do not bother announcing up front that you want to visit because church members will not believe you until you show up. I keep a church directory in my car that I make notes in about each family—especially those who have a tenuous connection—and check off any significant points of contact, be it a Sabbath lunch invitation over to our home (for those who are more shy) or an intentional visit to their home. Some of my most fun “visits” were going in squad cars along with one of our church members, a law enforcement officer. I will never forget sitting in a police car

as he asked me to pray for him and his family about very personal issues. It was only after I had spent eight hours chasing criminals through the night that he felt comfortable enough to open up to me.

Some pastors develop more elaborate plans that encompass dividing up the pastoral staff or elders by geographic regions or even age demographics. And these plans can work too. Obviously, this is increasingly challenging the larger the church (both in terms of church size or quantity of churches for multichurch districts). Yet it can and should be done. And visits are especially productive when they happen in conjunction with a fellow pastor or church elder. After all, Jesus sent His disciples out “two by two” (see Mark 6:7).

Finally, I discovered from one of my pastors, Pastor John Brunt, when I was a member at Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church, that developing a birthday list is a great way to keep in touch. As the senior pastor of a congregation with some 3,000 members, he took time to call me each year. I have never forgotten the first time he called. Pastor Brunt was on vacation, although I did not know that until later, but he still took a few minutes to let me know that he cared. Since then, as a pastor, I have found that many church members have been surprised—especially those on the margins of the church—when I have called them just to let them know that someone cares about them on their birthdays.

Special visitation

There are special kinds of pastoral visits that deserve specific kinds of additional skills: hospital, military, and jail or prison visitation. Some words of advice about each are in order.

Hospital visits. In my first pastorate, I signed up with other clergy to become a volunteer hospital chaplain. We rotated on a regular basis; once every two months, I was on call for a week. Each day I made rounds, visiting those who were open to a chaplain’s visit.

- *Always begin on a neutral tone.* I loved to ask the question, “So how

did you manage to get all of this attention?” That typically would generate a chuckle. My purpose was not to learn about their maladies but to begin a conversation that emphasized listening.

- *Be sensitive to different religious backgrounds.* In a rural part of the country, I was surprised by the religious diversity. Instead of seeing myself as the person to minister to each person, I would try to put people in touch with others who could help them better. If they were Catholic, I would help the person find a local priest or nun. Fortunately, I was friends with most of the clergy from a variety of denominations, so it was easy to assist people in finding help.
- *Just be yourself.* I once went in and met a man who, after I introduced myself, told me to “Go away.” When I inquired further, he said that I was just too young and had not experienced enough pain in my life. I said that I would call an older chaplain and, as I left, I told him I would be upset if I came back to find that the older chaplain was too old. He later let me come back.
- *Be prepared for death.* I did rounds one day and had four people in a row die after my visit. Some people are waiting for someone to pray with them so that they feel that they have permission to die. The nurses thereafter dubbed me the “Grim Reaper.”
- *Respect privacy.* With the Health Information Privacy Rule and other government regulations, remember the importance of not revealing the identity of people you visit, including their medical conditions. Even when I had church members in the hospital, I would specifically ask their permission whether it was all right to add the people to the prayer list for the church. Sometimes the answer was Yes; but other times, it was a definite No.
- *Get identification and certification.* Most hospitals have an accreditation program that allows you to

visit church members or join a chaplain’s group. Better yet, get certified through the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Find out more at www.acpe.edu.

Military visits. Because I pastored near an air force base, I discovered that visiting members in the military involved an entirely different set of skills, the hardest of which was learning military protocol.

- *Identify military personnel.* By simply knowing who they are, including those in the reserves, you can better anticipate deployments. If you can, try to be there for significant occasions, especially when they leave or come back from a tour of duty.
- *Base access.* Many military families live on base and require a military ID to get on base. Many bases have a chaplain’s office. It helps to introduce yourself at the local chaplain’s office. The chaplain can help you gain access when needed; or, if possible, another church member in the armed services can assist you.
- *Dedicatory prayer.* Regardless of how you may or may not feel about combat, it is a good idea to have a prayer of dedication in front of the church each time a church member is deployed. In our church, we lay hands on him or her and ask God to watch over the church member while he or she is away. Some churches even put up a map where they have pictures to remind the congregation to lift up both the individual as well as his or her family in regular prayer.

Jail or prison visitation. Without fail, every church I have pastored had members who have been incarcerated. Whatever the particular case, when you move into a parish, it helps to introduce yourself to the local constabulary so that when you need access, you can do so.

- *Accreditation.* Clergy visits in many cases have to be arranged ahead of

time so that jail or prison authorities can do a background check and make sure that you are safe to visit.


- **Limited access.** Do not be surprised when you have to talk to the person in a limited access situation—whether through glass or in a small room.
- **Limited literature.** I find that people I visit are incredibly open to spiritual things as they reevaluate their own bad decisions. Try calling in advance to find out what literature is already on hand that can be shared with the individual. Most hardbound books are banned. Expect any material that is allowed to be carefully searched.
- **Consider a jail ministry.** In some places, especially near large

federal prisons, some churches have become intentional about developing a regular prison ministry. Such a ministry can have far-reaching evangelistic effects.

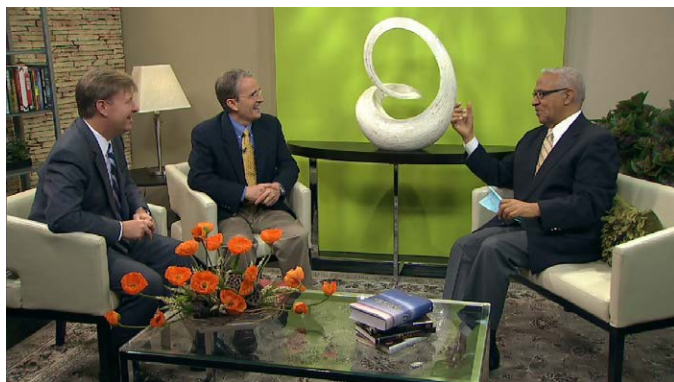
Conclusion

As with anything, too much of a good thing can become problematic. I will never forget attending a conference constituency session where an elderly minister criticized younger pastors for not doing pastoral visitation. Since I was one of the young pastors, I was curious to find out what he meant. One member confided in me that this retired pastor scared people by trying to visit them too much. It was a point of pride for him to visit 25 or more homes in a day. How he did that was a mystery

to me, but the problem was that each member became merely a checklist on his objective to fulfill his own goal. The same church member told me that he or she hid and did not answer the door so that he or she would not have to endure “another visit.”

Ultimately, the art of pastoral visitation centers on building meaningful relationships. Obviously, a healthy dose of common sense is essential because each person is different and has unique needs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution that every pastor should do, although some of the things that I have learned in my own experience I hope will inspire other pastors to connect and utilize the pastoral visit as a meaningful extension of his or her pastoral ministry. 

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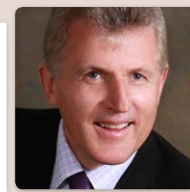
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Ministry lessons *from* the woman at the well

Conflict is in the air from the beginning of the Gospel of John. “Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, ‘Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John’ . . . he left Judea and started back to Galilee” (John 4:1, 3).¹ To the Pharisees, the growing impact of Jesus did not seem to be a good omen. And so, sensing the first drafts of hostility, Jesus “left Judea and started back to Galilee” (v. 3).

At that point, John introduces a subtle break in the story. “But he had to go through Samaria” (v. 4). The word *but* is soft, but there is, nevertheless, a flag waving to the reader to slow down. Did Jesus, strictly speaking, *have to* go through Samaria? What lies behind the notion that Jesus *had to* go through Samaria? There were other routes between Judea and Galilee—the coastal route or the Jordan Valley. Of course, observant Jews at the time of Jesus did *not* go through Samaria because they did not want to be contaminated by contact with Samaritans.

So what does the notion of necessity seen in the phrase “but he had to” mean? In the Gospel of John, Jesus never, or almost never, will do things simply because circumstances make Him do it.

This imposes on the reader the task of finding some other explanation for the necessity in this story. The “but” at the beginning of the verse nudges us

further in a different direction. Jesus has to go through Samaria not because Samaria is on His way, but because Samaria is on His mind. He goes there by necessity, but the necessity is in Him, not in His circumstances.

One on one with a woman of Samaria

And so, at high noon, we find Jesus in Samaria.

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) (vv. 5–9).

To read these five verses takes about 30 seconds. Let us call that *narrative time*. But how long was the *actual time* in this exchange?

My reconstruction will be something like this: He comes to the well first. She comes alone, not expecting anyone to be there. The situation is

awkward because she has chosen the time of day when there is the least chance for running into other people. She eyes the stranger warily while Jesus does not pretend that she has not come there. Awareness of the other is the first element in the encounter.

She will complete her errand despite the stranger sitting at the well. At this point, we have three main options. In option number one, Jesus begins the conversation immediately, asking for water, but He never gets any water because she immediately rejoins that the question is out of character with Jewish-Samaritan relations. In option number two, she lowers the bucket to get her water before anything is said. This takes time because, as she will say moments later, “the well is deep” (v. 11), 125–240 feet deep by various estimates. Ten minutes, perhaps more, might have transpired before anyone says anything. In option number three, He asks for water right away. She proceeds to lower the bucket, saying nothing until she has the water.

Of these three options, the first one is the weakest even though this is the option that is most “faithful” to the text. In this option, narrative time equals actual time. Within less than a minute of the woman’s arrival, there will be a conversation about water, first, and then about “living water.” Indeed, option number one is implausible because that option allows Him to ask

something of her but not for her to do something for Him. Option numbers two or three are better because they allow time for confidence building. I will go with the second option. She gets the water first. Not until that point does He ask, "Give me a drink." He pauses in the conversation as she gives Him water, and He drinks it with an expression of gratitude. Only then, when she has done something for Him, and there is a sense of parity in the relationship, does she ask Him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"

By now, we may be fifteen minutes into the encounter. So far, words have been few, but communication is not only by words. Communication is also body language, facial expression, eye contact or an avoidance of eye contact, and tone of voice. It takes about 30 seconds to read the story, minus the historical elements and the circumstantial matters, and trust cannot be built in 30 seconds. We are well advised to

settle for the 15 minutes or so of actual time before we proceed.

Barriers broken

Three huge barriers have been overcome in the span of the first 15 minutes—in 15 minutes and not 15 seconds. First, a Jew talks to a Samaritan, breaching the socioethnic barrier. Second, a man talks to a woman, breaching the gender barrier. Third, a pious person talks to a sinful person, breaching the moral or religious barrier. The latter point assumes the traditional view of the woman as a questionable character, a view that must suffice for now, even though there are other plausible constructs for her life story.

I write this as a pastor with a PhD in New Testament studies, but I also write it as a physician. In my work as a physician, everything hinges on establishing trust. Trust, in turn, is built less by how well we talk than by how well we listen. On this point, the account confirms trust in the making when the woman decides to

engage in a conversation that could have been avoided. It is not hard to imagine her hurrying away from the well without saying a word to the Stranger. Instead, she stays to talk. Triggered by His simple question and reinforced by hers, the conversation will be one for the ages.

We will have to speed up from here with only three additional points from the story itself. We move from His need to her need, from her water to His water (vv. 10–15).

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water," Jesus says (v. 10). She does not quite get the point, but she gets the hint that she has a need and that God has a remedy for it. On the premise of her need and His remedy, she declares, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water" (v. 15).

At that point, the conversation shifts gears (vv. 16–18). "Go, call your

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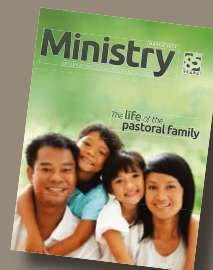
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is eye contact, she is not looking into a judgmental face.

A wonderful progression

There has been a wonderful progression in her view of Him up to this point. “How can you, a Jew . . . ?”—her opening bid acknowledges Jesus as an exceptional human being (v. 9). “Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob who gave us the well, and with his

Jesus has to go through Samaria not because Samaria is on His way, but because Samaria is on His mind.

husband, and come back’ ” (v. 16). This might seem like a change of subject, but it is not. What could be better than “living water” to bring an end to the trips to the well at high noon all by herself, as a person ostracized from her community? She does not understand the notion of “living water,” but she feels the appeal of getting water that quenches a person’s thirst to such an extent that one no longer has to make the trip to the well. We should not think that she has prepared for Jesus’ statement, but the statement is not unrelated to the woman’s situation in life.

“‘I have no husband,’ ” she answers (v. 17). Her denial could have been the end of the conversation for she certainly could have gotten up and left. But she does not leave even though Jesus allows time for her to do so, or, as I imagine it, He does not proceed until He is certain that she will not leave. He can only say what He will say next when He is confident of having earned her trust to the point of no return. “‘You have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband,’ ”

He says, adding, “‘What you have said is true!’ ” (v. 18).

This move is extremely daring but necessary and ultimately liberating. How He says it (and how we say things) matters more than what He said. Again, a pause on her part is likely now that all is out in the open. What now? “‘I see that you are a prophet,’ ” she says (v. 19).

The authorized Greek text has a period after her concession, but the necessary pause that comes with the period must be supplied by the reader. I believe that a long pause is necessary, perhaps several minutes. I do not share the widely held view that she wants to change the subject and eagerly rushes to do so. And, as noted already, verbal pauses do not mean absence of communication. If her body language at this point is apprehensive and questioning, His is accepting and reassuring. If there

sons and his flocks drank from it?’ ” recognizes Him as a great spiritual figure (v. 12). “I see that you are a prophet” places Jesus in an even higher spiritual category. And the progression in her view of Him has not run its course. She resumes the conversation, asking for the prophet’s adjudication of the dispute between Jews and Samaritans as to the correct place for worship, only to have Jesus answer that neither Jerusalem nor Samaria means anything in the new reality that is breaking in on the world (vv. 20–24). Only at that moment does she strike the ball, responding as though the definitive answer to her question must be deferred to an indefinite point in the future. “‘I know that Messiah is coming,’ ” she says. “‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us’ ” (v. 25).

That sentence would have been a fitting ending to the conversation,

the signal that she should realize that the time has come for her to leave. However, she does not leave even though there might have been another moment of silence. We can hardly imagine that Jesus could make His subsequent assertion except for the fact that it had entered the realm of possibility for her that He, the Stranger at the well, actually might be the Messiah. “‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you,’” Jesus says to her (v. 26). And she does not scoff at the claim.

When the disciples reemerge in the story, no further conversation between the two is possible. The disciples are puzzled seeing Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman (v. 27), and she quite forgets the reason why she came to the well in the first place (v. 28). Now, however, she has a story to tell, “‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’” she says to her fellow villagers (v. 29).

There must have been excitement in her voice and body language, and there must have been more than a little surprise on their part that the Samaritan woman suddenly and willingly makes “‘everything I have ever done’” a subject of attention and conversation (v. 29). Her willingness to draw attention to her life record increases the likelihood that she was not trying to change the subject when Jesus brought it up. Rather, the conversation between her and Jesus about her relational history ran to completion on the level of body language, even if words are lacking to that effect. If, again, the subject was her relational history, a history involving at least one intimate relationship that ought not to have happened (“‘the one you have now is not your husband,’” v. 18), the relational history has been detoxified and purified at the well. This history no longer represents a threat to her, spiritually, psychologically, socially, and otherwise.

“‘He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’” she asks rhetorically, convinced that He is (v. 29). This is the highest point in the progression in her view of Him. What this term meant to her, John does not describe in his Gospel, but there is no doubt what it should mean to us. Here, the reader of the Gospel has an advantage over the Samaritan woman, knowing explicitly what she may only have imagined implicitly. “‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,’” Jesus says later in the Gospel (John 14:9; cf. 1:18). The Stranger who talked to her at the well is the Revealer. That is how great He is, the exceptional Jew who is greater than Jacob, a Prophet, too, and, in fact, the Messiah who is to come into the world (John 4:9, 12, 19, 29).

Reflection

I will suggest four points for further reflection.

First, in this story and often in the Gospel of John, ministry is local,

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individual, and personal. “But he had to go through Samaria” (v. 4), and now we know why. In John, “the Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14). Samaria is included in the itinerary of the Word Incarnate by design, not by accident. He *had to* go to Samaria because that is His *modus operandi*, and He had to go there because He could not win her any other way: not by a tract, telephone call, or virtual presence on a television screen. In-person contact is the way of this Gospel, and the most consequential encounters in John happen one-on-one.

Second, in this story as in other stories in John, the role of women

lack of interest in Samaria is surpassed only by their lack of respect for her. How to resolve this question in our time may be nudged to its inevitable destination by ascribing to Jesus the prerogative to reveal principle and prescribe policy. “I know that Messiah is coming,” says the Samaritan woman in her attempt to postpone the moment of truth. Of all the compelling images in the story, perhaps the most riveting is the scene of Jesus sitting alone at the well at the point when the disciples return and the woman has left, His face exuding contentment. “‘Rabbi, eat something,’” the disciples say (v. 31), thinking of His physical hunger.

trust of the recipient. Such endeavors can, in the absence of trust, actually cause more harm than good.

Most important, however, is the answer to the question with which we began. Why did He *have to* go through Samaria? Geography is not the reason. He went there because of deeper needs, hers and His. “What Jesus longs for from this woman, even more than delicious spring water, is that *she* long for the living water that *He* longs to give *her*,” says Stephen Moore in a perceptive essay.²

For many who have written on the scene at the Samaritan well, the woman’s oblivion to her own need,


Communication is also **body language, facial expression, eye contact** *or an avoidance of eye contact, and* **tone of voice.**

in ministry is so conspicuous that it poses a serious contrast to the hand-wringing that the Christian church has had throughout much of its history over this question. The woman gets Jesus’ attention even though the disciples wonder what He is up to. They want to say it out loud but leave it at the level of thought: “‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’” (John 4:27). They find themselves in Samaria because it is on the way between Judea and Galilee and not because they have an interest in the place. It is not difficult to imagine an element of condescension in the disciples’ demeanor, “‘Why are you speaking with *her*?’” (v. 27; emphasis added). She, nevertheless, will be the first to win Samaria; she, not His disciples and not a man. For the men in the story, four months remain until harvest. For Jesus, by contrast, “‘the fields are ripe for harvesting’” (v. 35), and the woman is proof of His thesis and the means to bring it in. Their

“‘I have food to eat that you do not know about,’” He answers (v. 32). They wonder if someone else has brought Him food (v. 33), but Jesus speaks of food of a different order. His deepest need has been met in the encounter with the Samaritan woman (v. 34).

Third, we must win a person’s confidence before we can do anything else. Winning a person’s confidence begins with interest in that person. To overcome prejudice, distrust, and the fracturing realities of convention may take time, and this also takes ingenuity and planning. I see elements of this in Jesus’ journey from Judea to Galilee, arriving at the well at high noon, when He will see her one-on-one and by the fact that He breaks the ice by asking her for a favor. Pastoral ministry is, in this regard, no different from medical ministry. Confidence building knows no shortcuts. The programs we launch and the books we yearn to distribute will not do much good unless we have won the

assumed to be so much greater than that of Jesus, is the pivot on which the irony of their dialogue turns. Deeper by far, however, is the irony of Jesus’ own need—not to mention that of his Father—is just as great as the woman’s. “The well is deep,” as the woman says. Desire, however, is bottomless.³

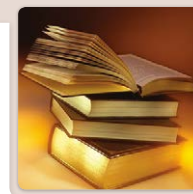
The encounter begins with His need for her water (vv. 6, 7). Then this encounter moves to her need for His water (v. 10). But then, in a moment of splendid clarity, the encounter returns to His need for her. His bottomless desire drives the entire story and is the reason why “he had to go through Samaria” (v. 4). 

¹ Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version.

² Stephen Moore, “Are There Impurities in the Living Water That the Johannine Jesus Dispenses?” *Biblical Interpretation* 1, no. 2 (1993): 208.

³ *Ibid.*, 227.

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Evolution Impossible: 12 Reasons Why Evolution Cannot Explain the Origin of Life on Earth

by John F. Ashton, Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012.

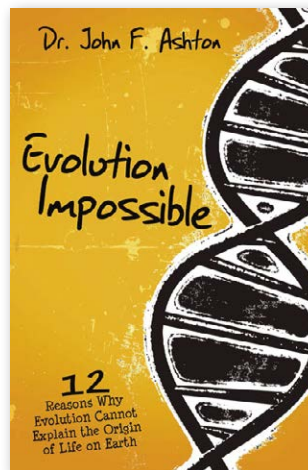
For those who would like a summary of standard creationist arguments, John Ashton provides an impressive list: problems with the big bang theory, the fine-tuned conditions for life on earth, the low probabilities for the chance formation of organic molecules, life's complexity, few beneficial mutations have been observed, the lack of intermediate fossils, mass extinctions, well-preserved fossils including organic material, catastrophic sedimentary deposits, and many others. The book includes chapters about scientists who reject Darwin's theory and anecdotal evidence for an intervening God. The author also mentions some infrequent creationist arguments: George Dodwell calculating the date for a recent earth catastrophe based on the wobble of the earth's axis, premonitions of disaster providing evidence for an intervening God, and dreams leading to scientific discoveries.

I have found that Adventist archaeology¹ provides lessons in using these arguments: (1) do not claim more than the data warrants or stretch interpretations to explain things away, (2) work within the scientific community, (3) present constructive explanations for data more than just pointing out problems with existing scientific models, (4) do not place on science the burden of proving the Bible, and (5) use science to study God's ongoing processes in nature without expecting it to explain God's one-time interventions.²

Some of these lessons suggest cautions for using arguments in this book. For example, it is true that uniformitarian assumptions cannot be used to


explain everything about earth's history (69, 77, 136); but geologists do not necessarily expect uniform conditions and rates.³ Fossils may be out of order in the Canadian Rocky Mountains (104), but evidence there for overthrusting is readily apparent to explain the different order. Fred Hoyle may talk about some superior intelligence (153, 175), but it did not lead him to believe in God. Hoyle did successfully predict a fine-tuned carbon resonance as necessary for the existence of carbon and thus life (148), but the prediction was based on the assumption that earth's carbon came from long ages of stellar evolution. The creationist argument that radiometric age isochrons are really mixing lines (137, 138) is an interesting suggestion, but considerable study is needed to determine whether it can be used as a general scientific explanation.

The evidence and logic of science are important in understanding our universe, but more than that is needed to draw people to Christ. The best argument is a consistent Christlike "life of disinterested love"⁴ that treats even the bitterest opponents with respect,⁵ provides a welcoming and caring community, and makes the world a better place using science in service. The Adventist understanding of origins provides a picture of a good and powerful Creator even in the face of evil: (1) Evil is not God's fault, for He made a



good creation. (2) Evil resulted from our God-given free will to choose love or rebellion, thus the Fall. (3) God is fair and just and Noah's flood provides an example. (4) Evil is felt by the Creator along with us as most prominently displayed at the Incarnation.

(5) Evil is limited to a short time in both the past and the future, as alluded to in our name *Seventh-day Adventist*.

The author is to be commended for drawing both the religious and secular mind to our good and powerful Creator—trustworthy in the face of evil and able to do so much more than humans can explain. The foreword of the book presents ideal goals to continue striving for: "look at all the evidence," "have open minds," and "find the truth." 

Reviewed by Ben Clausen, PhD, senior research scientist, Geoscience Research Institute, Loma Linda, California, United States.

- 1 Randall W. Younker, "Integrating Faith, the Bible, and Archaeology: A Review of the Andrews University Way of Doing Archaeology," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, eds. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 52.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), 113.
- 3 Stephen Jay Gould, "Is Uniformitarianism Necessary?" *American Journal of Science* 263 (March 1965): 223–228.
- 4 White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), 142.
- 5 White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1901), 6:120–123.



► Seventh-day Adventist Church commemorates 150th anniversary

Battle Creek, Michigan, United States—In a replica of the meetinghouse where Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneer and prophet **Ellen G. White** once spoke for ten hours on the great controversy, world church leaders met to commemorate the church's 150th anniversary.

The Second Meeting House is located on the campus of the Adventist Historic Village in Battle Creek, the birthplace of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the site of this year's Spring Council, a biannual business session of the church's Executive Committee, its top governing body.

Delegates received a crash course in Adventist history, with a side of some of the more obscure events surrounding the church's early formation, a strong urging to learn lessons from the past, and, above all, a call to rekindle the enthusiasm early Adventists felt for the second coming of Christ.

"We must never lose the sense that [Jesus' second coming] is soon," Adventist historian **Jim Nix** told delegates. "This is what our pioneers fervently believed."

Nix, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, explored the church's early roots in Battle Creek during a morning presentation. When church pioneer **Joseph Bates** first arrived in the rural Michigan town, Nix said he asked the local postmaster for "the most honest man in town" in hopes that the man would be open to the emerging Adventist message. The man was **David "Penny" Hewitt**, a peddler so honest that if he unknowingly cheated a customer so much as a penny, he felt compelled to make immediate amends, Nix said.

After a "morning" worship by Bates extended well into the evening, Hewitt



Photo: Brandon Roberts

and his wife, Olive, were convinced of the seventh-day Sabbath and the sanctuary doctrine. The couple became Battle Creek's first Sabbath keeping Adventists. In 1860, David would suggest naming the growing denomination the "Seventh-day Adventist Church," three years before it was officially established.

Delegates also learned about some of what Adventist historian **Merlin Burt** called "spiritual detours in leadership" during the church's early formation.

"The Bible doesn't hide the weaknesses of people of faith, and nor should we tell an incomplete story of our pioneers," he said.

Burt, who directs the Center of Adventist Research at the church-owned Andrews University in nearby Berrien Springs, Michigan, took the opportunity to defend the reputation of a man many Adventists have viewed unfavorably as an authoritative legalist.

That man, **George Ide Butler**, was embroiled in a heated debate with other early Adventist leaders regarding the doctrine of righteousness by faith. Butler rejected the notion, claiming it slackened the reins of God's law.

By 1888, Butler's health had collapsed. He had been "thrust" into leadership of the Ohio Conference after two dissenters, Snook and Brinkerhoff, questioned Ellen White's prophetic authority and unexpectedly left the church, Nix said. Butler would later serve two terms as the Adventist Church's president.

He retired to a rural citrus farm in Florida, where he cared for orange groves and his wife, Lentha, who had suffered a debilitating stroke. Years later, in a letter, Butler said the setting gave him ample "opportunities for meditation," and admitted that his mistakes were "manifold." Mellowed by quiet reflection, Butler fully accepted the doctrine of righteousness by faith and returned to

church administration, mentoring young members.

Calling the story “redemptive,” Burt urged delegates to apply its lessons to their own leadership.

“Even when God works and changes our own lives, our limitations still remain,” Burt said. “Hopefully, though, when we’re dependent upon God we can be more humble in our opinions, more charitable to others, less critical, and try to understand and care for others. When we are aware of

“May this be a reminder of the importance of transferring truth through the spoken word, and the written word,” Wilson said, referring to the future publishing house.

During an afternoon presentation, Adventist world church vice president **Delbert Baker** explored how the early church’s outreach method put it at the leading edge of advocacy for equality.

Early Adventists, Baker said, grappled with slavery, equality, and other “defining issues” of the mid-

Indeed, Baker said, early Adventists were a diverse group, well representing gender, age, and ethnicity. A former slave named **Charles Kinney** became the church’s first minister of African descent. Missionary **Anna Knight** was the first woman of African descent to do outreach in India.

Progress, however, “was not accidental” or, at times, even “easy,” Baker reminded delegates. It often required the “prodding of members” and the “confrontation of Ellen White.”

Early Adventists also struggled over whether to formally organize as a church, a subject **Barry Oliver**, president of the church’s South Pacific Division, explored. Early pioneers such as James White were fervent in their call to “come out of Babylon,” which they first interpreted as a challenge to leave organized religion and return to gospel simplicity.

But financial collapse and an urgent need to fund outreach led the Adventist Church to

embrace formal organization.

“The development of mission was a clear impetus for organization,” Oliver said, adding that early leaders were equally clear in cautioning that “when structure inhibited mission, it should be changed.”

Formal organization led to burgeoning church growth worldwide. When the church was officially established in 1863, there were 3,500 Adventists. By the turn of the century, there were 75,000 church members worldwide in America, Europe, the South Pacific, and other so-called mission fields.



the mercy of God, it makes us more merciful and able to be more effective leaders.”

During a midday break, delegates witnessed the groundbreaking of two new buildings on the campus of the Adventist Historic Village—replicas of the church’s first publishing house and first health reform institute in Battle Creek.

Adventist world church president **Ted N. C. Wilson**, flanked by presidents of the church’s 13 world divisions, raised bright blue shovels into the air for a photo op, a stark contrast to the gray drizzle that clouded the village.

nineteenth century. The church was officially established two years before the end of the American Civil War, which pitted the northern and southern states against each other in a bloody battle over slavery, states’ rights, and the preservation of the Union.

Ellen White counseled early Adventists to let “timeless biblical principles” guide their approach to race relations. Using Luke 4 as what Baker called an “outreach blueprint,” Adventists were “unequivocal” in their belief that the Bible prompted ministry to all people and compelled Christians to “set the oppressed free.”



► “One in Compassion”—Global Youth Day

St. Albans, UK, March 21, 2013—On Saturday, March 16, the first-ever Global Youth Day (GYD) was held, with the theme “One in Compassion.” Adventist young people were asked to “be the sermon” and to be involved in acts of kindness in their localities. The idea was to think globally but act locally.

The young people responded well throughout the world, and while data is still coming in, it looks like this event (on Twitter and Facebook) has been one of the largest global social networking events the church has ever conducted, with more than 26,759 people talking about it and 3,457,327 people having seen the media files published on the Facebook page

alone (<https://www.facebook.com/AdventistGlobalYouthDay>).

Live television links were broadcast through Hope Channel studios in different parts of the globe. GYD was featured live on Hope Channel International from Australia; Darmstadt, Germany; and Washington, D.C. Hope Channel Europe from Germany hosted a fast-moving and interactive afternoon program, featuring live Skype reports as well as Facebook posts with pictures and videos

Within the Trans-European Division, a number of excellent projects took place. In Norway, young people took to the streets where they were visited by hundreds of visitors as they made free waffles, hot drinks, gave away hugs,

balloons, and sang. In Serbia, a blood-donation drive was organized, while in Finland, Albania, Netherlands, Sweden, and other parts of the division, older people were visited in nursing homes or simply in their own homes if they were sick or unable to get out. In the UK, though raining all day, young people were not deterred from singing in the streets, visiting the elderly in nursing homes and hospitals, and giving blood. One youth department became a place of refuge for abused women.

In Denmark, Adventist youth took over the streets in Copenhagen with fruit baskets, tracts, and other literature while the young people in Aarhus braved the cold as they served waffles and talked to local people. [tedNEWS] ▼

Fred Hardinge, DrPH, RD, is associate director, Health Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



The power of love

Pastors, teachers, physicians, dentists, health educators, dietitians—all in helping professions—desire to see the lives of people changed for the better. Yet, for all the energy, emotion, and effort we often put into our work, the results seem woefully small and disappointing. For several decades now, I have often asked the questions, Why do so few change? How could I improve the odds for better outcomes?

Many years ago, I was involved in various smoking-cessation programs in the Washington, D.C., area. The United States Office on Smoking and Health

classes. After sharing four or five of these in my next class, several participants approached me to say that they had decided to quit after seeing these letters. They had identified these pleas with their children or grandchildren, and this motivated them to really work hard to quit. I was surprised at the power these simple messages had. I was beginning to recognize the power of love.

A few years later, I was teaching in graduate school. Like most professors, I had some bright students who were struggling with their grades. Every once in a while one of those would suddenly blossom! What caused the change? In many instances, they had fallen in love with the person of their dreams. Now they wanted to do their very best to demonstrate their ability to buckle down and prove to their beloved they were worthy of responsibility. Again, the power of love made all the difference.

A physician friend of mine recently shared an experience from his years of medical practice. The day was cold and wintery, and he was entering a store in town when a voice called out, “Doctor, doctor, look at me!” Standing in front of him was a woman that he initially did not recognize. She then threw open her winter coat, saying, “Doctor, look at how much weight I have lost!”

After studying her now thin face, he recognized her as one of his decades-long patients. He had delivered all of her children over the years. He was shocked at how much weight she had lost. He remembered the many, many times he had tried hard to encourage her to lose a few pounds; but on the next visit, she had gained a few more.


Gradually, over the years, she had become obese.

Now she was proudly grinning in front of him at her ideal weight! He asked, “But what made the difference?” “Oh,” she responded, “it was easy. About a year ago, my first grandchild was born. When I looked at that miracle of life, my heart filled with a love I had never felt before, and I said to myself, *He needs his grandma around for a long time*. So, I remembered the principles you tried to teach me, applied them with hard work, and look at where I am now. I am so happy!”

The power of love is very real. The power of love can move people to accomplish the most difficult things in life. This is why sharing the love of Jesus is so vital.

Luke tells a marvelous story in his Gospel, chapter 8, verses 43–48, of the lady who had a serious health problem for 12 years, and no one had been able to help her. She timidly came up behind Jesus, touched just the hem of His garment, and was healed.

This lady was timid, but she knew Jesus could heal her through the most insignificant contact—and He did. Jesus loves to heal people. It does not matter how long a person has been obese, a smoker, or any other problem. He happily solves lifelong problems.

Information and facts do not change people, but love transforms and powers change. Our words and deeds must reflect the love Jesus has for all. “In working for the victims of evil habits, instead of pointing them to the despair and ruin toward which they are hastening, turn their eyes away to Jesus.”* 

* Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 62.

The power of love
can move people to
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difficult things in life.

had concluded a campaign in elementary schools to get children to write letters to the president of the United States, asking him to control tobacco and smoking. Many of these letters were very poignant and touching, such as “Dear Mr. President, please stop all smoking because I want my daddy to live. I love him very much. Please, please do everything you can to save his life.”

One day I was offered copies of some of the letters that had been received. After reading many of them, I decided that maybe I should make some overhead transparencies of the best ones and share them in my cessation

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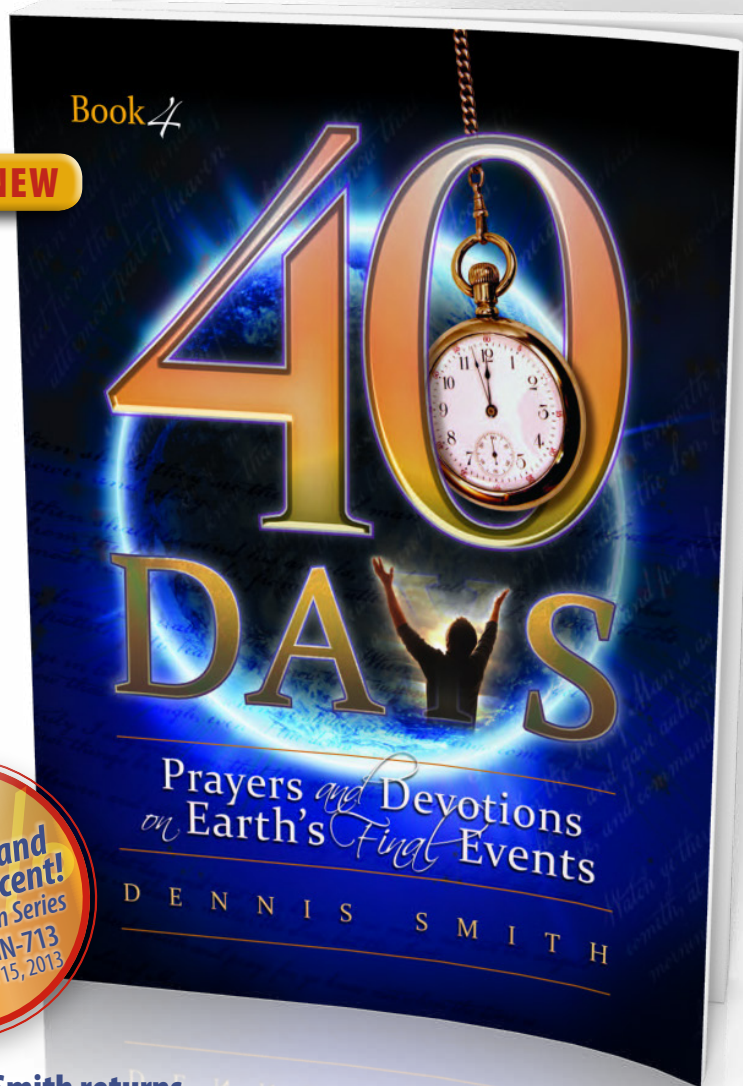


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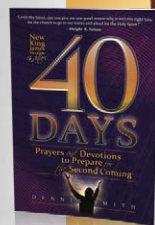
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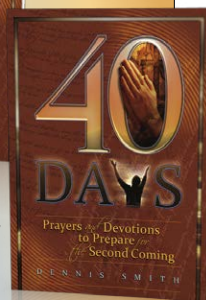
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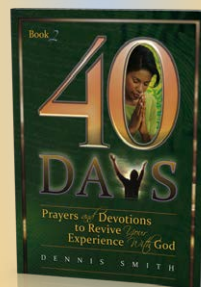
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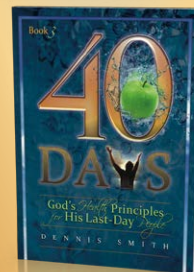
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