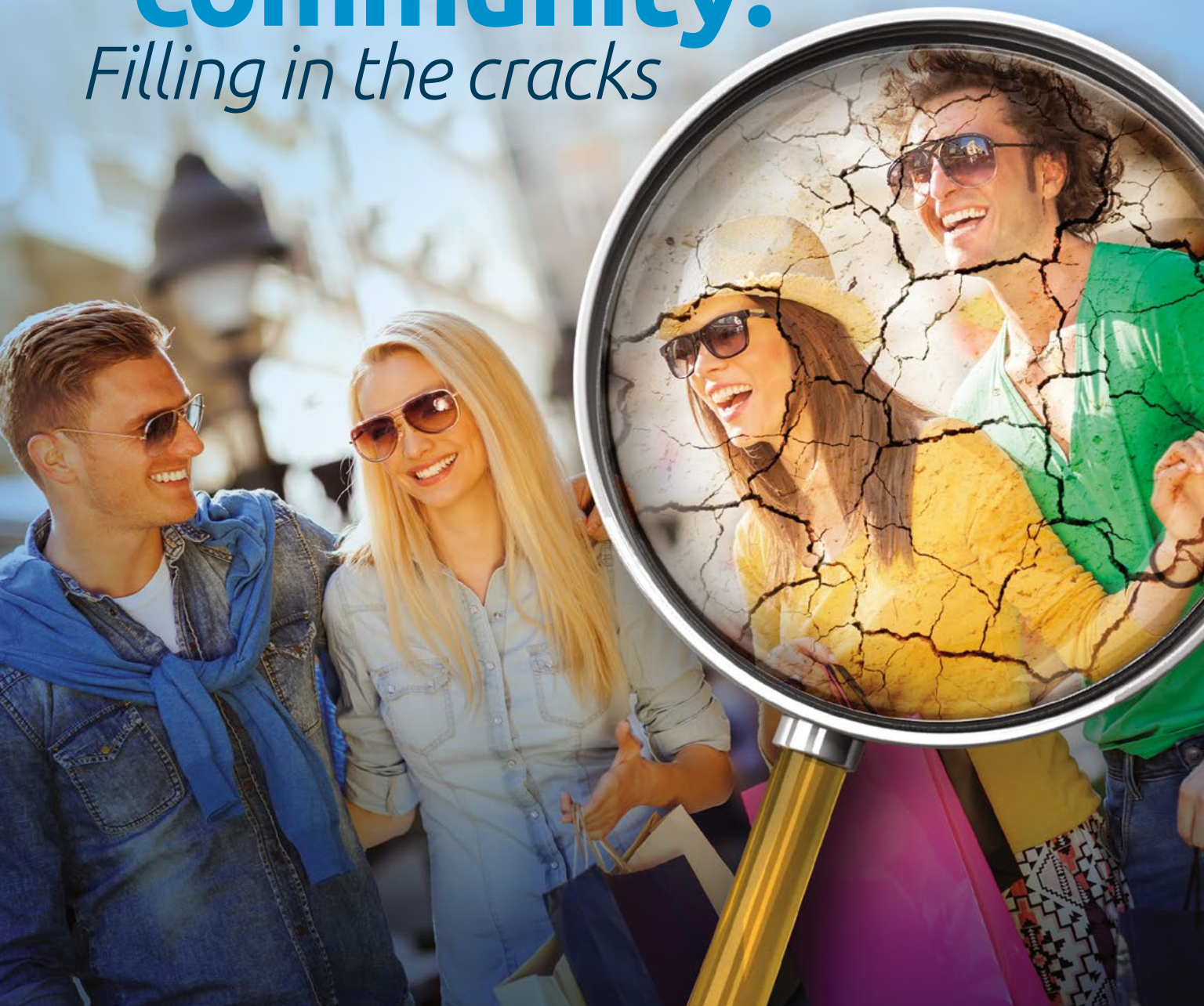


# Ministry<sup>®</sup>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

SEPTEMBER 2014

**Serving your  
community:**  
*Filling in the cracks*



# Devotional Books



## Something Better **ADULT**

**Calvin Rock**

Calvin Rock lifts our view from the stresses and trials of life to the never-failing promises of God. His devotional readings make each new day an open door to something better. Hardcover. **US\$17.99**

## Maranatha **EVENING**

**Ellen White**

This favorite devotional brings together Ellen White's writings about the closing events of earth's history and the triumphant return of our Lord. You will rejoice that Jesus is coming soon. Hardcover. **US\$17.99**

**Gift-boxed set. US\$31.99 set**

## PARENTING



### Help! I'm a Parent

**Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra, editors**

This all-new devotional helps moms and dads face the challenges of modern parenting with wisdom, hope and courage. Hardcover. **US\$17.99**

**NEW**

## WOMEN

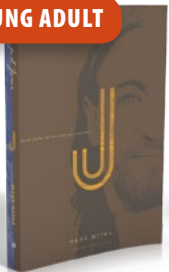


### Altogether Lovely

**Ardis Stenbakken and Carolyn Sutton, editors**

In this intimate devotional many daughters of God share their praises, their prayers, their victories, and even their heartaches. Hardcover. **US\$17.99**

## YOUNG ADULT

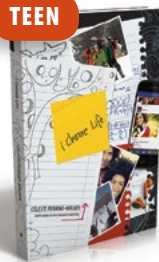


### Just Jesus

**Mark Witas**

Pastor Mark Witas shows us that the better we get to know Jesus, the better we understand God, and the better we know our own purpose on earth. **US\$15.99**

## TEEN



### I Choose Life

**Céleste Perrino-Walker**

Help teens discover the awesome power of choice from the songs they download to the friends they hang out with at school. **US\$16.99**

## JUNIOR/EARLITEEN

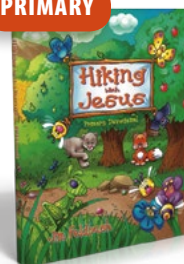


### He's Got Your Back

**Nancy Canwell**

When events or friends turn against you, Jesus has your back. Juniors can begin each morning growing closer to the One who will never change or let them down. Hardcover. **US\$17.99**

## PRIMARY



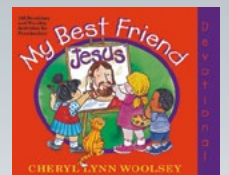
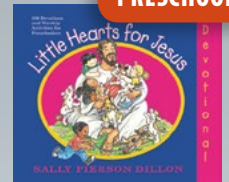
### Hiking With Jesus

**Jim Feldbush**

Primary-age children can take a "nature hike" through the Bible and discover all the wild and wonderful things that God made for their amazement. Hardcover. **US\$15.99**

## Two to choose from!

### PRESCHOOL



### My Best Friend Jesus

**Cheryl Lynn Woolsey**

Hardcover. **US\$15.99**

### Little Hearts for Jesus

**Sally Pierson Dillon**

Hardcover. **US\$15.99**

Scan this to learn more.



Prices and availability subject to change. Canadian prices higher.

AdventistBookCenter.com | 800.765.6955



**Review & Herald®**  
Spread the Word



## 06 Serving your community: Filling in the cracks

**Jan Paulsen**

Find out different ways to better serve and understand your community.

## 11 Breaking through: Christ's methods in the twenty-first century

**Mark A. Finley**

How can we follow Jesus' example and make a difference while living in this postmodern society?

## 14 A letter to a young minister

**Jean Weber**

Read a mother's poignant advice to her son as he begins his journey into ministry.

## 16 Mentoring interns and young pastors

**Roland E. Fischer**

What are four pillars of the mentoring process and how can they be used to better train young pastors and interns for the ministry?

## 20 All things work together? A parishioner's questions, reflections, and thoughts after a personal tragedy

**Cindee Bailey**

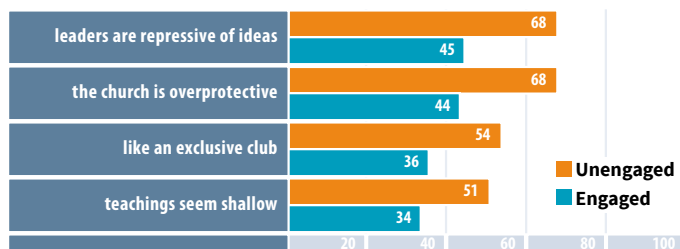
The author expresses her thoughts as she uses a personal tragedy to explore the will of God.

## 24 Lessons I learned during a marathon

**Brandon Westgate**

The author makes a spiritual connection with a marathon and how it applies to our journey with Christ.

Please note this revised Figure 3 from "Engaging Adventist Millennials: A Church That Embraces Relationships" by Clint Jenkin and A. Allan Martin in the May 2014 issue of *Ministry*.



**FIGURE 3.** Percentages of respondents who "agree strongly" that each statement describes their childhood church

**BIBLE CREDITS** Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. Scriptures quoted from NKJV are from the New King James Version, copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

## 04 Letters

## 05 Editorial

## 13 Revival & Reformation

## 27 Dateline

## 29 Resources

## 30 The Pastor and Health

### MINISTRY®

International Journal for Pastors  
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring,  
MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.  
[www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org)  
[ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org)

### EDITOR

Derek J. Morris

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Willie E. Hucks II

### CONSULTANTS TO EDITOR

John Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Myrna Tetz

### EDITORIAL SPECIALIST

Sheryl Beck

### FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

John Feezer IV

### STUDENT WORKER

Lisa Poirier

### INTERNATIONAL EDITORS

**Chinese**-Robert Wong

**French**-Bernard Sauvagnat

**Indonesian**-Edwin T. Pandjaitan

**Japanese**-Masaki Shoji

**Korean**-Soon Ki Kang

**Portuguese** (South America)-Zinaldo Santos

**Russian**-Michael Kaminsky

**Spanish** (South America)-Marcos Blanco

**Spanish** (Inter-America)-Pablo Perla

### INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS

Mario Brito, Michael D. Collins, Daniel

Devadhas, Carlos Hein, Michael Kaminsky,

Janos Kovacs-Biro, Armando Miranda,

Rudatinya M. Mwangachuchu, Daniel

Opoku-Boateng, Jongimpi Papu, David

Ripley, Hector Sanchez, Branimir Schubert,

Houtman Sinaga, Artur Stele, Ivan L.

Williams, Ted N. C. Wilson

### ADVERTISING

Melynie Tooley

[advertising@ministrymagazine.org](mailto:advertising@ministrymagazine.org)

+1 301-787-2790

### SUBSCRIPTIONS/ RENEWALS/ADDRESS CHANGES

[subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org](mailto:subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org)

+1 301-680-6511

+1 301-680-6502 (fax)

### COVER

316 Creative

### LAYOUT

316 Creative

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

12 issues: United States US\$32.99; Canada

and overseas US\$47.00. To order: send

name, address, and payment to Ministry®

Subscriptions, 12501 Old Columbia Pike,

Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

[www.ministrymagazine.org/subscribe](http://www.ministrymagazine.org/subscribe)

### DIGITAL DELIVERY

Print subscribers can sign up for digital deliv-

ery at [www.ministrymagazine.org/digital](http://www.ministrymagazine.org/digital)

### TO WRITERS

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts.

Before submitting, review the writers'

guidelines at [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org).

Please send manuscripts via email to

[ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org).



Co-hosts Anthony Kent  
and Derek Morris  
[www.MinistryinMotion.tv](http://www.MinistryinMotion.tv)

**MINISTRY®** has been published  
monthly since 1928 by the Ministerial  
Association, General Conference of  
Seventh-day Adventists. *Ministry* is a  
peer-reviewed journal.

**SECRETARY** Jerry N. Page

### ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES

Jonas Arrais, Robert Costa,

Willie E. Hucks II, Anthony Kent,

Derek Morris, Janet Page

### MINISTERIAL RESOURCE CENTER COORDINATOR

Cathy Payne

888-771-0738, +1 301-680-6508

[www.ministerialassociation.com](http://www.ministerialassociation.com)

**PRINTER** Pacific Press® Pub. Assn.,  
1350 N. Kings Rd., Nampa, ID 83687

Standard mail postage paid at Nampa, Idaho.  
(ISSN 0026-5314)

Member of Associated Church Press.

Adventist®, Seventh-day Adventist®, and  
Ministry® are the registered trademarks  
of the General Conference Corporation of  
Seventh-day Adventists®.

Vol. 86 Number 9 © 2014

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



*“What practical insights he shared regarding preaching and homiletics. I am grateful for his wisdom and insights.”*

### Haddon Robinson

**T**hank you for the July 2014 lead article, “Life-Changing Preaching: An Interview With Haddon W. Robinson.” Indeed, I find that it was worth the entire issue.

After reading it, I was taken back to Union College in the mid-1960s

and recalled another gifted young teacher named Floyd Bresee, who taught those who paid attention how to preach so people would listen and be changed. He said, “If you can’t give your sermon in one sentence, don’t preach it.” His famous illustration of a sermon theme sentence was, “Don’t

pray for the latter rain unless you are ready to stand out in the storm.” For 30 years, I did my best to emulate that teaching.

—Michael Deming, West Gardiner, Maine, United States

**I** extend my hearty thanks for the interview conducted with Haddon Robinson. His book on biblical preaching has been a trusted and valued friend on my own journey of bearing witness to the good news. But above all I’ve read and heard from this devoted messenger, I thank God and Dr. Robinson most for 14 paragraphs at the end of the second edition titled “A Final Word.” I carry a copy in my pulpit Bible. It serves as a Spirit-empowered reminder of what preaching really is.

—Louis Venden, email

**T**ypically I speed-read the articles in *Ministry*. But the interview with Haddon W. Robinson found me slowing down and reading his thoughts word for word. What practical insights he shared regarding preaching and homiletics. I am grateful for his wisdom and insights. I had a thought as I was reading. Here it is: *All preaching is teaching, but not all teaching is preaching.* I wonder if Brother Haddon would agree with me.

—Steven Clark Goad, email

**T**hank you for publishing the interview with Haddon Robinson. His book *Biblical Preaching* affected my own development as a preacher, and I was again impressed with his ability to give simplified answers to difficult and complex concepts.

—Bill Krick, email

ministrymagazine.org/digital



**Ministry. Delivered to your inbox.**

*If you're a subscriber, you can receive a free digital copy of the magazine at the URL above.*



# Mentor: An experienced and trusted advisor

As I reflect back on my own pastoral ministry, I can identify several individuals who were crucially important mentors for me. H. M. S. Richards Sr., founder and speaker of the *Voice of Prophecy* radio ministry, had already played a significant role in my family's spiritual journey more than 20 years earlier. My parents became Seventh-day Adventist Christians through his ministry. So when I completed my undergraduate studies, I was delighted to receive a recording by H. M. S. Richards Sr. titled "If I Were a Young Minister Again." I listened to that recording numerous times. The message contained much wise counsel from a great spiritual teacher. I determined by the power of the Holy Spirit to live what I had learned.

Another mentor during my internship year of pastoral ministry was my senior pastor, Robert Clarke. Bob was completing his doctoral studies at Lancaster Theological Seminary, and he was particularly interested in shepherding pastoral interns. The timing was perfect—I was an integral part of his research. It was hard work, but I considered myself blessed. Bob was used by God to shape my life and ministry. I came to love him as my spiritual father, and I cherished him as a colleague in ministry.

Long before I became a pastor, my second-grade teacher, Christine Emmerson, guided me. She gave me the opportunity to realize some of my untapped potential as a public speaker. I was attending a small Christian primary school in Binfield, England. It was time for our class play, and Ms. Emmerson

asked me to serve as the narrator. To be honest with you, I don't even remember the theme of that play, but the impact of that experience has stayed with me through the years. More than 40 years later, Mrs. Christine Emmerson Wood showed me a picture of a seven-year-old schoolboy standing on a chair. "I knew that you would become a preacher," she told me. She did so much more than give me opportunities to realize my public speaking potential—she loved me with an unconditional love. She gave me a visible manifestation of the unfathomable love of God. Who could ask for more? I will always be grateful for her godly example.

Having had such wonderful mentors has inspired me to look for young men and women who need guidance. I met one such individual several years ago in Orlando, Florida. I immediately recognized him as a young leader with great potential. Through the years I have been blessed to encourage and support him on his ministry journey. In giving, I have found joy. Surely, the words of Jesus are true: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35, NKJV). Today he is a highly effective Bible teacher with a global ministry. In fact, the tables have turned, and he has taught me things.


Whom has God used as significant mentors in your life? Perhaps it was a parent, a teacher, a pastor, a Christian author. Take a few moments to connect with those special people. Send an email or a text. Make a phone call. Say "Thank you." Your words of affirmation will undoubtedly mean a great deal.

After you have written your Thank-you notes, visit our Web site at [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org)

*She gave me a visible manifestation of the unfathomable love of God. Who could ask for more?*

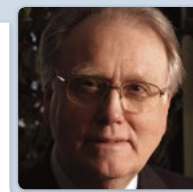
[www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org) and share your story, both as a mentee and a mentor. Perhaps we can post some words of affirmation as an encouragement to others.

I also want to challenge you to prayerfully consider your ministry as a mentor. It's work. Advising others requires sacrifice. But there is joy in giving. There is satisfaction in seeing the wisdom gained from your years of ministry blessing the lives of others. Even if you're just getting started in ministry, you can find a colleague and enter into a peer mentoring relationship. Share lessons learned on your ministry journey and encourage one another.

The author of our lead article has mentored many pastors and church leaders. Jan Paulsen's Spirit-filled ministry has shaped many lives, including mine. So I'm going to follow my own advice right now—I'm going to write a brief note of thanks. 

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).

Jan Paulsen, ThD, is the retired president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>1</sup>



# Serving your community: *Filling in the cracks*

A person casually scanning Norwegian newspaper headlines recently could be forgiven for thinking that this secular European country is in the midst of a Christian awakening. For a start, the surprise best-selling book of 2012—selling more than 160,000 copies and outselling every secular title—was a newly released Norwegian translation of the Bible. The Norwegian Bible Society had mounted an impressive advertising campaign for its updated, easy-to-read version of Scripture, but even this does not wholly explain its unprecedented market popularity in Norway.

And then in 2013 came a six-hour play called *Bibelen*, Norwegian for “the Bible,” staged in one of Oslo’s well-known theaters. The play’s six-month run drew more than 16,000 people and generated a stir in the media as critics and commentators alike speculated on what could be fueling interest in such a topic in a society where only 3 percent of the population regularly attends church.

Is Norway poised on the edge of Christian revival? It is unlikely, for there is more going on here than meets the eye. The relationship between Norwegians and Christianity is complex, shaped by historical and contemporary forces that are difficult for non-Scandinavians to fully appreciate. Some of this complexity was captured in an offhand comment by Erik Ulfsby,

artistic director at Det Norske Teatret, which staged the *Bibelen* play. Far from expressing surprise at the popularity of his play, Ulfsby told a reporter that even if Norwegians do not go to church, they still see the Bible as “an important part of their literary heritage.”<sup>2</sup>

## Neutralized Christianity

And here, in these few words, lies a clue to one of the most pressing mission challenges facing all of us who minister in countries of the secular West: How can we effectively witness to the power of the living God in a society that has largely consigned Christianity to the realm of history, literature, or to the very naïve? How can we speak compellingly of the Christ of Scripture when the language of Christian faith has such a quaint, anachronistic sound to the secular ear? How do we reach men and women whose interest in Christianity, if they have any at all, more likely stems from abstract curiosity rather than spiritual seeking? In short, how can we make the gospel alive and real for those who see Christianity as unreal and irrelevant?

My wife, Kari, has an uncle in east Norway whom we sometimes visit, and he likes to talk to me about faith. Our conversations are amicable and wide ranging. He is unapologetic about his atheism, yet is not hostile to my views. Rather, his attitude is one of indulgent amusement, which is touched

perhaps with pity that I should live my life beholden to a belief system that, to his mind, is little removed from the realm of fairy tales.

This type of response confronts so many of us who pastor within postmodern and secular communities. It is not usually outright hostility that creates barriers to our witness, nor is it that interest in Christianity has been completely extinguished. It is simply that the notion of a faith that actively shapes life seems alien to the postmodern mind. The idea that there is an ultimate truth—a truth that makes demands on our thinking and behavior—seems absurd to someone steeped in a culture of relativism, which regards absolutes of morality or spirituality with deep suspicion.

Much of Seventh-day Adventist evangelism has specialized in persuasive and effective presentations of biblically based, propositional truth. But what are we to do when the people we want to reach are ambivalent about the very concept of truth? When they do not accept the Bible as authoritative in any sense? What should our mission outreach look like? How can we authentically communicate Christ’s salvation to the deeply skeptical, humanistic mind?

## Retelling the old, old story

For some of us to accept that in many secular contexts traditional



evangelism is simply a nonstarter may be difficult. We yearn for the “good old days” of evangelism where, through judicious advertising, we could draw a crowd of people to hear someone give a clear and compelling presentation of truth. But a nostalgia-driven approach to outreach may often be an exercise in futility and self-indulgence. I believe we can be true to our historic mission without necessarily embracing every method of yesterday for every context today.

Ellen White often urged early Adventist workers not to be “one-idea men” in their presentation of the gospel.<sup>3</sup> On one occasion she advised, “Whatever may have been your former practice, it is

not become frozen within a particular approach but should be adapted to best allow it to be understood and believed.

She wrote, “We cannot be accepted or honored of God in rendering the same service, or doing the

in our day. We must walk in the light which shines upon us, otherwise that light will become darkness.”<sup>5</sup>

Our mission responsibility remains unchanged. The truth and hope we offer remain the same today as they ever have been. But what about our

*How can we effectively witness to the power of the living God in a society that has largely consigned Christianity to the realm of history, literature, or to the very naïve?*



not necessary to repeat it again and again in the same way. God would have new and untried methods followed. Break in upon the people—surprise them.”<sup>4</sup> In her writings and ministry she made it clear that our outreach should

same works, that our fathers did. In order to be accepted and blessed of God as they were, we must imitate their faithfulness and zeal,—improve our light as they improved theirs,—and do as they would have done had they lived

means of communication? Our method of sharing Christ’s salvation? We must “walk in the light which shines upon us” today, or else our inflexibility and blindness to reality will render us ineffective as God’s instruments of mission.

### Opening church doors

By 2010, when I retired as General Conference president, my wife and I had spent more than five decades living and serving away from Norway—in Africa, Britain, and America. But in recent years, we have had the chance to spend more time in the country of our birth and the opportunity to experience firsthand the challenges of

faithful mission in an environment that is profoundly secular and postmodern.

A few months ago, Kari attended a special health expo held at the Mjøndalen Seventh-day Adventist Church, approximately 50 kilometers from Oslo, which has become our home congregation when we are in Norway. This event brought some 250 people from the community through the doors of the church for a vegetarian

Yet over the past five years, the Mjøndalen congregation has pursued a model of outreach that, today, is regularly engaging with members of the community. Increasingly, the church is positioning itself as a community hub. Its distinctive building, erected in 2012, centrally located on a traffic circle, has become a community landmark. Attached to the church is the highly regarded Rosendal church school, which consistently attracts more applications than there are student places available. The church

It is unusual in Norway—indeed, in Western Europe—for a Seventh-day Adventist Church to be viewed as an open-door community institution rather than as a private religious enclave. And yet this reputation for openness is what the church members at Mjøndalen are deliberately and carefully fostering. The operative word here is *deliberate*; their plan is well thought out and long term, and it is making some impact. Throughout the health expo, people from the community—men and women who would otherwise never think of entering a church building—mingled with our members. A few



*It is people He came to save—not statements or doctrines or denominations. These exist to serve Christ's mission, not the other way around.*

meal and a series of seminars on weight management and nutrition. For us, this was an astounding sight. In Norway, where the Lutheran Church has long been intertwined, financially and administratively, with the state, church buildings are most often viewed as either historic relics or places to visit for christenings, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and little else. And non-Lutheran Christian churches—such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church—have the aura of foreignness and are often treated with an extra layer of caution.

has also launched a regular twice monthly Wednesday evening “Café,” which offers vegetarian meals for 75 Norwegian kroner (about US\$12.50). Church members have extended their Wednesday evening efforts to include a variety of seminars that are designed to meet particular needs in their local neighborhood. They offer different courses on personal finances, religious freedom, psychological health, tracing family trees, and photography as well as studies on biblical topics.

weeks later, the church again attracted a crowd to hear a well-known local trio in a concert marking the start of the Advent season. The concert was followed with a vegetarian “Christmas Table”—a Norwegian smorgasbord traditionally offered by companies and institutions as a seasonal gesture of generosity.

### Standing in the cracks

Since the Mjøndalen health expo, I have reflected on why their approach is



helping them swim against the tide of community irrelevance. Why have they not, like too many other congregations, succumbed to an outpost mentality, allowing a sense of isolation or futility to undermine their passion for outreach?

Mission outreach in Norway—as in any western country—can be a daunting proposition. A recent government census places members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway at about 0.1 percent of the population. However, our lack of numbers or institutional strength is not really our biggest barrier to faithful mission. Our larger challenge is encompassed in the pervasive feeling among many Norwegians that they have everything they could possibly need. In general, they are educated, financially comfortable, and well supplied with life's necessities. It is difficult to argue with the conclusions of a recent article published by the online magazine *Alternet* naming Norway as one of the eight best countries in which to be an atheist.<sup>6</sup> The writer pointed out the apparent strong correlation between the happiest countries in the world and the least religious countries in the world—with Norway topping many lists in both categories.

But every secular paradise has the occasional crack in its utopian facade. There are cracks that inevitably appear in one's personal life—family discord or sickness comes at some point to each of us. In the western world, there can also be a sense of isolation—a longing for authentic community in a world where technology and affluence are transforming the way people interact with one another.

Some cracks in the broader Norwegian society can be traced to a recent rise in immigration, some 260,000 men, women, and children just in the past six years alone, many from Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia. This is no small thing in a country that has historically been very static in its ethnic and cultural makeup. Immigration has brought various social and political stressors, but more than this, many

Norwegians have been personally confronted with prejudices and biases they did not know they possessed.

This is the society in which the Mjøndalen congregation ministers, and these dedicated believers have deliberately placed themselves within the cracks of society. They have looked around carefully and asked, Who exactly are these people who live in this community? What drives them? What are their needs—even those needs they are not yet aware of themselves? How can we serve them?

### Four questions

What does it take for a congregation in a western secular community to adopt a mission mind-set that connects with people who may instinctively reject more traditional methods of evangelism?

I know of no comprehensive blueprint for mission in a secular community. Obviously, the subject is broader than what can be covered in this short article, and every pastor will find himself or herself facing unique local challenges. But what follows are a few questions that could perhaps be used to start a conversation within your congregation about adapting your outreach approach to secular, postmodern realities—to “walk in the light that shines upon us” today.

1. *Do we have an extroverted or introverted mind-set?* In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others.”<sup>7</sup> This is the grand paradox of Christian community—its true reason for being is to serve those who *are not* members. Take a look at your regular programs and monthly budget, and then ask, Do we exist to serve our community, or are we primarily serving ourselves?

This distinction between an extroverted and introverted mind-set also shapes *how* we go about serving others. An introverted mentality prioritizes the comfort of church members and expects others to adapt to our culture and to learn our language of faith before they can extract something of value. An extroverted mind-set asks, How can we

adapt our approach and language so that our church will be a place where nonmembers can feel at home?

An introverted mind-set tends to view mission as a sortie into enemy territory. An extroverted mind-set says, as one of the organizers of the recent Mjøndalen health expo said, “We want to meet the people of our community on *their* terms and with *their* needs.”

Those with an extroverted mission mind-set will also be unafraid to seek out community partners who share similar goals. For instance, the Mjøndalen health expo was held in the local church facility but the congregation also partnered with the Norwegian government's Department of Health and with a well-known national weight management organization. Three of the four main speakers were non-Adventist experts.

Where does this extroverted mission mind-set come from? It comes from the Master Missionary Himself. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for His disciples: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. . . . As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:15–18, NIV). This was a prayer of engagement, not of retreat or separation but a call for Christ's followers in every age to reject an isolationist attitude and to emulate His radical engagement with the world.

2. *Are we offering something of value?* We may quickly answer, “Well, of course the truth of Scripture has immeasurable value!” And yet whatever we offer must have *perceived* value in the eye of the receiver before it will be appreciated. Too often, we give people what we know they need and wonder why their response is less than enthusiastic. Why do we do this? Maybe because it is easier to just offer someone a tract or an invitation to an evangelistic meeting. Or perhaps the real reason is that we have not done the homework necessary to truly know our community.

In all He did, Christ showed Himself to be intimately and compassionately

engaged with the day-to-day struggles that defined life in first-century Palestine. He shaped His language, His stories, His miracles in ways that spoke directly to the men and women He encountered. He understood their needs. The Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 42:1–9 reminds us of the sheer breadth of Jesus' holistic mission to humanity.

Does our outreach speak to the lonely, the stressed, the overweight, the drug-dependent? Is it tuned-in to political and social realities? Is it focused on meeting people where they are, rather than where we wish they were? Are we prepared to stand in the cracks of society and offer something that corresponds to felt needs?

I was interested to note that many programs offered by the Mjøndalen congregation, including the Christmas concert and the health expo, have a moderate attendance fee attached. The church has considered local interests and needs, and they are signaling their confidence that what they offer has value. It seems that many in the community agree.

*3. Is it powered for the long term?* As president of the Adventist world church, I learned quickly that without local church ownership of mission initiatives, such ventures are doomed to a short life. Mission plans that flow from the top down—whether from a General Conference committee or the mind of a church pastor—will not find long-term sustainability unless there is widespread buy-in among lay members of a congregation and the plan corresponds with their talents and enthusiasms.

This question of long-term sustainability is especially important within a secular context because mission to postmoderns is not generally a speedy process. It encompasses not just the length of a Revelation Seminar or a course of Bible studies but years of relationship-building. Our mission approach therefore must be carefully planned—deliberate and

consistent—and not made up of stand-alone events that come about in bursts of inspiration or enthusiasm.

One of the distinctive features of the Mjøndalen approach is that this concept has largely bubbled up from the passions of lay members and draws on the specific skill sets and resources that already exist within the congregation. There are a number of health professionals who are eager to use their professional skills for outreach. Since 2005, they have regularly offered health tests in local shopping centers, nutrition lectures, vegetarian buffets, and more. The church members believe that only consistent engagement with the community over a period of years will eventually break down prejudices and build genuine trust and relationships.

*4. Is it authentic?* A secular, post-modern man or woman can smell a sales pitch coming from miles away. Thus, when it comes to outreach in the secular world, it is absolutely essential that we first seek to build genuine relationships with people. Trust is difficult to create and easy to destroy, as one leader of the Mjøndalen church's mission program told me. She was expressing her concern that the model they have developed could be misused by some as a means to simply begin talking about spiritual values without first creating bonds of friendship and trust. "If this happened, it could eventually destroy our ability to use this method," she told me, "because in our part of the world, credibility and our good name as Adventists is everything."

What does authentic, people-focused mission look like? In some ways it reverses our traditional approach, where we convince people of the rightness of our message, conform their behavior to acceptable standards, and then, finally, embrace them into our community.


We do not cheapen our core values or beliefs when we freely enfold people into the warmth of our fellowship, regardless of where they are

in their spiritual journey. Rather, we are reflecting Christ's overwhelming concern and compassion for *people* over everything else. For it is *people* He came to save—not statements or doctrines or denominations. These exist to serve Christ's mission, not the other way around.

Yes, of course, all mission outreach must seek to lead men and women inexorably toward a meeting with their Savior, and when this happens, it will inevitably produce radical changes in their behavior. Yet, I believe effective mission in a secular world requires us to welcome people where they are and to foster a sense of belonging as a basic first step.

## Conclusion

Prosperity and secularism do indeed create a formidable barrier, deflecting so many of our "tried and true" methods of sharing the gospel. And it is not easy for us, as a church or as individuals, to change our approach—to reorient our thinking and use of resources to meet the mission realities of today.

Yet it is imperative that we try to read the unique pulse of our community, to really understand the specific fears, hopes, and needs that drive the men and women around us. I pray that we may look at the crowds, as Jesus did, with compassion (Matt. 9:36) and then ask, "How can we serve you?" 

- 
1. Kari Paulsen, wife of Jan Paulsen, is a notable contributor to this article.
  2. Quoted in many news sources, including "Bible in Norway Is Bestseller: 'The Scriptures' Surprisingly Strong in Largely Secular Country," *Huffington Post*, [www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/06/bibles-strong-comeback-su\\_n\\_3394982.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/06/bibles-strong-comeback-su_n_3394982.html).
  3. Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), 383.
  4. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 125.
  5. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1855), 262.
  6. Amanda Marcotte, "8 Countries Where Atheism Is Accepted, Even Celebrated, Instead of Demonized" *AlterNet*, [www.alternet.org/8-countries-where-atheism-accepted-even-celebrated-instead-demonized?page=0%2C0](http://www.alternet.org/8-countries-where-atheism-accepted-even-celebrated-instead-demonized?page=0%2C0).
  7. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, quoted in Joel Lawrence, *Bonhoeffer: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T & T Clark International, 2010), 36.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).

**Mark A. Finley, DDiv**, serves as assistant to the president, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



# Breaking through: *Christ's methods in the twenty-first century*

**R**eaching the lost with the gospel is increasingly more challenging in a postmodern, secularized society. The western world particularly dismisses the concept of divinely revealed truth and a personal God. Although in some parts of the world, tens of thousands of people readily respond to the preaching of God's Word, the numbers of responders are dwindling in developed, more affluent countries.

According to the Hartford Institute of Religion Research, more than 40 percent of Americans say that they go to church weekly; that number, however, is really less than 20 percent.<sup>1</sup> In other words, more than 80 percent of Americans are doing something else rather than attending church. "The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the United States public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling.

"In the last five years alone, the unaffiliated have increased from just over 15% to just fewer than 20% of all U.S. adults. Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described atheists and agnostics (nearly 6% of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33

million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14%)."<sup>2</sup>

Here are some additional sobering facts that should stir us to urgent action now. For the first time in history, more than half of the global population lives in urban areas, and this percentage is increasing rapidly. By 2050, population experts anticipate that 70 percent of the world will live in cities. There are more than 500 cities with a population of one million or more.<sup>3</sup> This is significant because urban areas tend to be more secularized than are the rural ones. The cities are nerve centers of education, culture, fashion, entertainment, jobs, wealth creation, and politics. It is relatively easy in the cities' subculture of materialism to become entangled in the web of postmodern indifference toward religion. These stark realities place a major challenge before the church.

These staggering statistics lead pastors and their congregations to ask some probing questions: How can Christians make an impact on a postmodern culture? Is the gospel relevant in a secularized society? Why has the mission of the church to share the gospel with every "nation, tongue, and people" stagnated in developing countries among people indigenous to that culture?

## Jesus: Our ministry Model

The call of Jesus is clear: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NKJV).

The Bible describes a God who is passionate about saving all peoples (2 Pet. 3:9). He desires all humanity to experience the gift of His grace and come to a knowledge of His truth (1 Tim. 2:3, 4). On multiple occasions Jesus demonstrated compassion for lost people (Matt. 9:35, 36). He lovingly ministered to those He came in contact with daily. He was concerned about the whole person. The Savior met the spiritual, social, physical, and mental needs of hurting people (Matt. 4:23). He modeled a ministry of loving service.

The church draws its inspiration for mission from the teaching and counsel of Jesus. The church must also look to Him for its model of ministry—a comprehensive ministry that addressed the wide-ranging needs of the people around Him. "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35, NKJV).



Jesus calls every pastor and each church member to embrace His mission of loving service. As His people meet in His name the physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of their communities, His character is powerfully revealed. Our love for Jesus compels us to follow in His footsteps of compassionate ministry. Ellen G. White succinctly summarizes the Savior's selfless service in these words. "There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit."<sup>4</sup>

Ellen White adds this classic statement: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"<sup>5</sup>

## Analyzing the model of Jesus

Jesus mingled with people. He did not stand aloof, waiting for people to come to Him. He was there mingling with them in their marketplaces, eating with them in their homes, discussing the issues of life beside the sea, rubbing shoulders with the crowds on the cobblestone streets of Jerusalem, and sharing the mysteries of life on the hillsides of Galilee. Jesus talked about common things like fishing, farming, weddings, money, and families. Every day and in every way, Jesus built relationships with people. They sensed that He cared for them individually. In Christ, the downtrodden, oppressed, and needy found one who sympathized with them and fully understood their plight.

The model of Jesus' ministry was to unselfishly and graciously minister to needs everywhere. As He developed people's confidence by sensitively caring for their needs and the walls of their prejudice crumbled, He then appealed to them to accept Him as the Messiah. Jesus' claims to divinity were often based on His unselfish ministry to them.

Why did the masses follow Jesus? What attracted such a wide variety of people from so many different walks of life to Him? Why did He appeal to such widely different characters as Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Mary Magdalene, a palsy-stricken man by the pool of Bethesda, Zacchaeus, the thief on the cross, and the Roman centurion? They saw in Jesus One who truly cared. His authentic, genuine concern opened the locked doors of their minds. They followed Him because He had so clearly and fully revealed the Father's love. They could not resist this divine, agape, self-sacrificing, unselfish love. When the church becomes a powerful force for good in its community, miraculous things still happen.

## Applying the model of Jesus

A postmodern culture longs for authentic relationships. While many will reject a religion of dogma and a superficial faith experience, they will respond to someone who genuinely cares for them and shares their faith in the context of an authentic experience with Jesus. Superficiality will never reach the postmodern mind. Postmoderns are much more concerned about the reality of faith than arguing about religious particulars. They would much rather see faith in action. The question they ask is not necessarily what truth is but *what difference does it make in my life?*

Jesus' model of ministry is tailor-made for a skeptical, questioning culture. Jesus did not attempt to answer all of His challengers' questions; He attempted, rather, to meet their needs. He did not attempt to out argue them; He attempted, rather, to

love them beyond what they could either imagine or deserve. His love broke their hearts and compelled them to follow Him. Love has an amazing magnetic, drawing power. Ellen White states it forcefully: "The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing."<sup>6</sup>

The church, as the body of Christ, lovingly meets needs everywhere in Jesus' name and is the embodiment of Christ's love in a broken, shattered world. When church members reveal Christ's love and the church ministers to specific community needs, the church will grow. Jesus spent a great deal of time ministering to people's physical, mental, and emotional needs. Think of the possibilities the church has today to impact our society. Following Christ's model, we, too, can reach out to meet the needs of our communities.

## Comprehensive health ministry

One of the greatest felt needs in our society today is in the area of health. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, upper respiratory disease, and diabetes are the leading killers in the twenty-first century in the developed world. There are nearly 600,000 deaths each year in the United States due to heart disease and another 560,000 from various types of cancer.<sup>7</sup> Medical authorities recognize that many of these deaths are related to lifestyle. As individuals choose to change harmful lifestyle practices, the risk of developing one of these lifestyle diseases is markedly reduced.


What if each church were a mini-lifestyle center helping people to become healthier by conducting cooking schools, sponsoring walking clubs or exercise classes, teaching people how to quit smoking, conducting classes in weight reduction, sharing principles of stress management, and outlining an entire holistic lifestyle with wellness classes? What if churches were known in their communities as places where families could get help

with their marriages, develop better parenting skills, and find assistance in the character development of their children? What if churches were known as safe places where Christ's love was revealed in practical, tangible ways that made a difference in the community?

What if every Christian physician and health care provider sensed Christ calling them to minister to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of their patients? There are over one billion visits to doctors' offices in the United States each year, and 55 percent of these are to primary care physicians. Patients most frequently visit their doctors for hypertension.<sup>8</sup> What an opportunity for godly, Christian health care providers to meet needs, develop confidence, and share eternal principles with their patients.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

Here is one simple church growth principle—the fewer people your church contacts, the fewer people you will win. This may seem self-evident, but it is a divine truth. When the church becomes insular, isolated, and separated from the community, the church will rapidly stagnate in its growth. But when the church has an intentional strategy to reach its community and its members are equipped to use their gifts in service to others, the church will grow rapidly.

Christ made a difference in His world; your church can make a difference in yours, even though it is a postmodern one. 

1 "Statistics Don't Tell the Whole Story When It Comes to Church Attendance," ChurchLeaders, [www.churchleaders.com/pastors](http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors)

/pastor-articles/170739-statistics-don-t-tell-the-whole-story-when-it-comes-to-church-attendance.html.

2 Pew Research, Religion and Public Life Project, October 9, 2012, [www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/](http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/).

3 Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, "Urban Urgency," *Christianity Today*, August 16, 2010.

4 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 143, 144.

5 Ibid., 143.

6 White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), 826.

7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Leading Causes of Death," [www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm).

8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Ambulatory Care Use and Physician Office Visits," [www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/physician-visits.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/physician-visits.htm).

9 One example of a group of health care professionals who are attempting to extend the healing ministry of Christ in their practices is the Adventist Medical Evangelism Network (AMEN), [www.amensda.org](http://www.amensda.org). AMEN is partnering with the Paradise Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church and putting on a free medical/dental clinic two days before the conference. The theme of this year's conference is "Joined Together," and it focuses on practical ways pastors and health care professionals can work together to model the ministry of Christ.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).

## Revival for children

Does revival and reformation happen only to adults in the church? Can God's Word revive children spiritually? There is no doubt that God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can change and transform even the lives of children.

Meet Clifferson Araujo dos Santos, an 11-year-old small group ministry leader from Manaus, Brazil. Revival and reformation all started when Clifferson attended a children's meeting and was inspired to start a small group ministry. He began by inviting his school friends and neighbors, giving them books and materials to read. Can you imagine a child with the passion to start a small group?

For three years, Clifferson has been running a weekly small group on Friday evenings for 23 to 28 children. The majority of the children are poor, and some have parents in prison. But

they learn about Jesus through the Christian songs they sing and the Bible stories told by Clifferson.

Each Friday evening, the children get to enjoy a delicious meal provided by Clifferson's parents. Then they welcome the Sabbath with singing. Clifferson shows a DVD on the life of Jesus, and then he studies the Bible with the children, who conscientiously underline special texts in their Bibles. Then they have a Bible activity.

What are the results? The parents of these children speak about changes in the lives of their children: they are more obedient and more respectful to the family, and their conduct at school has improved.

When the Holy Spirit comes into the lives of children, the Spirit revives and reforms them. Children spend more TAG time (time alone with God). Many engage in more

personal prayer, running small groups, and witnessing for Jesus. Reading and studying God's Word becomes a daily adventure. Others become fired up in service to the poor and less fortunate, following what James 1:27 admonishes: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble." \*

Yes, revival in children is real! Jesus said, "Let the children come to Me, and do not forbid them" (Matt. 19:14).

—REVIEWED BY LINDA KOH, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES, GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES.

\* All scriptures are from the New King James Version.

Revival  
and  
REFORMATION

# A letter *to* a young minister

My dear son:

Not long from now you will join the ranks of young ministers—viewed by some with trepidation, as a source of problems. (That’s nothing new; Paul recognized that Timothy’s youth might cause others to look down on him; see 1 Tim. 4:12.) Personally, I see your generation as the hope of the church.

Fortunately, your ministerial training had a hands-on tone. You were involved in all kinds of pastoral practicums, even as you learned Greek and Hebrew, theology and homiletics. I especially think of the evangelistic campaign you participated in during your training for ministry. Yes, you slept on the floor, walked the soles off your shoes, gave scores of Bible studies, helped care for the tent, and played your trumpet almost every night. And when some of those who studied with you were baptized, how thrilled you were! What a preparation for ministry.

In this letter, I do not need to remind you how to preach and give Bible studies. That you know. I will touch on only three topics: your spiritual life, your public ministry, and building a lively church.

## Your spiritual life

Of all things, I want you, as a young minister, to be a man of prayer and Bible study. Set apart a specific time each day, preferably first thing in the morning, to deepen and enrich your friendship with Jesus and soak up the truth from His Word. Around this sacred time, plan your day. Let nothing interfere. Without

strength obtained from a rich devotional and study life, you will not be able to successfully meet the complexities of ministry. Without being steeped in God’s Word, you could easily stray into what Paul called “endless discussion” (1 Tim. 1:6). A steady, disciplined, devotional and study life will enable you to fight the good fight, keep a good conscience, and avoid a “shipwreck of the faith” (vv. 18, 19).

At some point in your daily Bible study, you may discover what appears to be a new gem of truth. If this new idea simply enriches what you already know, give thanks to God for sharing from His vast treasure. Preach it, speak of it—without fear. However, if this new discovery conflicts with a generally accepted view, study it very, very carefully. Then, before you start preaching your “new light,” consult some of your fellow ministers. If learned and God-fearing older-generation teachers and pastors find your new light unconvincing, accept their verdict and go back to the Word. If a second time you do not succeed in convincing the leaders, you may well be wrong. For God to reveal to you alone a gem of truth and not impress others of its validity would be strange indeed. Or perhaps the time is not yet ripe. Bide your time. Remember that our strength as a church comes from marching together, under Christ, as He prayed we might (John 17:21–23).

In giving this advice, I am thinking not so much of how you can keep your job as of how you can grow spiritually. That growth will enable you to care for the flock God has entrusted to you.

## Your public ministry

Speaking about your ministry, remember you are becoming a builder, not of a structure but of a loving, living community of believers. You will grow this congregation as part of God’s family on earth.

I am sure you recall how brothers and sisters came so willingly to the ramshackle, leaky-roofed church building where we chose to attend services and help out. They came to the Sabbath morning services, went home for lunch, did their missionary work in the afternoon, and returned for the youth meetings, often bringing visitors. They stayed for a hot drink and whatever social followed. Besides that, many came on Sunday to help repair the old building, after which men and boys played soccer on the back of the lot. Even the children came for the Wednesday night prayer meeting—if nothing else, to hear another chapter of the continued story. Those people looked forward all week to church and everything it meant to them. Church was the center of their spiritual, social, and even intellectual lives.

How do you make the church into the center of people’s lives? First, what the church offers must meet people’s needs. Your sermons, thoughtfully and prayerfully prepared—and always related to their lives—will feed the flock. Rarely do churches have only one kind of people, and so you will have to make provision for different levels of spiritual understanding. Whatever you preach should be so simple that the unschooled



can benefit and yet so profound that the university graduate will go away savoring what you said. Through your preaching ministry, they will learn to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves.

The other side of people's spiritual need involves the necessity of sharing their knowledge and experience with others. Too often this need may be left out and spiritual needs never fully met. You will need to show your members how to share, in informal settings or in structured Bible studies. You cannot take for granted that they will be able to do it just because their heart overflows with love for God.

Preaching is not enough. You will also need to be a teacher. Show your members how to study the Bible and how to share their knowledge with others. I remember Brother John, a salesman in the street market. He learned to study and share, becoming a colporteur and later a church leader and preacher. I would hardly have dreamt that!

You can help your members develop socially. For this they will also need the spiritual strength of your visits in their homes, of your prayers with and for them—especially in times of emergency. This goes along with people's social needs for companionship.

In today's western world, it may not be considered necessary for people to meet their social needs in church. However, we are seeing that small group togetherness helps the church grow. If the church is small enough, one group is enough. Usually, there will have to be several groups, especially when there are different kinds of people in a church: adults, youth, children, men, women, and so on. These groups work efficiently in an independent way, but when they come together, this larger gathering becomes like a family reunion—and you know how much fun that is.

The youth of the church need to do things as a group. But do not think they need to be entertained. They can entertain themselves and be useful

while doing that. Help them channel their energies into useful projects. To work with young people, you need to become one of them. Help them play and execute interesting activities to which they can invite friends, classmates, and relatives.

## Building a lively church

Finally, I want to talk to you about building a strong and lively church. After all, that's what ministry is all about: caring for the community of faith. Here are five suggestions to help you.

*1. Learning together is vital.* Some church members know how to meet their need for information and knowledge; others do not. You can help turn the church into the center of their lives if you assist members to expand God-given mental faculties. A church is an excellent setting for all kinds of classes: Bible, witnessing, parenting, nature, health, etc. Classes offered by a church can also open a door to meet the needs of the community and make the church useful to more and more people.

*2. Make the church theirs.* As a pastor you are a leader, facilitator, enabler—never the boss. You must sow ideas, and after sufficient incubation, those ideas will come back, possibly in a new guise and now as their ideas. Graciously accept the change of ownership and let them push for their ideas.

*3. Let all members develop their individual talents.* Do not feel you have to preach or teach all the time. Give your people room to grow. At our little church, I decided to turn over the teaching of the children's Sabbath School lesson to Daisy so that she could learn how to teach. How I agonized the first month! But she learned to teach the children and became a leader. Of course, not everyone's talents are verbal. Grandma Maria took care of sick people and made clothes out of scraps of material. Encourage everyone to do something. The more variety, the better.

*4. Keep your church family looking for others with whom they can share the love and security they have found*

*in their church.* You know the story of one beggar telling another where to find bread. Teach your church family to share; encourage them to invite friends and relatives to church activities. Make your church mission-oriented. Your church's goal is to grow, expand; in so doing, everyone will be happier.

*5. Do not keep the children waiting to become involved in church activities.* Just think what you would have missed if—at the age of 11—you had not taken over the music at our church the two weeks the other musicians were gone. At that time I think you could play ten hymns on your trumpet.


The church I am describing may seem more like a beehive than a conventional church. In the beehive there is continual activity. In the church the same should happen. How I wish that some young pastor work with a visionary architect to design a building that could provide classrooms, a dining room, a gym—and on Sabbath it could become a place of worship. There's a challenge for you.

As Adventists, we have the Sabbath, a 24-hour period to nurture this family of God. We often speak of Sabbath as "family time" and do not remember that we are not necessarily talking about the nuclear family. Make the varied Sabbath activities—all tending towards proclamation, worship, fellowship, and service—the best and busiest day of the week.

If your church is a beehive of joyful sharing and service, you will not need to worry about your job. The conference president will be thrilled with you and will do his best to keep you in his field. No need to worry.

I have faith in you and your generation. You can—under God's guidance and in His power—infuse new life into the church. I can hardly wait to see it.

May God's strength and grace abound in you and in the church you will pastor. I will be praying for you daily.

With love,  
Mother 

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).



# Mentoring interns *and* young pastors

**A**t the turn of the century, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany recognized a pastoral crisis slowly but steadily affecting the life of the church. The crisis was composed of two elements: first, a relatively high rate of young pastors leaving the ministry; second, increasing complaints from pastoral interns that they were not adequately mentored. Overall, the crisis seemed to underscore a dilemma that many young pastors felt: they were not adequately trained for ministry. The situation may not be too dissimilar in other parts of the world, and hence the thoughts shared in this article may be of help to ministerial leaders elsewhere in the world field.

In response to the felt need for adequate pastoral internship and training in Germany, the conference established the Institute for Continuing Education (IfW)<sup>1</sup> associated with the German Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association. Together the church developed a concept to improve the mentoring process, which rests upon four pillars:

## Pillar 1: Training mentors

The personalities and the qualifications of mentors play a vital role in the process of introducing and integrating young pastors into the ministry. Are mentors experienced in the various fields of ministry? Are they sensitive to the needs of young pastors? Do they have leadership qualities? Are they able to develop not only a professional relationship but also a spiritual and personal one? Moreover, do mentors supervise the young pastors not only during their internship but also during the following three or four years until their ordination?

*Selection and training.* The first step in the mentorship process involves selection of qualified and experienced ministers in the local conferences. In most cases, this would be a senior or experienced pastor of a large church or church district. Such a pastor should have sufficient theological education, ministerial and evangelistic experience, and leadership qualities. This, however, is not always a matter of age; sometimes relatively young pastors who are well trained and have served in various

ministries are chosen for mentorship. As soon as a pastor has been selected to become a mentor, he or she has to undergo a special training program for mentors. This extends over 18 months and contains four training units of three or four days each. Peer supervision is also part of the program, with the training aimed to further the hard and soft skills of the mentors. They should be enabled to better serve in the ministry and better introduce the professional starters into their ministry. They need to become empowered spiritually, their personalities should be strengthened, and the competencies in the various fields of their ministry will be fostered. Insofar as the main task of the mentor is personal leadership, they have to understand the leadership process and learn to adequately control, evaluate, and build a close relationship with the mentee.

*Curriculum.* Groups of trainees comprise 5 to 12 persons.<sup>2</sup> Twice a year mentors come together in a retreat center for three to four days and are introduced to the following themes:

**Unit 1.** This introductory unit focuses on the following six objectives:

1. *Introduction to the goals and methods of the mentoring process.*

The basic questions are, Who is part of the process? (Persons and institutions such as mentor, mentee, local church, local conference,

## Mentoring Interns

Training mentors	Educating interns	Cooperating with local conferences	Selecting local churches
------------------	-------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------

- ministerial secretary, and the IfW are involved.) What are the elements of the training program? What is expected from the mentors?
2. *Expectations and fears of mentors and mentees.* The group focuses on items such as, What do I, as a mentor, expect from myself and from the mentee? What does the mentee expect from me? How can we cooperate?
  3. *Roles and role negotiations.* In a rather meditative setting, the mentors can reflect on questions such as, Who am I as a pastor? Who am I as a mentor? What is my new role as a mentor? How does it relate to my roles I already play in the ministry? How can I negotiate on my roles with the church and the mentee?
  4. *Goals and methods of internship.* The process of internship is largely developed according to the *Manual for Internship*, published by the General Conference Ministerial Association.<sup>3</sup>
  5. *Goals and methods of education.* Since mentoring is, in part, an educating process, mentors need to know about the philosophy of Adventist education and about principles and methods of adult education.
  6. *Leadership and leadership styles.* Leadership issues have become more and more important to the Adventist church worldwide. The mentoring process is leadership at its best, so the mentors become introduced to leading individuals, teams, and organizations on the basis of the situational leadership style.<sup>4</sup>

**Unit II.** The personalities of both the mentor and of the mentee are paramount to the mentoring process. Therefore this unit centers on personality aspects, including these various inventories:

1. *Personality and personality inventories.* What are the determining factors of personality, character, and behavior? Inventories like DISC<sup>5</sup> and Career Personality Inventory are used.

2. *Natural and spiritual gifts.* Do the mentors know their natural talents and spiritual gifts? How can they be rightly applied to the mentoring process?
3. *Ethical aspects of mentoring.* Issues of pastoral ethics especially related to the mentor-mentee relationship, such as trust, confidence, competition, finances, and relating to the opposite sex will be discussed.
4. *Motivation and goal setting.* How can the mentor promote the intrinsic motivation of the mentee? What are their individual and common goals? How can the local congregation be involved in the goal-setting process?
5. *Evaluation.* One of the main tasks in mentorship is evaluating the commitment and skills of the mentees. Evaluation, however, often seems to be a challenging task for mentors. How can it be done in an appropriate and helpful way?

**Unit III.** Successful ministry depends on the ability of managing self and one's duties. The mentor has to practice the following management skills and teach them to the mentee:

1. *Self- and time-management.* What are the values, visions, and goals of life and the ministry? Aspects of time management in the long run and short run are applied.
2. *Work organization.* How should the mentees organize their office and resources, and, even more fundamental, store and organize knowledge?
3. *Conflict management.* Conflicts on various levels are part of everyday life in our congregations and in the ministry. The pastor has to cope with them and manage the process of conflict management.
4. *Nonviolent communication.* A special tool not only for conflict reduction and prevention but also for a Christian lifestyle is "nonviolent communication," as presented by Marshall B. Rosenberg.<sup>6</sup>

**Unit IV.** This final unit sums up the role of the pastor, embedded in a system

theory. This unit also gives ample opportunity to reflect and evaluate the training program and the mentorship so far. A special emphasis is placed on burnout prevention.

1. *Resilience and burnout prevention.* The threat of burnout lingers above pastors from the beginning of their ministries. How can it be prevented and coped with? What strengthens the resilience of the pastor?<sup>7</sup> These topics are relevant not only for the mentors but also for the mentees.
2. *A system theory: Role of the pastor in church and society.* The church is a social system with many sub-systems. What are the roles and functions of a pastor within these systems? What is the relationship of the church to other systems and society?
3. *Reflection and evaluation of the training program.* Mentors have to give a short presentation about what they have learned and what was most important and helpful for them in the mentoring process.

*Supervision.* During the time of the training program, four sessions of peer supervision are mandatory; for the rest of the active mentors they are optional. Twice a year mentors are called together in groups of six to ten people. This peer supervision, chaired by the ministerial secretary and the director of the IfW, is aimed to help the mentors reflect on the mentoring process and resolve problems.

## Pillar 2: Educating interns

Professional starters in the ministry spend one year as interns and the succeeding three to four years as co-pastors in a church district.

*Internship.* Right at the beginning of their internship, the professional starters are called together for an introduction to the internship. The ministerial secretary and the director of the IfW give information about goals and structure of the internship and the mentoring process.



# DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

*Changing the People Who  
Change the World*

New Cohorts in  
2015:



URBAN MINISTRY



MISSIONAL CHURCH  
*A Biblical Response to  
Mission in Western Culture*



PREACHING

Phone: 1-888-717-6244

Email: [dmin@andrews.edu](mailto:dmin@andrews.edu)

 Seventh-day Adventist  
Theological Seminary  
Andrews University

*Co-pastorate.* After successfully finishing their internship, the young pastors continue to work as co-pastors, mostly in the same church district. This means that the process of mentoring goes on. However, the mentees will grow in independence and take over their own responsibilities in the ministry.

*Mentoring.* The whole process of mentoring all through those four to five years can be divided into four phases or—in the perspective of the mentor—into four duties: (1) discuss and plan the ministerial tasks together; (2) do it as a mentor and let the intern watch; (3) let the interns do it and watch them; (4) evaluate together and let the interns do it on their own.<sup>8</sup>

*Assessment center.* Right before the professional starters finish their internship, they will be assessed in an assessment center (AC). The purpose of the AC is to serve the church—that is, the local conferences—and to aid the young pastors in their professional careers. The first and foremost goal is to recognize and enhance the potentials of the interns, while the second goal is to give a recommendation about further employment in the church.<sup>9</sup>

*Curriculum.* Having graduated from university with an MA in theology, interns receive ongoing education with the focus on the practical aspects of ministry. This training program has been developed for a persistent cycle of five years so that every mentee undergoes the same five units whenever they start. These units correspond to five areas (or basic tasks) of the pastoral ministry, which had been defined by the ministerial departments of the Adventist Church in Germany and Switzerland:<sup>10</sup>

## Unit I: Theological task—the pastor as preacher and teacher

1. Comprehend various theological issues and “leadership by theology”
2. Teach and preach that which is biblically sound and socially relevant
3. Conduct worship services and special services

## Unit II: Missionary task—the pastor as evangelist and church builder

1. Plan and conduct an evangelistic campaign
2. Implement various methods of personal evangelism
3. Engage in church planting and church growth

## Unit III: Pastoral task—the pastor as deacon and counselor

1. Pastoral care and counseling
2. Conflict prevention and management
3. Ministering to young people
4. Social ministries for church and society

## Unit IV: Organizational task—the pastor as leader and prophet

1. Leadership principles
2. Change management
3. Creating and implementing the vision of a church
4. Organization, structures, and finances of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
5. Church manual and policies

## Unit V: Personal task—the pastor as a relational being

1. Develop personal and social skills
2. Understand the role of social relationships (family and friendship)
3. Building the spiritual life of the pastor

When young pastors—after four to five years of service—become ordained to the ministry, they have undergone a thorough training process: theological studies at the university, one year of internship, passing the assessment center, and continuing education by the IfW. All of this is done under intensive supervision of a specially trained mentor.

## Pillar 3: Cooperating with local conferences


The ministerial secretary of the local conference is in charge of supervising the mentoring process between pastor and intern. For that reason the IfW closely cooperates with the ministerial department and conference presidents.

*Consult regularly.* Whenever conference presidents and ministerial secretaries meet to discuss matters related to the ministry, the director of the IfW receives an invitation to be part of these meetings. Together they make sure to cooperate and implement the mentoring policies for the benefit of the interns and mentors.

*Visit the training programs.* The ministerial secretaries and/or conference presidents are invited to visit the annual training programs and meetings

or three churches in a local conference as educating congregations where succeeding interns can be trained.

*Acceptance.* In order to grant a successful process, the local churches have to accept their role as an “educating congregation.” Often they expect interns to take over full responsibilities in various areas of congregational work. However, interns, especially in the first months of their ministry, have to work closely with their mentors in order to watch and learn. Much labor must be

interns could be enhanced, the rate of dropouts has been reduced, and, as it seems, the job satisfaction has improved. However, matters of job development and continuing education change rapidly in our world today. Therefore, the leaders of the German Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association and the Institute for Continuing Education (IfW) in Germany are always rethinking various aspects of the curricula and focusing on new challenges in ministry and the mentoring process.<sup>11</sup> 

**The German unions have come to think about the possibility of choosing two or three churches in a local conference as educating congregations where succeeding interns can be trained.**

of the interns. There, they learn to know the young pastors, become familiar with their needs, and listen to their experiences. Moreover, they teach some lessons of the training program or give reports of their own ministerial and administrative practice. They visit the training programs of the mentors and thus gain an insight into the mentoring process and relationships from two perspectives.

#### **Pillar 4: Selecting local churches**

The training and mentoring process of the interns takes place “on the job”; that is, in the local churches. For that reason, these “educating congregations” have to be selected carefully. The German unions have come to think about the possibility of choosing two

invested in training interns instead of having them labor for the church.

*Fields of work.* Congregations where interns work should be able to provide a wide range of ministries: worship services, evangelism, public services, family ministries, youth groups, Pathfinder clubs, senior ministries, and administration, for example. Thus, the professional starters have apt fields of work to become well prepared for their own ministry.

#### **Conclusion**

This mentoring concept, after 12 years of implementation, has proved to be successful. The process has become more satisfying for both mentors and mentees. Leadership skills of the mentors have advanced, and mentees feel better supervised. The training of

1 German: Institut für Weiterbildung = IfW

2 This training program for mentors is currently designed for the German-speaking unions (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland).

3 For a copy of the *Manual for Internship*, please contact Cathy Payne at [paynec@gc.adventist.org](mailto:paynec@gc.adventist.org).

4 See Ken Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi, and Drea Zigarmi, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing Effectiveness Through Situational Leadership* (New York: William Morrow, 1985).

5 DISC stands for dominance, inducement, submission, and compliance, which are four personality traits used in psychologist William Marston's behavior assessment tool. (“DISC Assessment,” Wikipedia, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DISC\\_assessment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DISC_assessment)).

6 See Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (Encinitas, CA: Puddledancer Press, 2003).

7 See a two-part series in the August 2000 and October 2000 issues of *Ministry* called “Indicators of Ministerial Resilience” on this topic at [www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2000/](http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2000/).

8 See *Manual for Internship* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Department of the General Conference of SDA, 1990).

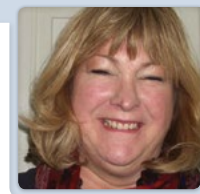
9 An article regarding the need for assessment centers can be found at Roland E. Fischer, “Assessment Center for Interns,” *Ministry*, July/August 2010, 32–34.

10 This is a vision and role model (German: *Leitbild*) for Adventist pastors.

11 For additional information, contact the director of the IfW at [Klaus.vanTreeck@adventisten.de](mailto:Klaus.vanTreeck@adventisten.de).

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).

Cindee Bailey, PhD, is professor of social work and sociology at Walla Walla University, College Place, Washington, United States.



# All things work together?

## *A parishioner's questions, reflections, and thoughts after a personal tragedy*

Is an accident just an accident when it is caused by an inattentive young driver running head-on into the car in which my husband, Neil, was a passenger? Why is it that no one except my husband was seriously injured? And that four days later he was snatched away from life? From me?

Does death have meaning?

For months, I searched for comfort in the idea that God controls everything completely. Whatever happens in life—including this heartbreak of my life—will find its resolution: there must be a plan to make all things right.

I went so far as to discuss on Facebook the concept that there are no accidents. If there are no accidents, there are no coincidences. God must direct events to make “all things work together for good” (Rom. 8:28, NKJV). I was incensed when someone disagreed with me because that meant God did not involve Himself with this incident. That meant it was merely an arbitrary event. Somehow that made Neil’s death and my sorrow insignificant. I had to believe otherwise—my faith that God was involved in every little detail was strong.

I was surprised that this tragedy did not send me into an existential whirlwind. I suppose it was because of all the awesome support I got from my community—my church pastors and church family, my colleagues, my kids’ elementary school, our friends, and our family. When I am alone and think God is silent, I remember that His voice comes through His people, and indeed, I have heard His compassion loud and clear!

My worldview was also adequately in place to withstand the doubts of why this had to happen, and where God was all along. Eleven years ago, I had to revise my perspective on God when we lost a twin son at birth. Since then I have had to choose each day to believe in a God who is both powerful and benevolent because living without such a belief is untenable for me. So, I thought I was handling it all as well as could be expected after suddenly losing my comrade in life. But once the immediate agony of grief abated and functioning of sorts found a new balance, my comforting answers seemed to crumble and new questions arose.

### Just a part in a broken world?

If God in His omniscience and omnipotence *allows* tragedies, surely He still must have some authority in how this contest between Him and Satan played out in regard to my husband’s death. Is the constant presence of mortality and suffering in this world merely a part of being in a broken world? Or does each cry of despair mean something? Surely, if Satan moved to destroy, God’s countermove would be something that includes some sort of triumph. Is there something for someone, somewhere, to learn from this one death? Is there a greater good in this case? Or is this loss just a random, sad event? Did Satan want me to think that because God allowed this to happen, God must be unjust? Or is this death just one more proof that Satan continues his work on this earth, and that his power remains insidious?

If God is all love and goodness and compassion, then all pain and suffering are evil. Right? Is *everything* that happens a part of the great controversy? Is every little thing either good *or* evil? A daisy—good; losing my keys—bad? I



imagine what heaven must be like—no bad thing will exist there; so I think that all bad, whether horrific or seemingly insignificant, must come from Satan. “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8, NIV).

Some people said that maybe Neil died to lead others to Christ; or maybe he died because there was something in his future that he could not handle. I cannot accept that a loving God would *impose* pain or suffering to bring about a greater good. When I think of God working all things together for good, I think that good may come *in spite* of a tragedy; and that is different from *causing* it to create good.

I thought that all things would go the way they are supposed to go—even on this earth. Thinking that way stems from the view that God controls every event and action, but such a view takes away free will.<sup>1</sup> If there was no free will, why would God allow the driver to look away from the road; or at the furthest extreme, create a Hitler to slaughter millions? Free will allows for human-effected atrocities and human-produced destruction, including accidents; if human free will is taken away, is it not logical to impute that culpability onto God? Some would have all events be under God’s control—total sovereignty. What are the ramifications of thinking this way? Yes,

in a chastising God who, in His total control, designs events such as child abuse, disease, terrorist attacks, or car accidents.

Can there just be random pain not intended or caused by anyone? Arbitrary evil? How about natural disasters? Are they evil, implying an intent to cause misery, or are they merely following a physical law in which humans get hurt? If God is in charge of everything, has He caused those tragedies? Or has He backed away from us and allowed calamities to run their course, in order to give us the opportunity to make choices or live with the consequences? Is God in charge, but not totally in control (for now)?

**God's *ultimate will* assures us that no matter what happens on this earth—life, death, suffering, tragedy—God will eventually make it right.**

### **All things work together?**

Romans 8:28 states, “all things work together.” Now I do not believe that means that there was some sort of Job-type, Satan-and-God scheme in Neil’s death. Nor do I think there was some plot by God to kill Neil. I believe that all of us are living in an impaired and injured world under Satan’s dominion and power (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4), and he looks for ways to destroy. However, in spite of Satan’s activity, God can use Neil’s death for good. That gives his death meaning. There are no such things as accidents. That means in God’s ultimate will, everything fits. Everything may not be the way it should be, but eventually everything *will* be the way it should be.

it gives immediate comfort that “it is the will of God,” but after thinking that over, I do not think God can cause evil even for a later good. That would be saying the end justifies the means. Can a blameless, benevolent God function that way?

If I do assign meaning to suffering, does that infer purpose? Purpose would assume cause; but can a good God cause evil? Maybe even ascribing meaning takes away free choice, and thus the possibility of randomness exists. I cannot accept the fruit if I do not agree with the roots. Some may believe that God is in total control and that He sends suffering to punish or teach us. I cannot buy into the comfort of everything having meaning and all happenings being in God’s will if I cannot believe

### **Personal anguish and theological angst**

My personal anguish intertwines itself with theological angst. How can I find healing from my grief when I cannot understand who God is? If I do not understand God’s nature or goals or involvement, how do I pray? How do I know how much to trust God to act in my life, and how much should I be involved in all the choosing and action? What is the purpose of all this continued existence in suffering? If I believe, as some do, that God controls everything (good and bad) and suffering happens for a greater good, then we are preordained to be saved or lost. So no matter what I do, it does not really matter. My life, Neil’s death, are already determined. God controls meticulously.

But, if I believe, as some others do,<sup>2</sup> God is sovereign, but self-limiting (by choice rather than by abdication), this allows for free will. Free will for consequences chosen by us or others; free will to experience the sin of this world until—until when?

Even so, I am not comfortable with meaninglessness and randomness—the idea of arbitrary events. This makes me feel insecure and vulnerable. I want God to be all encompassing and in charge of everything. If He knows when the sparrow falls or where the lily grows in the field, surely He continues to be part of what happened on that road. Maybe that should be enough for me. Or does He have some sort of countering checkmate to offset Satan's check?

Ellen White made this assertion: “God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.”<sup>3</sup> To me this sounds like concurrent concepts of free will (“choose to be led”) and God's ultimate control of things or events (“the purpose which they are fulfilling”). This quote seems to suggest that there is a plan, though it may be eventually and possibly but not presently understood.

I do not have any problem with the idea that God may self-limit His omnipotence in order to allow sinful humans to exist. If evil is the antithesis of God and we “all have sinned and fall short” of His glory (Rom. 3:23, NKJV), certainly He must constrain Himself in order for us to survive to make choices. So, if God is in charge yet limits Himself in order to give us free will, we find it reasonable to think that bad things can happen that are not His choosing, His ideal will.

## Understanding God's will

Leslie Weatherhead published a series of sermons during World War II titled *The Will of God*.<sup>4</sup> He examines how God can be loving and powerful and still

allow suffering. He divides God's will into three types:

1. The intentional will of God—God's ideal plan for (humanity).
2. The circumstantial will of God—God's plan within certain circumstances.
3. The ultimate will of God—God's final realization of His purposes.

The *intentional will* of God is what He would have for us if there were no sin or dispute over power of this world—no great controversy—that is, what God wants ideally for us if Satan would not say God was unjust in giving us that perfect life. God *intended* for Neil to live forever with Him. The *circumstantial will* is God's alternate choice when we thwart His plan or choose otherwise than He would intend for us or when Satan imputes disease or disasters or death upon us.<sup>5</sup> This incident affirms Romans 8:28. Maybe in God's *circumstantial will*, I will change something about myself for the positive or maybe our sons will have something more to give back to others, or people will adjust their lives because of what they saw in Neil but would not have had he not died. Or, maybe I will never see the plan in this lifetime.


God's *ultimate will* assures us that no matter what happens on this earth—life, death, suffering, tragedy—God will eventually make it right. So, maybe no meaning exists in my husband's death. Maybe losing him is simply a happening in a sinful world, and his death is a waste of a beautiful life. I understand, with my head, the concept of circumstantial and ultimate wills, but my heart has not yet caught up with that belief. I have yet to comprehend how God will transform Neil's death into something good or how, when I get to heaven and see the whole plan, I could say that I would not want it any other way. But (I am glad there is a “but” here) God's ultimate will gives me hope.

“God does not cause the difficult circumstances that we face in life.

God works within those circumstances to bring about something new and beautiful. God works for good in all circumstances, bringing beauty from our pain. God's circumstantial will is that we would partner with God to bring about the good. God's desire is that we would have hope in the midst of our circumstances, taking confidence that God's ultimate will will reign in the end.”<sup>6</sup>

In writing this article, I have worked through a few of my questions, and for others I will continue to wait on the Lord. I hope to find some peace in the mystery.

“If we can only trust where we cannot see, walking in the light we have—which is often very much like hanging on in the dark—if we do faithfully that which we see to be the will of God in the circumstances which evil thrusts upon us, we can rest our minds in the assurance that circumstances which God allows, reacted to in faith and trust and courage, can never defeat purposes which God ultimately wills. So doing, we shall wrest from life something big and splendid. We shall find peace in our own hearts. We shall achieve integration in our own minds. We shall be able to serve our fellows with courage and joy.”<sup>7</sup>

Difficult though that may be, that is how I hope it will all work together. 

1 See Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1972).

2 Denis Fortin, “The Place of Seventh-day Adventism in the Calvinist-Arminian Debate: Historical and Theological Perspectives on the Rise of Arminianism.” (paper presentation at the 2010 Arminianism Symposium, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI). Retrieved from [www.atsjats.org/article/85/media/video-audio-archives/2010-arminianism-symposium-andrews-university-mi](http://www.atsjats.org/article/85/media/video-audio-archives/2010-arminianism-symposium-andrews-university-mi).

3 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), 224, 225.

4 Leslie Weatherhead, *The Will of God* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972).

5 I like the concept of God adjusting His plan because this expresses such love for us that even when we deviate from what He would have for us or when Satan takes control of a situation, God can make good from it, e.g., Joseph's slavery, Moses being thrown into the Nile, Jesus' death.

6 Jeff Allen, sermon delivered July 10, 2011, titled “God's Circumstantial Will,” [www.highstreetumc.com/clientimages/51598/sermons/gods%20circumstantial%20will.pdf](http://www.highstreetumc.com/clientimages/51598/sermons/gods%20circumstantial%20will.pdf), 4.

7 Weatherhead, *The Will of God*, 46.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).

ministrymagazine.org/digital



If you can think of a good reason NOT to receive a free digital version of a magazine you're already subscribed to, we'd love to hear it. No? Then what are you waiting for?



*If you're a subscriber, you can sign up to receive a free digital copy of each magazine issue delivered directly to your inbox.*

Sign up for digital delivery by  
**December 1, 2014**  
for the chance to win an iPad Mini!



**Brandon Westgate** is a pastor serving in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, Bonnerdale, Arkansas, United States.



# Lessons I learned during a marathon

*“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:25–27, NKJV).*

I signed up to run in a marathon six weeks prior to the race. I had not been doing any serious running to prepare because I considered myself in good shape. I reasoned that if I was dedicated and consistent in increasing the distance in my training, I should have a successful run. This was the start of lessons I learned from a marathon that have helped me in ministry.

## Preparation

On the day I signed up for the race, I started with a 4-mile run, easy at my current fitness level. I followed a schedule that included increasing the distance on successive runs and then taking a rest day or two during the week. Recognizing that in just a few short weeks I would be running 26.2 miles (42.2 kilometers), I increased my distances quickly. By the next week I had a 10-mile (16 kilometers) and a 13-mile (21 kilometers) run planned. The 10-mile was a little taxing but manageable. I took a rest day and then

did the 13. During the last few miles of the 13, I began to feel knee pain. The next day my knee was still hurting. The day after that I tried to run and realized that I was injured. I decided that to be healthy for the race, schedule or no schedule, I would need to rest my knee. I did not run for two weeks.

In our spiritual lives, as shepherds, we are called to be innovative and visionary, while also maintaining the standards and culture of our respective churches. Trying something new, venturing out into the unknown, has inherent risks, but if we never seek for something more and better, we have settled for the status quo. And, from where I stand, the status quo is not somewhere I am comfortable setting up camp. We read books on ministry and fill our time and heads with great concepts and ideals, which are fine. But at some point we need to realize that ministry is rarely conducted in an ideal environment.

## Perseverance

The weather was cold, and when I started to run again, I ran an easy and slower paced 4 miles. The knee felt good, but I had only two weeks before the marathon. I rested and ran and rested and ran over the next ten days. A few days before the marathon, my last run was just 10 miles. According to the prevailing wisdom, that run should have been 20-plus miles to ensure

my body was ready for the physical demands of the marathon. I knew that not running those longer runs would make things more difficult.

The day of the race came; the weather was miserable: it was raining (intermittently and light for the most part) and 45 degrees at the start of the race, with the temperature dropping as the day progressed.

The first half of the race, I felt good. The knee was doing well. I thought that I was going to make my goal of running the race in four hours. Still feeling pretty good, I finished the first half in two hours, three minutes. However, at mile 17, I felt myself slow down. This is where the pain began. It was not the pain of injury but of fatigue. It migrated to various parts of my legs and hips, but until the end of the race, it was persistent and nagging.

In our spiritual lives, perseverance is a key component as well. The enemy always tries to tell us how easy life would be if we would just give up this thing called “ministry.” The temptation is always there to just be done with the board meetings, business meetings, counseling sessions, hospital visits, and whining parishioners who want everything their way. No question, for a minister, perseverance is required.

## Pain

As runners get farther into the run, lactic acid builds up and causes soreness and pain. I was in pain but not injured. I



ran carefully, watching each step, doing my best to make sure every footfall was well placed. But the pain persisted, even though I soon realized that everyone around me was also in pain.

At some point, the run became about community and a shared experience. We were all hurting, and yet we kept running, the same direction, toward the same goal. We tried to encourage one another. Some runners slowed and eventually stopped running, shivering and hypothermic on the side of the road while making panicked calls on their cell phones so that they could get picked up. We wished them well but kept running. You

flock, and even some of those we have been working with to bring into the flock, will make it into the sheepfold. In the back of our minds, though, we know that not all will make it. The pain of continuing, or perhaps the allure of simply stopping, will claim some of those we have invested in and cared about. Unfortunately, this adds to the pain. We grieve for them, we hurt for them, but we press on in spite of it.

### Progress

At the beginning of the race, each runner is given a microchip to fasten to his or her shoe. This chip has a triggering device that activates a timer.

progress as well. The Lord watches over His people. This should compel us to greater and greater things. After all, He is with us, running with us and encouraging us to keep going.

### Prize

At the aid station on mile 21, they were announcing over the loudspeaker that the race had been canceled. A severe thunderstorm had moved into the area, and, for our protection, they were canceling the race. They followed that announcement with these words: "If you want to continue running, you may do so at your own risk." I kept running. And so did most of the others.

*When we keep  
our eyes on  
our calling  
and run with  
endurance, we  
realize that  
we are not  
running alone.*



know instinctively at the start of the race that some will not finish. But we who run find it hard to watch people, who seem physically fit and mentally prepared and who trained for this run for several months, succumb to the cold or an injury.

The same principle holds for people we minister to and with. We are all in this ministerial journey together, this great race to the ultimate goal. We would like to think that everyone in our

How it works is simple. As you cross the start line, the chip sends a signal to the computer, which effectively starts your personal timer. At several points along the race there are mats you run across that record your total time up to that point. The last mat is, of course, at the finish line.

Somehow, just knowing that your progress is being recorded is compelling. In our spiritual lives we should be aware that our God records our

Having gone this far, we were not going to stop now.

The last few miles were the most difficult. My pace had slowed; the temperature continued to drop. But we kept running—I and those around me whom I had seen throughout the race. Sometimes passing them, sometimes being passed by them, we had been enduring this experience individually, and yet somehow it felt like a team effort. You realize that you are not

alone, and yet no one can run this race for you. I remember seeing the sign for mile 25. I thought, *One mile to go!* I had no idea how long I had been running. I was not wearing a watch and did not have a cell phone with me either. I just knew that I needed to continue.

Up another hill and down around another wet corner, I saw the finish line, and then I crossed it—26.2 miles completed. We were greeted with cheers and a warm blanket. Someone put a huge finisher's medal on our necks; others took our pictures. We were done.


## Conclusion

This race, like so many things in life, taught me some lessons. First, sometimes you may not be fully prepared for what you are about to go through, but you can persevere with God's grace,


and you will make it through. Success is determined by your willingness to keep going. Also, pain will be a part of the process. Sometimes you will experience hurt, whether physical or emotional. The temptations to quit will come, but stay focused and on the right course, even when others seem to be taking the easy way, and you will receive the prize.

Hebrews 12:1, 2 says, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God"

(NKJV). We prepare by laying down every weight and sin at Jesus' feet. This lightens the load. Forget about whatever mistakes of the past you blame yourself for—drop those burdens of guilt at the cross and be free of them.

We run with endurance the race set *before us*, not some other course that others may run that looks easier, but rather the race set before each of us, individually. We were not called to run another's race. Jesus calls us to run the race that He has called us to run. When we keep our eyes on our calling and run with endurance, we realize that we are not running alone. Jesus Himself said that He would be with us. He will not leave us to run by ourselves. When we continue to press on, even when we think everyone else has stopped, we will receive the promised reward. 


Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).



PACIFIC INSTITUTE OF  
**CHRISTIAN  
MINISTRY**

*"Enabling Disciples  
for Today's Generation"*

*An Equipping Ministry of the Asian/Pacific  
Ministries of the Pacific Union Conference  
& North American Division*



Ever wish you could get the training to serve as a pastor's helper in your local church? Now you can!

**The Pacific Institute of Christian Ministry (PICM) provides education to the laity that will enable and prepare them to serve in the ministry. The institute was established to meet the needs of our growing Seventh-day Adventist churches.**

### Objectives:

1. To help church members discover and use their spiritual gifts effectively.
2. To provide professional lay pastoral training for all church members.
3. To prepare gifted members to disciple others in the local church.
4. To encourage lay leaders to work



together with pastors in fulfilling the Great Commission.

5. To adopt the concept that every pastor is an equippier and every member a minister.

### Enroll in the following programs today!

1. *Certified Lay Pastoral Assistant (CLPA)* – for lay leaders and church members (26 courses)
2. *Certified Pastoral Ministry Associate (CPMA)* – for CLPA and ministerial graduates (20 courses)
3. *Elders' Certification Training* – for local church elders (9 courses)

**Dr. VicLouis Arreola III, Director**  
[viclouis.arreola@nadadventist.org](mailto:viclouis.arreola@nadadventist.org)  
805-413-7350

**Pastor David Brown, Field Representative**  
[picministry@aol.com](mailto:picministry@aol.com) | 530-351-5148



[WWW.PICM.ORG](http://WWW.PICM.ORG)

## ► Adventist seminary appoints first woman as associate dean

**Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States**—The Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University has chosen its first woman to serve as associate dean, a development that comes the same month that the university named a woman as its lead chaplain.

**Teresa Reeve**, an associate professor of New Testament contexts, will fill a role vacated by **Clifford Jones**, who became president of the Lake Region Conference on July 1, 2014.



Teresa Reeve will become the first woman appointed as associate dean at the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Michigan, United States. [photo courtesy Andrews University]

“This is a historical nomination because for the first time a lady will hold this position!” seminary dean **Jiří Moskala** said in a letter to seminary faculty and students.

Moskala said the selection process included consultations with the church’s North American Division and the General Conference, which oversees the world church, and he believed that the appointment would bring “unique diversity in our leadership.”

Addressing Reeve, he said, “I praise God for you, and I am glad that I can play a part in this historic moment. I am looking forward to an excellent collaboration with you.”

Reeve, who received her doctorate in Christianity and Judaism in antiquity from the University of Notre Dame and has taught at Andrews for 11 years, said she would seek to promote greater learning and leadership in her new position, which she likened to the role of academic dean. “I have to make sure that we are making the best leaders for the church. I believe we are in the last days, and we are on the verge of great new things that God wants to do for us in the church,” she said. Reeve also promised to spend a lot of time listening, especially to the faculty. “They are the center of the institution. We have a super faculty.” [Adapted from *Andrew McChesney/Adventist Review*]

## ► Adventist Church’s philanthropy promotion gaining more traction worldwide

**Baltimore, Maryland, United States**—Nearly 350 fund-raisers and nonprofit leaders participated in this year’s Conference on Philanthropy, held June 24 to 27 in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference, held every three years, is sponsored by Philanthropic Service for Institutions (PSI), a fund-raising consulting agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s North American Division. The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world headquarters sponsored several international scholarships to this conference in an effort to promote philanthropy in more denominational institutions.

The headquarters’ sponsorship highlights the growing need for professional fund-raisers in more Adventist churches, schools, and hospitals worldwide. PSI leaders say the agency, in recent years, has fielded an increasing number of consulting requests from outside its territory. “We’re designed to serve North America, but we answer questions from around the world. It’s definitely growing,” PSI director **Lilya Wagner** said.

Several participants described their first such conference as “eye-opening” for education about the profession’s best practices. “This conference is quite a good one. An eye-opener. When I get back to Africa, I would like to see something like this start,” said **Masamba Eliudie**, director of financial administration for Rusangu University in Zambia. “Philanthropy





introduced at the right time will yield great results.”


“This [conference] is an eye-opener. It makes you want to go out and do it,” said **Sophie Masuku**, research coordinator at Solusi University in Zimbabwe. “It should really be taken seriously because many institutions are languishing,” Masuku added.

An institution’s commitment to philanthropy often starts with the crucial first steps of hiring an expert and educating the organization’s leader on his or her role in charitable giving, said Wagner. “It’s equally important to educate both fund-raisers and non-profit leaders because that has to be a partnership,” Wagner said. “It’s deeply challenging when either one of those parties doesn’t have the education and

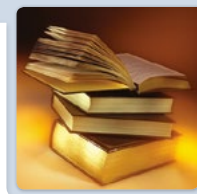
information they need for an organization’s philanthropy program to flourish.”

PSI associate director **Kristin Priest** said the agency offers resources to Adventist institutions at no cost and promotes the industry’s professional accreditation: Certified Fund Raising Executive. Priest said the Adventist Church can do more to promote philanthropy, including presenting it more often to college and university students as a career option. “Fund-raisers are sometimes seen as professional beggars, which unfortunately deeply misconstrues what the profession is about,” Priest said. “Philanthropy,” she said, “is about relationships and inviting donors to be part of an institution’s mission. Sometimes it can benefit the donor in a big way.”

For **Lois E. Peters**, philanthropy helped her realize she was capable of greater accomplishments in her own life and career. The president of At Home Pediatric Nursing Team, Peters got into charitable giving after an Adventist institution’s fund-raiser visited her and toured her growing business of nursing homes. The philanthropist asked for a donation greater than the amount she had, which motivated her to increase the size of her business.

“We need [philanthropists] to teach us to know what we’re able to give,” Peters said during the keynote address at the conference’s awards luncheon. “God’s wealth is bigger than you can imagine.” [Adapted from Ansel Oliver/ANN] 





## Reading for Preaching: The Preacher in Conversation With Storytellers, Biographers, Poets, and Journalists

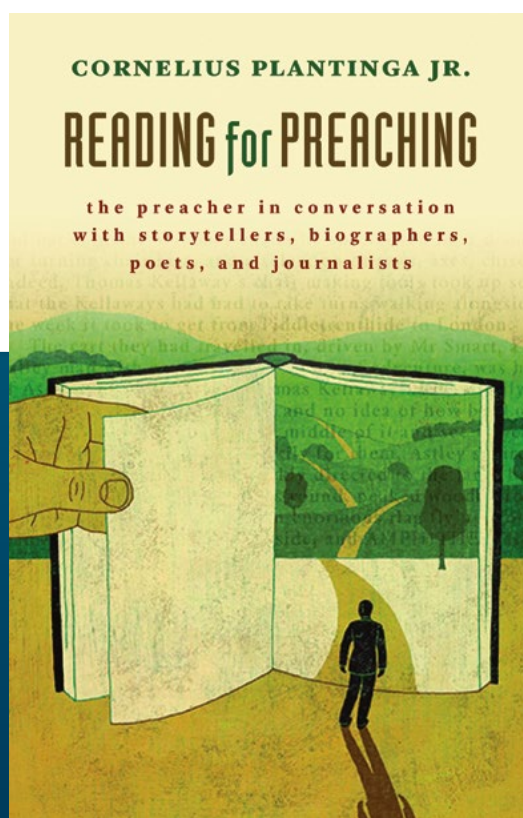
by Cornelius Plantinga Jr., Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013.

I opened *Reading for Preaching* expecting to find a list of a preacher's "best reading." Instead, I found doors opening in my heart and soul; doors I did not even know were there. Doors that revealed storerooms filled with treasure and danger, solutions and questions.

The author, Plantinga, remains passionate about stories and the "pur-

promiscuously sown truth. Biographers, poets, journalists, sportscasters, and novelists have often felt the Spirit slip through their keyboards into print. The preacher's quest discovers that

*The preacher's story quest continues as an expansive one, leading wherever the Holy Spirit may have promiscuously sown truth.*



ple passages" within them—phrases, words, adjectives, and verbs that put skin on God. This book emphasizes the story of a preacher's love quest for the very best stories; the ones whose messages will resonate with individual parishioners and clothe sermons with Velcro.

The preacher's story quest continues as an expansive one, leading wherever the Holy Spirit may have

moment of truth and shares it with verbal dexterity.

"Preachers are the guardians of the stories." "Remember, in the heart of every adult there still lives a child who can be moved by a story."

Do not buy this as an e-book. Purchase a real one, a paper copy you can dog-ear and underline. Scribble your heart into the margins until it overflows into your preaching. On

second thought, buy two copies. One for you, and a second to give away when a pastor friend asks, "What are you preaching this week?"

"Delight your listeners whenever you can. When they are delighted, they want to praise Jesus."

—Reviewed by Richard Duerksen, storyteller with Maranatha Volunteers International, Roseville, California, United States. [V](#)



# Transcending the negatives of life\*

We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.

We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." 1 Peter 2:20.

Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all cause for misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matthew 5:23, 24.

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Proverbs 15:1. And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away.

Under a storm of stinging, faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be

stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises:

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm 37:5, 6.

"There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." Luke 12:2.

"Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." Psalm 66:12.


We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly in God. He knows the sorrows that we feel to the depths of our being, but which we cannot express. When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7.

Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty.

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into

a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.

We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them. While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from memory, such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave His Son to die for us. If as workers for Christ you feel that you have had greater cares and trials than have fallen to the lot of others, remember that for you there is a peace unknown to those who shun these burdens. There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. Let the world see that life with Him is no failure.

If you do not feel lighthearted and joyous, do not talk of your feelings. Cast no shadow upon the lives of others. A cold, sunless religion never draws souls to Christ. It drives them away from Him into the nets that Satan has spread for the feet of the straying. Instead of thinking of your discouragements, think of the power you can claim in Christ's name. Let your imagination take hold upon things unseen. Let your thoughts be directed to the evidences of the great love of God for you. Faith can endure trial, resist temptation, bear up under disappointment. Jesus lives as our advocate. All is ours that His mediation secures. 

\* This is an excerpt from Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 487, 488.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or visit [www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine).

Join us in

# 10 days of PRAYER

January  
**7-17** 2015

[www.TenDaysofPrayer.org](http://www.TenDaysofPrayer.org)

## Southern Adventist University

your partner in ministry

### JOIN US ON CAMPUS

#### Adventist Heritage Lecture, October 2

Historian and author Alberto Timm, associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate, will give a presentation at 11 a.m. in the Collegedale Church.

#### Archaeology Lecture, October 6

Martin Klingbeil, professor and published author from Southern's School of Religion, will discuss the Institute of Archaeology's 2014 summer excavation activities in Lachish, Israel, at 7 p.m. in Lynn Wood Hall Chapel.

For more information, visit [southern.edu/archaeology](http://southern.edu/archaeology).

#### Origins Exhibit

Our museum-quality exhibit in the Biology Department offers an understanding of origins from a creationist worldview. Consider the intricacy of the cell, the relationship between the Geologic Column and biblical flood, and the significance of beauty in nature.

For more information, visit [southern.edu/faithandscience](http://southern.edu/faithandscience).

### JOIN US FROM ANYWHERE

Vespers and worship services at our campus church are broadcast live at [southern.edu/streaming](http://southern.edu/streaming).

### INVITE US TO JOIN YOU

Southern encourages ministers, church administrators, and other event planners to utilize our professors, staff, and students who possess a wealth of talent and expertise in a number of diverse areas. To learn more about topics and formats available, visit [southern.edu/resourceguide](http://southern.edu/resourceguide).

#### Recommend Us

If you know of someone looking to attend a Christian university, we have a variety of campus visit options for prospective students. For more information, go online to [southern.edu/visit](http://southern.edu/visit).



Power for Mind & Soul

1.800.SOUTHERN  
Collegedale, Tennessee