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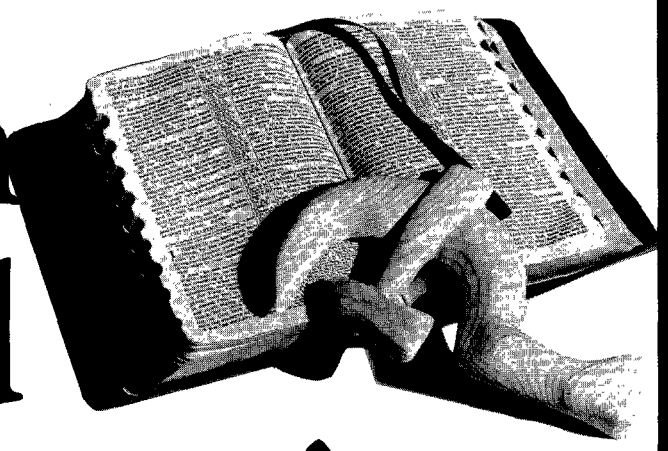
Religion and Communism



Letters

Computers

I really appreciated the article "Computers: What You Need to Know" (November 1986). Include more articles of this type, won't you please, for us beginners?—Ronald R. Neall, Upatoi, Georgia.

■ Thanks again for the article on computers.—Ted Struntz, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Not guilty

I found the article by Cathy McBride, "When Guilt Is Not From God" (November 1986), stimulating and helpful. Thank you for regularly sending me MINISTRY.—Fred R. Manthey, Jr., Ph.D., Dunmore, Pennsylvania.

Hit target

We disagree in some areas, but the article "Commitment Versus Career," by Rex D. Edwards (November 1986), was on target. Thank you!—Michael R. Proctor, Juneau, Alaska.

Getting out of debt on one salary?

I read an article on how a pastor and his family can make ends meet on one salary (May 1986). My wife and I have always known that this is the best way to live. We really want my wife to be at home with our two children, ages 2 and 4. I would like to press the question a little further and ask not just how a family can live on a pastor's salary but how a family can get out of debt while living on a pastor's salary. Our lifestyle is what I consider rather simple, and as I look at our finances and expenses I see how we could comfortably live on a pastor's salary if we were out of debt.

We've just finished our experience at the seminary, where we took out a loan for my education (considerably less than some of my friends borrowed). This loan is now being paid along with one that my wife had taken out while she was in college. We owe money to some family members, we are making payments on a car, we've had major repairs on our other car, and my wife has had some expensive medical tests.

I want to say that we are not compulsive users of the plastic card. Almost a year has gone by and we haven't used it at all. All in all, we have a debt of about $20,000. I don't know if that is an inordinate amount, relatively speaking, but I do know that trying to liquidate it while living on a pastor's salary is very discouraging. Only a small problem can throw us into a major financial crisis. What ideas do you readers have for quickly getting out of debt?

By the way, I really enjoy MINISTRY magazine. Our conference sends it to us. It is the only magazine we receive, since we can't afford a subscription to anything else.—Name withheld.

No nit-picking

I have been receiving copies gratis and want you to know that I appreciate the obvious devotion of your writers and the professional skills they bring to their task. Keep up the good work, and don't let the nit-picking of the "always right" fringe get to you. I'm referring specifically to the Marietta, Georgia, letter writer (November 1986) whose comments were inexcusable but not unexpected. You Adventists do good work. Keep it up.—Reed Holmes, Retired Clergyman, Jonesport, Maine.

Telling loyal opposition

I would very much appreciate getting the issue that had the follow-up editorial to "Does the Church Need a Loyal Opposition?" (May 1986). I am in a parish that has great potential for growth but also has a very vocal opposition. I need to know if they are out to help me or destroy me. Please send me that follow-up editorial ("Identifying the Loyal Opposition," July 1986) and include me on your bimonthly subscription list.—Name withheld.

More prayers

Here is an addition to that thoughtful prayer ("Books That Have Enriched My Devotional Life," November 1986)—since it is designed to portray life as it really is: The fragmented body of the aborted baby awaiting incineration with the clinic's garbage.—David F. Wilbur, St. Nicholas Congregation, Dacada, Wisconsin.

Drop MINISTRY

Through my own studies and the teachings of my denomination, I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist is a non-Christian cult.

With that in mind I feel your literature has no place in our church. Please remove our church from your mailing list.—L. Devon Aaron, Lincolnton, Georgia.

Anabaptists helpful

I am not a Seventh-day Adventist, but am one of those pastors who receive your magazine, MINISTRY, as a gift. I find many interesting articles in it, and want to thank you for your kindness.

In your July, September, and November issues you ran a series of articles on the Anabaptists, and since I am teaching a church history class for thirteen weeks on Sunday nights, I am sharing these articles with the dozen or so in the class.—E. C. Schumacher, Pastor, Salina, Kansas.

If you're receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928, MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy; requests should be on church letterhead.

First Glance

In 1984 Bob and Marie Spangler visited the Soviet Union and brought us a report covering church-state relations and the status of churches—particularly the Adventist Church—in that country. Last year Bob and Marie made a return visit and included Poland and Czechoslovakia on their itinerary. This issue contains a full report of their recent trip.

Can believers think? Can thinkers believe? In an article that will challenge *your* thinking, Richard Rice untangles the knotty relationship of faith and reason.

Continuing our discussion on the ordination of women, Russell Staples looks at the question from the perspective of the social sciences. His background and training enable him to make a unique contribution. He grew up and began his ministry on the African continent, and has expertise in both theology and anthropology.

Noting that most pastors will spend their entire ministry in small churches, former MINISTRY editor Russell Holt writes that that's not necessarily bad news, and lists six advantages small churches have over larger ones. If you are ministering in a small church, you can make the most of your ministry there by using these advantages.

Eleanor Anderson encourages pastors' spouses who want to add to their income to try writing. Their special experiences give them insights on topics that are in demand.

And don't miss our article on alcohol and the pregnant woman. Elizabeth Sterndale writes about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the major preventable cause of retardation.

David C. James

COVER PHOTO BY MEYLAN C. THORESEN

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VOLUME 60 NUMBER 3

Religion and Communism

J. R. Spangler

MINISTRY's editor reports on religious freedom and the advance of Adventism in the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

J. Robert Spangler is the editor of MINISTRY *magazine and an associate director of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

Nearly three years ago my wife and I visited the Soviet Union at the joint invitation of the Soviet government's Council on Religious Affairs and of Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders in that country. In September of 1986, responding to a similar invitation, we spent three weeks there, accompanied this time by Dr. V. N. Olsen, former president of Loma Linda University.

Our travels in that part of the world took us more than 10,000 miles. We met with non-Adventist government and religious leaders and Adventist Church members and ministers in Moscow, the capital city; Tashkent in central Asia; Novosibirsk, the central city of Siberia; Lvov and Chernovtsy, cities near the Polish and Romanian borders in the southwest; the port city of Odessa on the Black Sea; and finally Riga, Latvia, on the Baltic Sea.

Pastors Mikhail P. Kulakov and N. A. Zhukaluk, Soviet Adventist Church leaders, had carefully planned our trip, arranging visits with political and religious leaders throughout the Soviet Union in addition to appointments with Adventist church groups. (Pastor Kulakov's son Mikhail—whom I affectionately called Mike—translated for Olsen and me, and Galina Gritsuk served my wife as both translator and companion.)

The attentive service of our church leaders and our translators and the hospitality of our members guaranteed a most pleasant and profitable tour. Soviet Christians are some of the most gracious and warmhearted people in the world.

Do Christians suffer in Communist bloc countries?

Everywhere I report on visits to Communist countries, people ask about religious persecution. What is the truth? I questioned our church leaders carefully and was unable to find any evidence that Adventists were in prison for any reason that could be connected with their religious beliefs—not even for participation in "underground activities." Some may wonder if our leaders would know if a member was incarcerated. From what I've observed, it would be quite impossible for them not to know, no matter what the reason behind the incarceration!

Our leaders, and those of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslim faith, indicated that the winds of religious freedom are increasing. We could sense the change in atmosphere. In a conversation I had with a Soviet government official, he remarked, "It was thought that after the revolution in 1917, religion would vanish—but it didn't. We made a mistake. Not that the concepts and philosophy of Communism are wrong. . . . The mistake was in the practical application of these concepts. Sometimes it is difficult to harmonize theory and practice."

Now Soviet newspapers are printing articles touching on religion, an indication that it is legitimate to discuss religion in the press for other purposes than simply to denigrate it.

Aitmatov's work titled "The V-Chopping Block," presently being published by installments in the Soviet magazine *Novy Mir (New World)*, offers one example. It says people today are in a dark pit. Not knowing the way out, they

bump against trees and each other. This article indicates that the reason for this situation is that religion was taken from people and they were given nothing in return.

As another example, portions of the Soviet media openly suggest that to understand their culture, Soviets must study their country's important Christian thinkers and theologians of the past. An article in the August 1986 issue of *Ogonyek,* a weekly social, political, and literary magazine and one of the nation's most popular journals, provides an evidence of this. In that article, Sergey Averintsev, a renowned specialist on culture, claims that one cannot fully understand Russian culture without being acquainted with Vladimir Solovyov's *The Justification of Good* and *The Three Conversations.* Solovyov was a leading Christian philosopher in Russia in the nineteenth century. His works have not been published since 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution.

Averintsev has also published a new translation of the book of Job. This biblical book is now part of the Soviet Library of World Literature. We hope that this foreshadows the entire Bible being made available through the nation's bookstores.

(Let me note here that among Adventists in the Soviet Union, every family and most individuals have their own copies of the Bible, and many have hymnbooks. Recently the government printed 10,000 Bibles for us.)

Oppression's religious roots

Much of the religious persecution that this world has seen has taken place when religious organizations have dominated secular governments. This has been true particularly when governments and religions have united to rule the masses. Even today, much of the conflict around the world—the riotings, bombings, hijackings, and civil wars—involves a strong religious element. Unfortunately, Jesus' words "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34, RSV) are seeing a fulfillment beyond their original intent.

Many of the books that have been written about the causes of the French Revolution reveal the far-reaching consequences of the rejection of the Bible and of true Bible religion. I believe that the battle against the Bible that took place during that revolution occurred mainly as a result of the apostate state church's perversion of the gospel and suppression of the Scriptures. At that time France had the unique distinction of being the only nation on earth whose legislative assembly had officially declared that there was no God.

Similar factors have underlain modern Communism's attitudes toward religion. In old Russia when the church formed alliances with the secular state, its witness was prostituted, Christianity was perverted, and the oppression of religious minorities resulted. The objective student of religious history cannot make a wholesale condemnation of the Communist system when he knows that the church is simply reaping what it has sown.

In his book *World Communism in Endtime Prophecy,* Carsten Johnsen underscores this point. He writes, "The church has professed Christ, while defending doctrine and practice quite the antithesis of His. It must then bear its share of responsibility, not only for the appeal of Communism, but also for its very existence" (p. 12).

Under Rome, mankind was blessed with many benefits. And yet this same power conquered the world and held millions in slavery. Rome's aims and objectives are summed up in the words of Virgil's *Aeneid:*

"But Rome! 'tis thine alone with awful sway,

To rule mankind, and make the world obey,

Disposing peace and war thine own majestic way."

Under Rome's tyrannical rule, Jesus Christ was crucified, the apostle Paul was executed, and many other Christians were cruelly persecuted and martyred. The all-powerful emperors held the office of *pontifex maximus,* which made them the head of the state religion, and in time they demanded to be recognized as fountains of all wisdom and power, and even to be worshiped as gods. Yet though Rome caused so many of God's children to suffer, I fail to find a single instance of Christ challenging or condemning its authority. Furthermore, Paul, before his death under the Roman sword, admonished the church to "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:1, 2).

The objective student of religious history cannot make a wholesale condemnation of the Communist system when he knows that the church is reaping what it has sown.

Paul does not imply in these verses that God always approves the conduct of civil governments. Certainly He was extremely unhappy with Hitler and Stalin, who each were responsible for the deaths of millions. Paul's point is that as long as God entrusts human government to men and as long as the laws of these governments do not conflict with His commandments, we are to obey these governments, even when religious freedoms are limited.

Christians will support the authority of the existing state and will not presume to resist or attempt to depose the powers that be except by legal means. Christ's message is one of peace and brotherly love.

We are to pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2) and to obey them (Titus 3:1). Peter commands Christians to submit "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13).

On the other hand, this same Peter told the ruling power in Judaism—the Sanhedrin—"Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19, 20, NIV). Because Peter and the other apostles disobeyed the proscriptions the Sanhedrin had enjoined upon them, that governing group had the apostles arrested and imprisoned. In his defense, Peter simply said, "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29, NIV).

Is there then a contradiction in Scripture? No! The Bible does not suggest we must render absolute obedience to the civil authorities. Only God is worthy of absolute obedience. Our obedience of the civil authorities, compre-

This Polish Adventist seminary has 40 students in residence and another 70 off-campus students.

hensive though it may be, must come to an end in those instances where their laws conflict with God's commands. The civil powers have no authority over our witnessing to the gospel. If the civil powers attempt to restrict the Christian's witness, he or she is free to obey or disobey as the Holy Spirit leads.

Christians should do everything in their power to avoid conflict with the government. If some means of witnessing are forbidden, but they can obey the government and proclaim the gospel just as effectively by other means, they should use the latter. But if laws forbid them to witness for Christ, they may have no other choice than to follow the example of Peter and the other apostles in disobeying the authorities. This may lead to prison and even death, as it did for the apostles; but it might also lead to thousands being added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7).

In harmony with these biblical concepts, the Seventh-day Adventist Church decided to recognize in the U.S.S.R. only that group of Adventists that is registered by the government—the vast majority of Adventists. This has brought considerable unity and strength to our membership of nearly 35,000.

Overplaying Communism's restrictions

According to Mark Elliott's informative article on Eastern Europe in *Eternity*, July/August 1986, more than 200 parachurch groups are attempting to respond to the needs of Christians in Communist countries. These groups represent a "veritable explosion of Western interest in Soviet bloc Christians." Elliott questions the motives of some of these organizations, which raise millions of dollars for the aiding of the religiously and economically oppressed. He says, "Some missions play to the reactionary tendencies of at least some of their donors by giving way to sensationalism. One West Coast misson director stated in an interview that his literature purposefully concentrated on emotionally charged articles because copy highlighting violence and physical abuse of believers stimulated donations. Associated Press religion writer George Cornell is right in saying some groups make a living 'peddling hate and fear' " (pp. 25, 26).

Those who are deeply concerned for Christians in the Communist world, those who sincerely and honestly are attempting to share the good news with these countries, are to be commended. Yet a word of caution is in order. While we must recognize that religious freedom in most Communist countries does not equal that of the West, we must also ask what use Christians in these countries

are making of the freedoms they do have. Reverend Michael Zhidkov, vice president of the Baptist Union in the U.S.S.R., told me, "At most, we use approximately 70 percent of the rights that are available to us."

So rather than emphasizing the restrictions that are there, let me point out what we can and are doing to advance the gospel in these Eastern bloc countries. Our church is able to worship freely in its buildings. We are able to secure property and to build new churches as permission is granted. We are able to do personal witnessing to those who show an interest in learning about Christ and the gospel. We can arrange for the government presses to do some printing for us; they have produced Bibles, songbooks, and a limited amount of other Christian literature. And parents are allowed to arrange Sabbath privileges with school authorities, though at times this can be difficult.

A further indication of the opening doors came while we were eating our last meal in Moscow in an apartment made available to us by the Baptists, whose church we share there. During that meal Pastor Kulakov was handed a letter from the chairman of the executive committee of Tula giving us permission to start a Bible correspondence school for our ministers. Our leaders in the Soviet Union have secured property between Moscow and Tula that we can use for this purpose. Here, from time to time, we will be able to bring in groups of our ministers for training. We feel fortunate to be able to start this mini-seminary, since an untrained minister is a detriment to both society and the church.

Soviet leader visits U.S. Adventists

One of the high points of our trip was a 100-minute conference with Mr. Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs for the U.S.S.R. For four years he was the Soviet ambassador to Guyana, and he still retains the diplomatic rank of ambassador. Mr. Kharchev was cordial, frank, and open. Our discussion ranged from the advance and needs of the Adventist Church in the Soviet Union to the aims and objectives of the Council on Religious Affairs.

Neal C. Wilson, world president of the Adventist denomination, visited the U.S.S.R. five months before we did. He too had an interview with Mr. Kharchev. In view of the tragedy at Chernobyl, which had occurred just two weeks before his visit, Pastor Wilson, on behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, sent with us a letter and a check for $25,000 to be presented as a gift to the Soviet government through Mr. Kharchev to aid the Chernobyl disaster victims. Our church wants the Soviet government to understand that Adventists are concerned for people's welfare. Our message touches the physical as well as the spiritual life.

After presenting Mr. Kharchev with this gift, we learned that he was coming to the United States to attend a conference. (Rabbi Schneier, founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, sponsored Mr. Kharchev's visit.) Arrangements were made for Mr. Kharchev to visit our Washington, D.C., world headquarters and several of our institutions.

The night before his visit, the Soviet Embassy invited five of us from our Adventist world headquarters to join a group of other religious leaders at a reception in Mr. Kharchev's honor. We appreciated the opportunity of meeting there the Soviet ambassador to the United States, Yuri Dubinin, his wife, a number of other embassy officials, and religious leaders from the Washington area.

Adventist Church leaders arranged for a helicopter to fly Mr. Kharchev to our new Review and Herald publishing house and printing plant in Hagerstown, Maryland. From there he was taken to our 224-bed Shady Grove Hospital and then to one of our church's secondary schools, where the entire group of students greeted him. His final stop was at our world headquarters complex, where a banquet was held in his honor.

His remarks at the banquet indicated that this contact with our church leaders would help him to understand better our church's objectives, beliefs, and organizational structure. We firmly believe that these types of contacts are necessary to the building of bridges of mutual understanding.

As Christians, we are ministers of reconciliation and not condemnation. I believe that in terms of religious freedom, both the Christian church and the non-Christian religions are making progress in the Soviet Union. Presently there are approximately 50 million Russian Orthodox believers, 40 million Muslims, 500,000 Baptists, Mennonites, and Pentecostals combined, and

In terms of religious freedom, both the Christian church and the non-Christian religions are making progress in the Soviet Union.

35,000 Seventh-day Adventists. Of course, other religious groups function there as well.

Adventism in Poland

Our next stop was Poland. The Polish people suffered enormously during World War II. Out of the population of 38 million, 6 million—16 percent of the population—were killed.

Prior to the war all of the religions except Roman Catholicism were controlled by a combined church-state government. There was widespread persecution, and the state gave these minority religious groups no legal recognition. Like the other religious organizations, the Adventist Church was merely tolerated. Many of our ministers and laypeople suffered in prison for their faith.

After the war all religious organizations had the opportunity to register with the government. In 1946 Seventh-day Adventists received state recognition, and since then our privileges have increased, until today we have virtually unrestricted religious freedom.

Pastor Stanislaw Dabrowski, president of our church in Poland, pointed out that we now have 84 churches and 40 smaller groups of members in that country. Although we have only 5,000 members, approximately 8,000 people attend our churches, and we baptize approximately 300 to 400 a year. Since World War II we have either built or renovated 62 church buildings.

One of the reasons our church in Poland continues to grow at a rather slow rate is because it is not difficult for people to emigrate. Many Polish Adventists have moved to Australia or West Ger-

The only Adventist Book Center in all of Europe is in Ludowici, Poland.

many. In fact, more live outside of Poland than inside.

The only Adventist Book Center in all of Europe is in Ludowici, Poland. We have 70 Polish literature evangelists, who are free to sell our literature anywhere in that country. Our church leaders there are in the process of securing a press on which, beginning this year, they will do their own printing. We already have our own bindery.

Adventists print 30,000 copies monthly of the religious journal *Signs of the Times*. Half of these are sold in state stores or on street newsstands. We have published 500,000 copies of various Adventist books (16 titles). Our health message is received extremely well—Mrs. Dabrowski, wife of our president, authored a recipe book called *Health Kitchen* that sold 30,000 copies in one week.

Our members in Poland prepare radio programs in Polish for broadcast over our stations in Portugal and Italy. In Poland itself we have a quarterly 40-minute broadcast on state radio.

The Polish Bible Society is within two blocks of our headquarters office, which is located on a main thoroughfare in Warsaw. It is open to the public and is well stocked with translations in several languages. When I stopped there, I bought five Bibles.

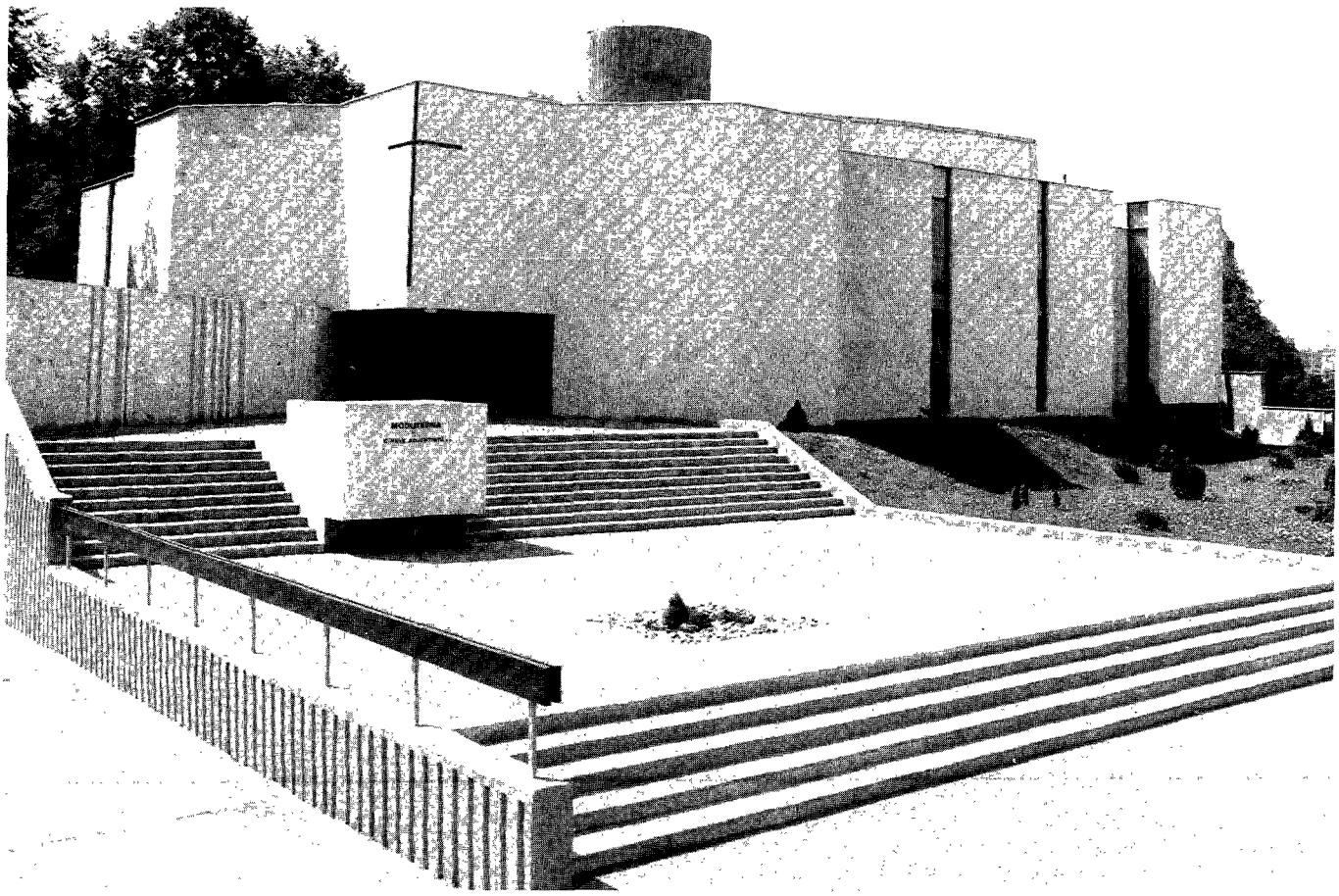
All of our ministers have open mailboxes and can receive religious literature, books, and papers with no restrictions. For our public evangelistic meetings, we are able to pitch tents, rent halls or churches, pass out handbills, and to display openly posters advertising the meetings.

Three days before our visit our church dedicated its new seminary building near Warsaw (see photo). Forty students are in residence, and 70 home study students attend periodically to receive additional training. We are proud of our new seminary structure.

Our churches have Sabbath school classes (equivalent to Sunday school) for the children and young people. If young people are registered as believers, they are able to have Sabbath privileges while attending public schools.

Poland requires its young men to serve one and a half years in the army. With a letter from his local pastor stating that he is a Seventh-day Adventist, a young Polish believer may be allowed to keep the Sabbath and to attend church. Local army leadership grants this permission, but if a problem arises, a letter to the defense minister brings help.

If a young man does not choose to go into the army, he can substitute three years in medical service or working in the coal mines for the year and a half of military service. He receives a salary for this work, and no stigma is attached to his choice. No Adventists are in prison for their faith in Poland.



The new Modlitebna church, one of the four Seventh-day Adventist churches in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

The beauty of the 800-seat Modlitebna church equals that of any Adventist church worldwide.

The high point of our visit to Poland was our interview with Mr. Adam Lopatka, the minister of religion for the country. Mr. Lopatka's position makes him a member of the Polish cabinet. (Each of Poland's 49 provinces also has a minister of religion.)

Mr. Lopatka complimented the activities of the Adventist Church in his country, especially in the areas of healthful practices. We, in turn, extended to him our appreciation for the freedoms our church and other religious organizations enjoy there.

The republic of Czechoslovakia

In Prague, Czechoslovakia, my wife and I were met by Pastor Oldrich Sladek, president of our denominational organization in that country. His amiable and aggressive spirit has brought strength to the Advent movement.

Czechoslovakia has a population of 15.5 million people. The Adventist Church there has a membership of nearly 8,000, with 169 churches. Most of the congregations have their own buildings, and the denomination is able to secure permits to build or buy more.

In Prague, the capital, we have four church buildings, including one we built recently that seats approximately 800 (see photo). Although my wife and I were there on tourist visas (I had been to Czechoslovakia earlier in 1986 on an official visit), we were granted permission to preach. What a joy it was to meet with the members of our churches in Prague in this lovely sanctuary! Its beauty equals that of any Adventist church in the world.

On the national level, Czechoslovakia has two departments for religious affairs—one headquartered in Prague, for the Czech republic, and the other headquartered in Bratislava, for the Slovakian republic. The Ministry of Culture in each of the republics supervises these departments. The country is further divided into 10 districts, each of which has a representative for religious affairs, as do each of the towns.

There is no shortage of Bibles in Czechoslovakia. Bibles are both printed in the country and imported. A new ecumenical translation has become quite popular.

Our denomination employs 96 full-time ministers and Bible workers in Czechoslovakia. I believe we are the only denomination to pay our pastors without state aid.

We are allowed to rent other churches when we need more room than our own provide. For instance, in May 1986 we rented a large church belonging to another denomination so that we could hold a meeting for our members from various churches in and around Brno. We are also able to hold evangelistic meetings in our churches and use them fully without seeking special permission.

The government prints 12,000 copies of our bimonthly church journal, *Signs of the Times,* without censoring it. This journal, which is sent to all our members, is in four colors and is beautifully done.

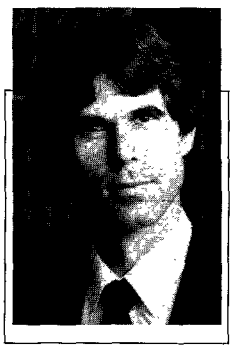
Our Sabbath school lessons are also printed in sufficient quantities for all our members. The four quarterlies for the year are translated into the Slovakian, Hungarian, and Czech languages and are

(Continued on page 24)

Reconciling faith and reason

Richard Rice

Reason is not necessarily antithetical to faith. In fact, it can aid it—though faith must go beyond reason. We can deal successfully with doubt.



Richard Rice, Ph.D., is a professor of theology at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

Can a thinking person be religious? Can a believer be intellectually honest? Is there evidence for religious beliefs? Does it matter? Can we go ahead and believe, whether or not it makes sense?

Questions like these raise one of the most persistent issues in religion—the relation of faith and reason. Over the years no topic has attracted more theological attention or generated more diverse scholarly opinions. But the issue is more than merely academic. It is a matter of great personal concern. And it is unavoidable. Sooner or later every Christian questions whether his or her beliefs make sense.

According to the Bible, faith is the most important element in religion. It is impossible to please God without faith (Heb. 11:6). And faith is the indispensable condition of human salvation; it is the sole means by which we receive the saving grace of God (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 3:1-9). But the Bible also suggests that faith doesn't come easily. While Jesus said that even an infinitesimal amount of faith could move mountains (Matt. 17:20), He openly wondered whether He would find any faith at all when He returned to earth (Luke 18:8).

These biblical descriptions illuminate the problem that concerns us here. On the one hand, faith is extremely important; on the other, it is anything but easy. And if it has never been easy to believe, the challenges of our time make it more difficult than ever. In the well-known lines of "Dover Beach," British poet Matthew Arnold surveys the "sea of faith" and poignantly records its "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar."[1] The nineteenth century brought sweeping changes in the way people viewed the world, and Arnold feared their impact on religion.

What Arnold saw taking place on a broad scale in Victorian society repeats itself on an individual level in the experience of many Christians today. Bit by bit, like the ebbing of the tide, personal faith seeps away. Finally, what was once a surging religious commitment gives way to the barren sands of doubt and disbelief.

Education taxes faith

Because educated people frequently experience this, some believe that advanced education inevitably erodes faith. They conclude that a person has to choose between serious intellectual inquiry and a genuine commitment to God.

This view is extreme, of course. But it is true that higher education can exert considerable pressure on religious commitment. Several factors account for this. One is the conflict between conventional scientific views and certain religious beliefs. What most scholars in natural sciences such as biology, zoology, and geology believe about the age of the earth and the origins of life contradicts what Christians have traditionally understood biblical passages like Genesis 1-3 to teach. And many scholars of the human sciences accept naturalistic accounts of religion. They hold that religious beliefs arise from various psychological and sociological influences and not from an actual supernatural or divine reality.

Indeed, it is probably accurate to say that God does not function as an

explanatory factor in any scientific enterprise today. If the typical scientist were asked about the place of God in his investigations, he would no doubt offer a version of Laplace's famous statement: "I have no need of that hypothesis."[2]

Another factor that puts pressure on faith is the "ethic of belief" that prevails in the modern world. We see this ethic in statements like these from the writings of David Hume and W. K. Clifford: "A wise man . . . proportions his belief to the evidence"[3]; "It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence."[4] According to this rational ideal, an intellectually responsible person always insists on adequate evidence for his beliefs, and he suspends judgment unless or until he gets it.

This ethic's effects on faith are not hard to see. Evidence for religious beliefs is notoriously scarce. Unlike scientific proposals, which are intended to rest on carefully developed empirical evidence open to public examination, religious convictions are highly personal and often resistant to public inquiry. For this reason, many people question their validity.

Some take religious claims seriously but insist that there is not enough evidence to support them. Bertrand Russell, the great agnostic, held this view. Once someone asked him to suppose that when he died he found out that God existed after all. If God asked him why he never believed in Him, what would he say? Russell answered, "Not enough evidence! Not enough evidence!"[5]

Others take the position that religious beliefs do not deserve serious consideration at all. At best, they are matters of private preference or personal opinion. But they do not belong among the settled beliefs of thinking people.

Faulty responses to pressure

People who grow up in the shelter of a religious environment and then meet this sort of pressure in the course of their graduate or professional education or in pursuing their careers often react in one of three ways. Some capitulate to it, some defy it, and others just try to ignore it. The first response is rationalism. Rationalists accept the ethic of belief we just described. They insist on the highest standards of evidence for all truth claims. Because in their estimation religious beliefs do not meet these standards, they dismiss them as untenable, and religion loses its personal significance for them.

Diametrically opposed to the rationalist's response to intellectual pressure on faith is fideism.[6] Fideists react to the challenge of modern thinking by withdrawing their religious beliefs from intellectual scrutiny. They often minimize the significance of the challenge, sometimes ridiculing it. But they never try to formulate an answer to it. The fideist position is roughly God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.

A third response to rational pressures on faith is more social than intellectual. Many Christians have serious reservations about the religious beliefs they grew up with, but they maintain strong ties to the church anyway. For many reasons they are unwilling to sever their connections to the religious community of their early years. We might call such people "communal Christians."

Communal Christians participate in church activities and support the church financially. Often they even serve as leaders of the church. Most typically, they educate their children in denominational schools. But their religious experience contains a strong element of nostalgia. A vibrant personal faith is something they recall from the past, but it is not a present possession. Having nagging doubts about the church's teachings, they respond by trying to ignore them.

Each of these positions attracts certain people, and each has its peculiar difficulties. But all three views rest on the assumption that religious beliefs cannot be reconciled with serious intellectual activity. This is why those who hold to them believe that they have to give up either faith or reason, or else that the most they can hope for is to keep the conflict between them from disrupting their lives.

Serious Christians cannot accept the options we have described. If faith is to survive in the modern world as a vital force in human lives, there must be a way of relating it to reason that does not compel us to choose between the two. The purpose of this discussion is to describe such an alternative. We can't do this adequately within the limits of a brief article, of course. But we may be able to learn enough to help us avoid some of the more catastrophic mistakes that are often made in this area.

We can approach the topic of faith and reason in either of two ways. We can start with reason and ask about faith, or we can start with faith and ask about reason. The first tack is typical of philosophy. Philosophers assume the validity of reason; for them the status of faith is the problem. For Christians, however, the second approach is more urgent. Assuming the validity of faith, how should we think of its relation to reason?

Sooner or later every Christian questions whether his or her beliefs make sense.

In a discussion of this nature, the meaning of the terms is crucial. An exploration of the various meanings of *faith* and *reason* could easily fill a book. In the following remarks I use these expressions rather broadly. *Faith* refers generally to religious experience, or Christian experience, and includes both the elements of belief and trust in God. *Reason* refers to intellectual activity in general and, more specifically, to the process of methodical, self-conscious investigation.

Holding faith and reason together

To achieve an adequate understanding of faith and reason, we must reject at the outset any attempt to keep the two apart. On the practical level, it is impossible to avoid thinking seriously about religious beliefs if we care about them at all. On a more substantive level, the attempt to divorce faith and reason does violence to both.

Intellectual integrity involves a willingness to submit all our beliefs to rational investigation. A person who will examine some of his beliefs but not others is like someone who breaks only a few laws. He is basically irresponsible. So we cannot be intellectually responsible if we isolate our religious beliefs from serious consideration.

Even more important, if we try to

Reason contributes to the life of faith by helping Christians to resolve the doubts that sometimes arise.

exempt faith from careful reflection, we misrepresent its nature. Several factors indicate that reason has an important role to play in religious experience. For one thing, genuine religious commitment involves the whole person, including the cognitive or intellectual faculties. For Jesus, the central precept of the law is the command "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt. 22:37, RSV). According to Ellen G. White, this lays upon Christians "the obligation of developing the intellect to its fullest capacity, that with all the mind we may know and love our Creator."[7] So what is sometimes called the intellectual love of God is an integral part of genuine religious commitment.

In the second place, while people often say that real Christianity is a practical matter and that what you do is more important than what you believe, Christian practice presupposes certain beliefs. We cannot ignore those beliefs without collapsing the basic structure of religious experience.

It is also significant that from its beginnings Christianity's supporters have *argued* for it and not merely asserted that it is true. They not only called on people to believe its teachings, but they maintained that these teachings deserved to be believed. They insisted that Christianity was demonstrably superior to alternative views. With the Jews throughout the Roman world Paul argued that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:5), and with the Gentiles, that He was the true revelation of God to man (Acts 17:30, 31). And Peter urged Christians to be ready at any time to give reasons for what they believed (1 Peter 3:15).

These considerations make it clear that we must not separate reason from faith. Understanding, or intelligent belief, has a central role to play in religion.

Reason aids religious experience

In what ways, then, can reason contribute to religious experience? First, it can help to prepare the way for faith. And second, once faith is present, reason can help it to grow.

Often people do not make a religious commitment because it is unpopular within their circle of friends, or because it involves personal inconvenience. Others are put off by unfortunate encounters they have had with religious institutions and supposedly religious people. But besides such factors, intellectual obstacles keep many people from religious commitment. For instance, it has always been difficult to reconcile the reality of God with the massive presence of evil in the world. And as we have noted, certain biblical statements appear problematic in light of contemporary science. Even more recently, people have come to view religious beliefs as simply the product of social conditioning, or the expression of psychological needs. All of these difficulties call into question the beliefs, or cognitive claims, involved in Christian commitment. If someone has serious questions along these lines, they must be dealt with before faith can become a real possibility.

By helping a person respond to challenges like these, reason can prepare the way for faith. It renders faith reasonable, and therefore responsible, by establishing the credibility of its intellectual contents.

Reason also plays a role within an established religious experience. Just as loving someone makes us want to learn more about that person, love for God elicits a desire to increase our knowledge of Him, to keep discovering new facets of truth. The Bible often stresses the importance of intellectual growth in the Christian life. The book of Hebrews, for example, bemoans its readers' failure to advance beyond a rudimentary grasp of God's word and urges them to go on to maturity (Heb. 5:11-6:1). And in his letter to the Colossians Paul expresses the desire that they "come to the full wealth of conviction which understanding brings" (Col. 2:2, NEB).

Besides adding to our knowledge, reason contributes to the life of faith by helping Christians to resolve the doubts and problems that sometimes arise. Ellen G. White mentions this function of reason in *Steps to Christ*, her careful discussion of Christian experience. She observes that many are troubled with the suggestions of skepticism that unsettle their faith in the Scriptures. She asserts that "God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant."[8] Reason, then, can give a growing religious experience greater durability.

So reason makes important contributions to religion. It can prepare the way for faith, and it can enhance our religious experience once we believe. But even though reason is closely related to faith, we need to beware of exaggerating its accomplishments. There are important limitations to what it can do.

Beyond the limits of reason

So far we have focused on the cognitive dimension of faith. We have emphasized that religious commitment involves believing or knowing certain things. This is why intellectual activity is important to religion and why any attempt to separate reason from faith ends in spiritual disaster. But we must not conclude that faith is purely rational, or that religion is nothing more than belief. Faith has other qualities, too, and they complicate the picture. In particular, they require us to recognize the limitations of reason.

For one thing, faith must continually subjugate doubt. The evidence for faith is never overwhelming. Not believing will always be an option; it will always have a degree of support. To quote Ellen G. White again, "God has never removed the possibility of doubt. . . . Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith."[9] For this reason, faith always has a certain "in spite of" quality; it holds on to its beliefs in spite of factors that make belief difficult.

A related characteristic of faith is the totality of trust it displays. From the available evidence, several philosophers have concluded that God's existence is "probable."[10] But faith does much more than affirm that God probably exists. Faith is the complete confidence, the

absolute certainty, that God is real. Those who have faith do not limit their trust in God to the level for which there is evidence; they go beyond that limit to trust God completely, without reservation.

In some of the classic cases of faith, this contrast between evidence and trust is striking. We think of Job as an outstanding example of faith because he kept on trusting God in spite of all his sufferings. Similarly, Abraham maintained his confidence in God even when commanded to sacrifice Isaac. People with faith trust God even when the evidence seems to show that God is indifferent to their problems.

We must not exaggerate this aspect of faith. It would be a mistake to conclude that faith automatically gets stronger when the evidence for it grows weaker. This would lead to the absurd conclusion that the highest form of faith is to believe something ridiculous. Nevertheless, there is a tension within faith. It always has a basis in evidence, but it always goes beyond the evidence, too.

The explanation for this tension lies in the fact that faith is a personal decision. It is an expression of freedom that involves the will as well as the mind. No matter how much evidence we have, in the last analysis whether or not we will trust in God is always up to us.

And since in part it depends on the will, faith cannot be forced or produced. In their eagerness to show that religion is reasonable, people sometimes speak of faith as if it were the product of rational inquiry, the matter-of-fact result of an investigation, an automatic response to certain stimuli, or the only logical conclusion to an argument. But this is a mistake. While it can contribute to faith in significant ways, reason alone can never lead someone directly into faith.

Several factors limit the contribution that reason can make to faith. One is the fact just mentioned: faith involves freedom. If faith were the only possibility, if reason left us with no other choice, then our faith could not represent a personal response to God's love. It would simply be admitting the obvious.

Second, if faith were the product of human reason, it could not be a response to divine grace. Instead, it would be a human achievement, a form of intellectual work-righteousness. And if faith were the product of reason, the caliber of a person's intellectual abilities would determine the quality of his or her faith. Then those who are young or uneducated would necessarily have a low quality of faith. Yet often these are the people whose faith is strongest.[11]

Finally, we must recognize that few people find faith through a deliberate process of investigation. The famous proofs that God exists, for example, are notoriously ineffective in producing religious conversions. Rather, people find faith through nonrational means—the subtle influence of other people, the emotions that accompany certain experiences, or even vague impressions they are not fully aware of. As Jesus said, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8, RSV).

These considerations prevent us from claiming too much for reason. While reason can contribute to faith in several important ways, the origins of faith are inscrutable. Faith is never the last step in a logical exercise.

While it can contribute to faith in various ways, reason alone can never lead someone directly into faith.

To summarize our observations, by nature religious experience is rich and complicated. Consequently, we must expect of reason neither too little nor too much. There is rational evidence for our religious beliefs, but the scope of such

(Continued on page 17)

Adoption

by George E. Rice

As Paul develops the theme of redemption in his Epistles, he repeatedly calls upon the language, imagery, and thought of his Hebrew culture. He uses Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, the promised seed, the role of Israel as God's chosen people, the law, to illustrate God's plan for redeeming mankind.

But Paul is indebted to the Roman judicial system for one concept that beautifully portrays what God accomplishes through His plan for repentant sinners. One word encompasses this concept with all of its ramifications—*huiothesia*.

Huiothesia is a compound word made up of *huios*, "son," and *thesis*, "a position, a placing." So the compound means "placement as a son" or "adoption."

Under Roman law an adopted child became a new person. He received a new name, a new identity. He was legally separated from everything that made up his past, and was given a legal right to the wealth and fortunes of his new family.

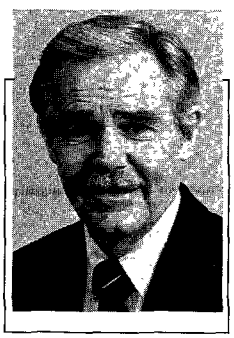
In contrast, although an orphaned Jewish child may have been taken in and raised to adulthood by a Hebrew family, there was no legal adoption as in Roman society. There was no change of identity, no new name, no separation from that which made up his past. The reason for this was the preservation of the birthright. So the courts of Rome provided an illustration for redemption that Paul could not find in his own culture.

Huiothesia appears five times in the New Testament, always in Paul's writings (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). But it is in Romans 8:15-17 that we see Paul's theology reflecting its full implications. "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship *[huiothesia]*. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (RSV).

To ordain or not

Russell Staples

Looking at the issue of ordaining women from a sociological perspective provides insights on Third World objections and raises questions about the church's current ordination practices.



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The members of Andrews University's Pioneer Memorial church have been studying the question of whether or not to have women elders. Dr. Russell Staples submitted to us a paper he had written for that study, looking at the general question of women's ordination from a sociological perspective. We adapted the following article from that paper, and publish it as part of our continuing discussion in print. As usual, we encourage your careful study of this topic.—Editors.

Two years ago church historian Martin Marty, commenting on the fact that women constitute a quarter of the ministerial candidates in North American theological seminaries, wrote: "No theological revolution of our time matches that signaled by the entrance of women into the theological schools . . . and into the ministry on such a scale."[1]

The roles women fill are being redefined. More women are entering the working force in this era than in any previous age. And they are entering most of the professions that before had been mainly male domains. Their entry into the ministry antedates this movement and is driven by different motives, but is parallel to it.

In most Protestant denominations the ordination of women has a long history. In fact, generally speaking, women were more actively involved in the work and administration of North American Protestant churches in the nineteenth century than they were during the period between the two world wars. This is as true of the Adventist Church as it is of the other denominations. In the late 1960s and the 1970s women began entering the ministry in large numbers, and presently almost all of the Protestant churches have ordained women clergy.[2]

The major cultural and social shifts that took place after World War II opened up new opportunities for women in all spheres of society. The criteria for entering the professions changed from the traditional status-and sex-defined eligibility to those of competence and efficiency. That same era saw an increase in the number of college educated women. The proportion of B.A. graduates they constituted rose from 30 percent in 1950 to 45 percent in 1972. With an accompanying sharp decline in birthrate, increasing numbers of women gained the freedom to explore career opportunities. And with the passage of federal laws regarding equal opportunity—for example, the 1964 Title VII act that outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex—many women began to enter traditionally all-male professions.

In this new intellectual and social climate, those women who felt called to the ministry began to see in the churches spheres of discipleship in which they could make a positive contribution, and saw no valid reason barring them from ordination. Obviously, many male clergy and lay leaders in the church agreed with them.

Some of what has been written opposing this movement of women into the ministry portrays it as a capitulation of the churches to pressure from the women's movement. A more thoughtful analysis is inclined to give greater weight to other factors.

Societies have institutions in keeping with their character, and when a social

system undergoes massive changes, the institutions within that system will also change. Who would deny that over the past two decades the American family, and especially the American urban family, has changed drastically? Sociologists attribute much of the change taking place in the church's patterns of ministry to a conscious effort to minister effectively to changing parish circumstances.

The Adventist Church seems to have made tentative steps in this direction in the early 1970s, recommending that women who felt called by God to the gospel ministry should attend the seminary. And in some cases the church provided sponsorship. It has now apparently retreated to a holding pattern.

Our church should not feel obliged to accept as a model for its own actions what others may do. However, it does need to understand what is happening in the wider world and the cultural climate that informs such grand-scale social changes, for it must eventually decide how it will relate to them.

What do sociologists see?

All human doing and thinking take place in social settings, and thoroughgoing sociologists endeavor to understand church decrees and ordinances against their social background. They pay particular attention to the way the parties in the discussions make their arguments and the scriptures they use. The difficulty for the church, of course, is that Scripture makes no clear statements either mandating or forbidding the ordination of women. From this point of view, the issue revolves around hermeneutical method. Those who interpret the passages by placing them in their cultural context find no weighty reason to withhold ordination from women, and those who insist upon a literalistic interpretation make a case against their ordination.

Since the arguments on both sides have been multifaceted, long, endorsed by prestigious scholars, and in neither case direct, a sociologist would be inclined to view them all as attempts to support preconceived ideas.

I often hear it said that those churches with a liberal orientation ordain women and the more conservative ones do not. While this is true of the Missouri Synod among the Lutheran churches, many of the most conservative church bodies are more open to the ordination of women than are their liberal counterparts. For instance, in 1977 three relatively small and ultraconservative Methodist-related churches—the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), the Wesleyan Church, and the Church of the Nazarene—had 1,044 ordained women pastors between them, while the more liberal 12-million-member United Methodist Church had only 319.

There seems to be another dimension to the issue. Churches with a high view of the sacraments appear to be more reluctant to ordain women than do the nonliturgical churches. The reason underlying this may be a lingering concept of female ritual impurity (a concern we will deal with more fully later). Because of it, the idea of a woman preaching may be more acceptable than that of a woman fulfilling priestly and sacramental functions.

And there is yet a further consideration. Ordination not only confers the right to preach and perform the sacraments; it also elevates to a position of authority in the church. Churches differ in their responses to female authority. On the whole, because the more highly educated are used to judging proficiency by objective standards, they apparently find it easier to accept female leadership than do blue-collar workers.

(The large number of ordained women [1,572 in 1977] in the Assemblies of God Church make a notable exception to this generalization. Clearly, in this case intense religious belief and experience override social conventions. Simply stated, that church believes that it dare not withhold ordination from those the Spirit has anointed.)

How many ordinations?

Even defining ordination itself is not as simple as it might seem. While Christian churches agree on the broader outlines of the definition, they differ considerably on the finer details.

Protestants generally agree that the early church practiced two forms of ordination: that to the diaconate and that to the gospel ministry. Most Protestant churches consider the diaconate to be a class of officers separate from the clergy and charged chiefly with material duties (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8). Beyond this, there seems also to be a fairly general consensus that the second form of ordination is to the ministry of both word and sacrament, whether that ministry be lay or clerical. While the grades

Has the church the right to divide the authority conferred by ordination?

of ministry within this ordination may vary, there is but a single ordination.

Adventist Church practice harmonizes with this general understanding. We differentiate between the ordination of deacons and ordination to the ministry. And although Adventist Church policy doesn't specifically state it, we consider ordination to eldership and to the ministry a single ordination because it confers on both grades of ministry the rights to preach and to administer the sacraments and the authority to rule. These three elements constitute the fundamental offices of the ministry. (No Protestant church regards marriage as a sacrament, and so the right to solemnize marriages is more a legal provision than an essential mark of the ministry.)

Local elders, then, hold the essentials of the office of ministry. In contrast to pastors, their jurisdiction is regionally restricted and they do not receive a salary. But for the most part, Protestantism understands this in terms of grades of ministry and not in terms of a different kind of ordination. Licensed ministers, for instance, may not celebrate the Lord's Supper or baptize or solemnize marriages unless they have been ordained as local elders. In other words, until they are ordained as pastors, it is the ordination to local eldership that confers upon them the essential offices of ministry.

In light of this, the 1974 and 1984 Annual Council actions seem particularly significant. Their significance does not lie in the fact that they authorized the ordination of women as local elders in the North American Division, but in the proviso that while women elders may perform the general duties of an elder, including the right to celebrate the Eucharist, they may not baptize. (This proviso is implied in the 1985 Annual Council deliberations on the ordination of women, but not specifically applied to the 1984 ruling.)

If my interpretation is correct, this

exceptive proviso raises weighty questions. Restricting grades of ministry to particular regional jurisdictions is simply a legislative matter. But has the church the right to divide the authority conferred by ordination, or any precedent for such an action? How can it distinguish between the right to baptize and the right to celebrate the Eucharist? What is the meaning of an ordination that authorizes the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist but denies the right to baptize? This dividing of its meaning is tantamount to reducing the divine order of ordination to the level of ecclesiastical legislation and enablement.

Nor can the church overcome the difficulty by distinguishing between the ordination of local elders and clergy. Not only is there no precedent for this in Scripture, but the church would still have to maintain different ordinations for male and female local elders—an untenable position.

There is one office of eldership in the church, not two; and there is but a single ordination to that office. I cannot see that it is possible to ordain women to any other eldership than that to which men are ordained. Anything short of this would have to be some kind of legislative enablement to an extraordinary ministry, not ordination.

In general, then, we must seek the reasons churches hold different positions as to the ordination of women on sociological rather than biblical or theological grounds.

Why do many in the Third World oppose?

Members of our church come from a wide variety of cultures, some from tribal societies with a sacral worldview and others from within the great world religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Although women may constitute the majority in the Christian churches in such societies, only in exceptional cases have they been ordained to any form of ministry. In the recent discussions in the Adventist Church, members of these cultures generally were not in favor of ordaining women. Much of this opposition stems from concepts of the holy and of ritual purity and uncleanness.

All religions have concepts of the holy that may include holy beings, holy things, holy places, and holy time. Adherents believe that these must be protected from defilement. The holy is both powerful and dangerous, so the priest who performs sacramental rituals must be spiritually and physically whole and pure—neither maimed nor polluted.

The sources of pollution are many; one may be defiled by contact with death, disease, and that which is impure. But women are the major casualty. Because most societies associate ritual uncleanness with the female reproductive cycle, they bar women from intimate contact with the holy and therefore from priestly functions. The privileged ritual status many such societies give postmenopausal women makes obvious their belief.

This should not strike us as particularly strange, for the Old Testament maintains similar concepts of ritual purity. In fact, the explicitness of the laws in Leviticus 11-22 regarding the clean and unclean and ritual purity exceeds that of the regulations of most other known societies.

In many places the New Testament shows that these concepts continued on into its time. For example, after Jesus touched the leper, He could not "openly enter a town" because He was regarded as being ritually unclean from the contact (Mark 1:40-45, RSV). Jesus apparently respected the feelings of the people of His time in this matter. And it was to replace ritual ideas of purity with a moral understanding of it that Jesus said, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him" (Mark 7:14-16, RSV).

The rules for the churching, or purification, of women, remnants of which remained in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer until recently, show that the medieval church also retained this understanding of purity. Society now understands cleanness in scientific categories. But though it does, these earlier concepts of the danger of defilement that women pose remain a weighty, although usually subliminal, consideration in those churches in which a major function of the priesthood is the performance of the sacraments. Because of the danger of ritual impurity, women are not regarded as suitable candidates for this office. Similar ideas underlie some of the arguments for a celibate clergy.

I believe this is one of the reasons many Adventists in Third World churches do not favor the ordination of women. They and the societies in which they live are still too close to concepts of ritual purity and defilement to accede wholeheartedly to women preaching in holy places, handling holy things, and performing holy rites.

There are two other less weighty reasons for the reluctance of the Third World church to acquiesce in the ordination of women. In the first place, most traditional Third World societies have been male-dominated to a degree we find difficult to understand. In the massive social revolution now taking place virtually everywhere, women are being accorded unprecedented authority and prestige. The traditional male role is threatened in the home and everywhere else. Ordination to the ministry confers not only the right to perform the sacraments but also a degree of authority to legislate and govern. I have found that men whose authority in the home and in the workplace is threatened are somewhat reluctant to have it eroded in the church as well.

And second, where church membership is comprised predominantly of women and children, I have found both men and women hesitant to have a woman pastor lest the church appear to be some kind of women's society. This may be a concern in the United States as well, but I suspect to a lesser degree.

I have noticed that Third World persons who harbor these views generally raise a biblical argument—the lack of a positive mandate—in defense of their stance. They seem reluctant to spell out the real and much deeper reasons.

Can women minister effectively?

Before concluding, we must ask two fundamental questions: Have women in ministry enlarged and enriched the ministry of the church to its own members? and Have they made the church's outreach more fruitful? The bulk of the large literature that covers, from every conceivable angle, the experience of women in ministry in North America says yes.

Women in ministry perform many tasks and fill particular roles that complement the work of the male clergy. Women excel particularly in specialized ministries: chaplaincies in colleges, hospitals, the military, and so on; team ministries in evangelism; and specialized ministries in multistaff churches. Women can often relate more effectively than can men to women—especially the

young, educated, and professional women—and to children, and to people in certain life circumstances.

But women pastors minister effectively in every conceivable church setting. Surveys indicate that some congregations rate their female ministers as better preachers than the male ministers on their staffs.

On the other hand, women in ministry encounter difficulty with some population groups. These problems are generally most intense in single-pastor churches with traditionally conservative congregations, and among some of the minority groups.

Some people, particularly some men, so identify the role of the pastor with maleness that they are not sure how to relate to a woman pastor. Should they relate to her as a woman? And is it possible to relate to her as if her sex makes no difference?

Some tradition-oriented male leaders have difficulty relating to a woman's exercising of clerical authority. And the history of women in ministry in North America is replete with examples of women whom churches have felt were overly preoccupied with the concerns of the women's movement.

But all in all, women in ministry have now become an intrinsic part of the ecclesiastical establishment in the Protestant churches of North America. Sociological expectations are that the percentage of women pastors (now about 5 percent of the total) will continue to increase well into the next decade and probably beyond that. The denominations that are ordaining women have learned to maximize the gifts of both men and women in ministry. Impartial observers are firmly convinced that the harmonious blending of dedicated ministries has strengthened and enriched those churches.

[1] *The Christian Century*, Feb. 6-13, 1985, p. 114.

[2] In 1977 the 76 denominations that ordain women to the ministry reported a total of 10,470 female clergy. That year 1,576 were serving in the Assemblies of God Church, 388 in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 157 in the American Baptist Church, 426 in the Church of the Nazarene, and 384 in the Wesleyan Church. The year 1981 saw 757 serving the United Church of Christ and 1,316 the United Methodist Church. In general, each year since has brought a significant increase in the number of women ministers serving in Protestant churches. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches do not ordain women to the priesthood. (Statistics from Constant H. Jacquet, "Women Ministers in 1977" [New York: Office of Research, Evaluation, and Planning, National Council of Churches, March 1978], pp. 9-12, and Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara J. Hargrove, and Adair T. Lummis, *Women of the Cloth* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981], p. 6.)

Interestingly, the churches within the Methodist tradition have been the most wholeheartedly open to the ordination of women. The Adventist Church is closest to this church family and owes much to it for its basic theological orientation and church polity. (This and the fact that Ellen G. White played such a prominent role in the birth and early years of the Adventist Church, make the difference in their attitudes toward women in ministry quite a puzzle.)

Reconciling . . .

From page 13

evidence is limited. Faith always believes more than reason can fully establish.

Similarly, reason can remove obstacles to personal trust in God, and when faith is already present, reason can help it to grow. But it cannot lead someone all the way from unbelief to religious commitment. In short, our discussion supports the conclusion that faith is *reasonable*, but it is not necessarily reasoned. Faith includes reason, but it is not limited to reason.

Dealing with doubt

This view of faith and reason has some important practical implications. Let us conclude by looking at how it can help us deal with the perplexing problem of doubt.

When serious thinking seems to leave us with more questions than answers about religion, we would do well to keep several things in mind. As we have noticed, because it always goes beyond the available evidence, religion always poses a degree of uncertainty or risk. But every significant venture holds an element of risk. Moreover, there is an element of mystery in every important relationship, not just our relationship with God. So it should not surprise us to discover a measure of doubt in even the strongest religious experience.

This suggests a second point. If people like Job and Abraham—outstanding examples of faith—wrestled with doubt within their relationship to God, then it must be possible for us to work through our religious questions within the framework of a religious life. We don't have to put our faith on hold or isolate ourselves from other Christians until we have all our questions answered. Examining what we believe can be part of our religious experience; it doesn't mean our religious life is coming to an end.

Perhaps most important of all, we need to remember that satisfying answers to religious questions often come from action rather than reflection. The ultimate test of Christian faith is not intellectual but practical. More important than whether or not we can explain our beliefs is whether or not we can live them.

Some would-be Christians once asked Blaise Pascal how to obtain faith. He told them to associate with believers, to worship and pray with them—in short, to act as if they already had faith. Pascal believed that the experience of faith would follow the words and actions of commitment.

William James makes a similar point in his essay "Is Life Worth Living?" He concludes with this admonition: "Believe that life *is* worth living, and your belief will help create the fact." [12]

As we have argued in this discussion, there is a place for serious thinking in the Christian life. But reflection can accomplish only so much. The time comes when we must act. Careful investigation can demonstrate that faith is a reasonable choice, but it cannot prove that it is the *right* choice. Only the exercise of faith, the act of commitment itself, shows us that.

[1] Helen Gardner, ed., *The New Oxford Book of English Verse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 703.

[2] Quoted in Hans Kung, *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today*, trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), p. 92.

[3] *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section X, part 1 in Edwin A. Burtt, ed., *The English Philosophers From Bacon to Mill* (New York: The Modern Library, 1939), p. 653.

[4] William Kingdon Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," in Leslie Stephen and Frederick Pollock, eds., *Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), vol. 2, p. 186.

[5] Wesley Salmon, "Religion and Science: A New Look at Hume's Dialogues," *Philosophical Studies 33 (1978)*: 176, quoted in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1983), p. 18.

[6] From the Latin word *fides*, for "faith."

[7] Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), p. 333.

[8] ———, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 105.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] For example, see Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[11] Jesus cited children as examples of those who will enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14), and He marveled at the faith of a Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:21-28).

[12] *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p. 62.

The small church advantage

B. Russell Holt

If you were trained to serve a large church, but find yourself serving small congregations, you may find it difficult to understand the advantages small ones can have. But small can be beautiful.

B. Russell Holt, associate editor of Signs of the Times, *is a former executive editor of* MINISTRY.

When I was in college and seminary, most of my professors seemed to assume that I would spend my life pastoring a church of 600 talented, eager-to-serve members. After I graduated and became a pastor, most of the programs coming to me from different church departments and entities seemed to make the same assumption.

In reality, I had two small churches of about 50 members each. Not unusual, you say, for a young pastor's first district. The anticipated career track for Adventist pastoral ministry envisions a year or two of internship in a large church, learning the ropes under a senior pastor, then a district of two or three small churches, followed by increasingly larger congregations, and finally a single church of 500 or 600 members.

How does reality compare with this anticipation? Can most seasoned pastors reasonably expect to serve a large congregation?

Statistics say no. Writing in *Christianity Today* (Aug. 8, 1986, p. 10), editor V. Gilbert Beers declares: "The fact of the matter is that there are more small churches in America than large churches. Anywhere from 50 to 70 percent of most denominations are 'small church' (usually under 200 people). And when you have weeded out the deceased, nonresidents, and dropouts, most church rolls could probably be cut as much as 50 percent—all of which means that small churches are often much smaller than their membership rolls indicate."

Our own denomination bears out what editor Beers has said. In the North American Division 78 percent of Seventh-day Adventist churches have less than 200 members; 57 percent have less than 100.* Congregations range from a low of four members to the 4,990-member Loma Linda University church in Loma Linda, California—the denomination's largest in North America. Even in California, however, not all Adventist churches are large. In the Southern California Conference 44 percent of the churches have 200 members or less; 12 percent have less than 100. For the Southeastern California Conference the figures are 39 percent and 14 percent respectively.

Obviously, the majority of Adventist pastors will spend their entire ministry serving small churches. But if you're among that majority, you don't have to feel badly or pine for a larger congregation. Small can be beautiful. I know; I've pastored some really small churches.

Sure, small churches have their drawbacks. They often lack talented members and almost always have a weak financial base. A shortage of children sometimes makes it difficult, if not impossible, to have a church school. Realistic expectations for significant church growth may seem limited. And it's easy to conclude that your small church can't wield the

*Specifically, 899 churches out of the 4,226 in the North American Division have 200 members or more, and 920 number from 100 to 199 members. These figures are based on actual counts from the directories of all 58 conferences in North America. Companies, groups, and other unorganized congregations are *not* included since by definition they are small in number. The "conference church" is also left out of the tabulation because it has no pastor as such.

influence in the community or in the conference that large churches enjoy.

But don't be too quick to decide that a small church dooms you to a mediocre ministry. Small churches have some advantages that large ones can't match. Here are six advantages of small churches and how they can work for you and your members.

Adaptability

Small churches are more adaptable than large churches. I once planned a spring evangelistic series in the smallest church of my three-church district—a congregation boasting about 16 members, as I recall. This church sat, as it had since the late 1800s, in a tiny crossroads community of some two dozen houses surrounded by outlying farms.

My advertising brochures (all 200 of them) had been distributed; the members were ready to support the meetings with their attendance and by inviting guests. The meetings were to begin on Saturday night. Sabbath morning 18 inches of late-spring snow paralyzed everything on wheels, and I lived 45 miles from the church! But the snow didn't affect the telephone. It was a relatively simple matter to get on the phone and postpone the meetings one week. Within minutes everyone in the church knew of the revised meeting schedule. Within three or four hours everyone in the community knew. Try accomplishing that with a 600-member church in a city of 200,000 people!

Small churches are more flexible and adapt more quickly to emergencies than do large churches. It's the principle of inertia. An ocean liner simply can't turn as quickly as a row boat. Knowing and using this fact can make your church effective in ways that would be difficult for a large church.

Incidentally, when the meetings began a week later, the little church was filled, and we baptized four people at the close of the series—25 percent of the church membership. And that points up the second advantage of a small church.

Reaching goals

Small churches can usually reach per capita goals easier than large churches can. I know the argument that says the reverse is true: in a large church you have more people to help reach the goal. However, the key factor is not bodies, but active participants, and I'm not convinced that the average large church has a greater percentage of active members than the average small church. In fact, I'm quite certain it's the other way around. If I had to choose between raising an Ingathering goal of $12,500 with 500 members or a goal of $1,250 with 50 members, I know which one I would pick.

Check it out for yourself. Look at all the comparative listings your conference office sends you. Per capita, small churches will probably be at the top. Whatever the goals deal with—finances, baptisms, church attendance—I'm convinced that as long as goals are based on membership, small churches will reach them more easily than large churches will.

The family feeling

Small churches have a feeling of family that large churches can't often duplicate. Many times the small church feels like a family because it is one. The wise pastor will be reasonably sure he knows who is related to whom before he says very much to anyone about anybody! It's amazing how the family tree can include some branches you would never have suspected.

But aside from blood relatives, a small church just naturally generates a closer bond between members than is possible in a large congregation. In a small church everybody knows everybody else—who they are, what they do, where they live, and what they've been through. In a large church, members may know a small circle of friends that way; they probably recognize a larger group by sight, but the rest are mostly strangers.

My wife learned this the hard way. We had belonged to a 600-member church for two or three years when she became one of a team of greeters at the front doors. This church always had a large number of visitors, so spotting an unfamiliar face one Sabbath morning and wanting to be friendly, she asked brightly, "Are you visiting our church today?"

The man eyed her coolly and replied, "I've been a member here for six years!"

Such a thing could never happen in a church of 100 members. Small churches don't have to schedule a moment of organized friendliness into the service and have everyone greet someone sitting nearby. In a small church most of the worshipers have already greeted everyone else.

The wise pastor will be sure he knows who is related to whom before he says very much to anyone about anybody!

Like any close-knit family, a small church can be prone to rivalries, feuds, and grudges. But I've noticed that the same things happen in large churches. At least in a small church everyone knows that Sally and Mary aren't speaking this week, and the family can start trying to reconcile the two. In a larger church most of the members may not even know who Sally and Mary are.

Informality

Small churches are less formal than large churches. Depending on your point of view, this may or may not be an advantage. If you're highly structured and organized, the fact that the service doesn't begin until enough people show up may bother you. If you're more spontaneous in your approach to life, you may see that as an advantage. If nothing else, the informality of the small church keeps things from getting dull.

"Sister Smith is sick today. Mary, can you play hymn No. 311?"

Mary looks, decides that No. 311 has too many sharps, but says she could do "pretty good" with No. 543. So everyone sings No. 543, and Mary indeed does "pretty good." ("Pretty good" is enough in itself to keep things from getting dull.)

Informality can be overdone, of course. One district I pastored included a 23-member church that pushed the limits. About twice a month Henry showed up for church, always with some provision against starvation—a candy bar, a bag of potato chips, a handful of peanuts. (Never, I'm thankful, anything as large as a watermelon or a cake.) Early in the service Henry would produce his snack and eat it. That wasn't a real problem; he did it fairly unobtrusively. But eating made Henry sleepy, so he

usually stretched out on the pew and went to sleep!

Now we all knew that Henry wasn't operating with the same mental capacity most everyone else enjoys, so we didn't make a big thing out of his nap. Anyway, he wasn't the only member I've had who took naps during my sermons—just the only one who didn't mind doing it openly.

I'm the first to admit that informality has a twin brother named *carelessness* and a cousin called *sloppiness*. But if you can keep away from these two, informality can add a special quality to worship. Things come off too slick in some large churches, almost like a television special in which every second and every line is planned beforehand. On balance, I put down informality, rightly handled, as a plus for the small church.

More people-oriented ministry

The small church allows you to spend less of your time being an administrator and more of your time in direct ministry to people. In most cases the senior pastor of a 500-member or larger church is as much administrator as he is pastor. He heads up a pastoral staff—at least an intern and an office secretary—whom he must supervise and assign duties. Add committees (figure at least one per 50 members), boards (church board, school board, plus a few the conference will find for him to sit on), budgets to help prepare and follow, regular office hours, correspondence, elders' and deacons' meetings, and the pastor finds himself with precious few hours for person-to-person ministry.

It really isn't his fault, and many pastors of large churches fight against it as much as they can, but it's just the nature of any organization to require more internal management the larger it becomes.

By comparison, a 100-member church can almost run itself. Even when you consider that a small church also requires regular board meetings and a certain amount of committee work (even when these are duplicated two or three times because of multichurch districts), fewer hours are spent on administrative duties in a small church than in a large one. That's why a large church often has a minister of visitation—the senior pastor must spend most of his time as an administrator.

When you pastor a small church, you get to do more of the satisfying part of ministry: visiting your members in their homes, holding Bible studies, doing personal evangelism—in short, people work instead of paperwork. And that's the primary purpose of being a pastor—ministering directly to people.

Active laity

A small church demands more active involvement of its members. A large church usually has a dedicated core of talented people who willingly assume responsibility, and a great mass of passive members who willingly watch them do it. A small church, on the other hand, can't afford the luxury of very many idle members. When the nominating committee meets to select church officers and assign responsibilities, you can be sure that nearly every member of a small church will have a job—often two or three.

In a large church a member may come and go for years without ever being asked to do much of anything, especially if he or she likes it that way. With so many people, it's easy to get lost in the crowd. Not so in a small congregation that has almost as many people on the platform as in the pews. Everyone is needed; everyone's talents (or lack thereof) are well known, and everyone gets drafted to do something.

Having people who are used to active participation in the church is a blessing to your ministry. These are the people who will respond most readily when you appeal for involvement in special projects. Of course, any church, large or small, is going to have lethargic members. But it's harder to be inactive in a small church than it is in a large one.

Respect your church

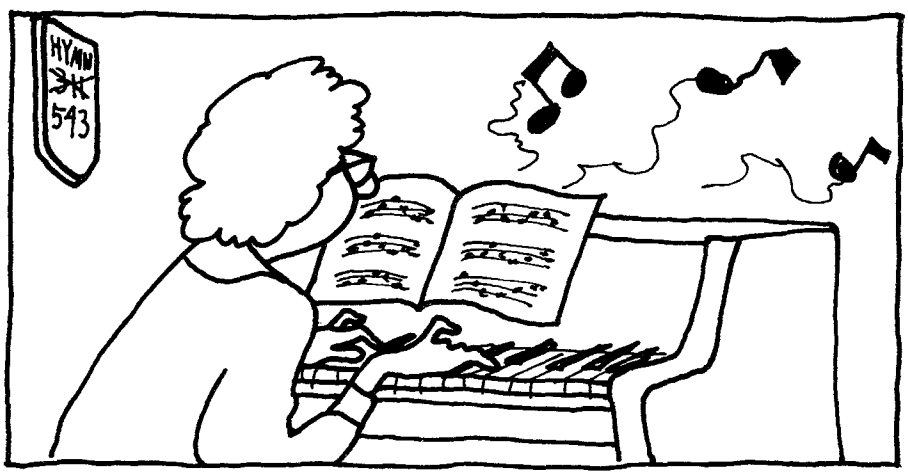
There they are—six advantages small churches have over large ones. Advantages that you and your members can use to make your ministry more effective than you may have thought possible.

But a word of caution. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that small means you can afford to be less professional than your large-church colleagues.

You may be able to keep your membership list on the back of an envelope, but don't. If you do, you, your members, and the community will see your church as just that—a vest-pocket operation. Approach your ministry as though you had a thousand members. Hold regular board meetings and keep accurate minutes. Insist that the treasurer and clerk maintain up-to-date records and turn in their reports to the conference office promptly. Put out a monthly church newsletter and mail it to your members' homes. Make it neat and informative.

See that the church building and grounds are in good repair and attractive inside and out. Small doesn't have to mean dirty, cluttered, or disorganized. Throw away last year's Ingathering papers (or find some better use for them than to decorate the back windowsill or a corner of the sanctuary). Clean the clutter out of the pulpit. Have an up-to-date sign identifying your church.

In short, don't use your small size as an excuse for mediocrity or worse. Small can be as good as, or even better than, large. After all, if 50 to 70 percent of the churches in most North American denominations are small, there must be a reason they continue to thrive. People must be finding in these small congregations a spiritual home that meets their needs. That's what your church—no matter how small—can be for your members.



Ministering through the gift of writing

Eleanor P. Anderson

Learn how you can widen your sphere of influence.

Eleanor P. Anderson, from Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, assists her American Baptist pastor-husband in teaching Sunday school and leading church choirs.

During our first full-time pastorate we moved the church building across the village green with most of the community watching. There we added an education building. It was an exciting event. I wrote about the undertaking, using the language of an Old Testament narration. The article sold immediately, and I was hooked on writing.

From that time on, writing for publication became my hobby. With three little ones, time was scarce, but I occasionally managed to mail off something. I wrote a poem about our children, an article on teaching children to pray, and several devotionals for a quarterly publication.

Then I discovered the Christian education (Sunday/Sabbath school) market. One of our daughters invited me to a special program in her Sunday school class marking the end of a unit. The boys and girls, dressed as children of Jesus' day, quoted Scripture about Jesus' growth and explained about the models of houses, lamps, and displays of food used in those times. I was impressed. A denominational teachers' magazine printed an article detailing what I had seen and heard.

Before long I realized that my experiences as a Sunday school teacher and those of teachers I knew could be useful to others. I began to write about what I was discovering in classes.

Once I taught a group of lively junior highs. They seemed so engrossed in their own lives, so noisy and full of conversation, that I wondered if I would ever be able to reach them. I found some things that worked and wrote about them.

To set the scene in the article, I described the problem: Three girls wait in the corner, whispering and giggling. Tom comes in, asking in a loud voice, "Did you see the game on TV last night?" Enthusiastically he proceeds to tell about a crucial play.

The buzzer sounds, signaling the beginning of the class period. Henry and Nancy walk in, engrossed in their own conversation. It's time to teach this class. But how does one get these young people into Bible study at this moment?

In the article I described word games that I used as attention-getters and mentioned other useful ideas: brief competition between teams to review last week's lesson, working on a bulletin board as they enter the room, open-ended stories to aid discussion, and questionnaires before a new unit of study. I defined the problem and gave possible solutions.

When I taught an adult class, my writing reflected that. In another church I was part of a teaching team. An editor liked my description of our methods and the advantages I saw in team teaching. Once again I shared what I knew.

In several churches I had charge of children's choirs. Articles on the choirs and on using music in Christian education found a ready market.

In each instance I wrote about experiences I had had that could be useful to others. Sunday school and Sabbath school superintendents and teachers are eager for new ideas. They want to know what has worked for someone else. They get excited when they read an article and can say, "Why, I could do that!"

The "shepherdess" in a church has an opportunity to serve in many ways and to

observe others at work. Ideas gleaned from experience, written clearly and in a straightforward manner, may be just what an editor is looking for.

Of course, church programs and teaching ideas are not the only subjects for writing. When our children were young, we camped each summer. We were usually able to find a place to worship. The day we sat in an outdoor amphitheater in a cloud of mosquitoes is funny now. The minister even shortened his sermon. Another time we traveled many miles to a campground where jean-clad worshipers sat and worshiped. As we were coming back through Rocky Mountain National Park, the brilliant moonlight picked out a magnificent buck standing near the edge of the road. I put these outdoor worship experiences into an article for a Christian family magazine.

Not all experiences make it into print. When hiking on Mount Washington in New Hampshire, I stumbled and fell on the trail, spraining my ankle. I tried to put this into a young people's story, but so far no one has accepted it.

When I began teaching public school, I had little time for writing, except in the summer. But I have had some success with writing teaching tips for specialized teachers' magazines.

In one class I had several children with speech problems. In working with them and in discussions with the professionals who had speech therapy twice a week, I learned the fundamentals of testing for specific consonant aberrations. In the classroom we practiced special exercises for speech improvement. All this found its way into an article.

About this time I began writing children's stories for Sunday school take-home papers. This is another wide open field. Many denominations publish age-level papers to be handed out each week. My public school experience in kindergarten and first grade made me comfortable with the vocabulary and attitudes of that age group.

I have written and sold many devotionals based on my experiences in parsonage life. Turning a problem into a blessing, I even sold an article about practical ideas I had gained from moving from one place to another. Whatever your walk in life, you have had experiences that could be helpful to others in Christian work.

I hope by now you're saying "Why, I could do that! I have things to share too." Of course. I have detailed my experiences, hoping to encourage other ministers' wives to try writing.

Getting started

If you've always had an urge to write but have never started, give it a try. One way to begin is to write short teaching tips. Many Christian education magazines use these. For example, I wrote about 10 ways to use a paper plate in Sunday school. Think of a problem you solved, a craft idea that the children loved, a new way of presenting a Bible truth. Write it as if you were explaining it to a friend.

Perhaps your expertise in Bible study would enable you to make up puzzles and quizzes for children's and young people's take-home papers. Such puzzles are not just space fillers but can be a means of helping young minds retain Bible knowledge.

Anything sent for publication must be typed, double-spaced. Always, *always*, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. At the end of this article are names and addresses of a few Christian education periodicals. *Writer's Market*, which can be found in bookstores and probably your library, will tell you the specific requirements of these publications: length of articles, type of fillers, and so on.

A most helpful sourcebook is *Religious Writer's Marketplace*, by William Gentz. It is published by Running Press in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and it lists many religious publications for all age groups with addresses and requirements.

Most libraries have some books on the how-to of writing. Your bookstore will probably carry one or more writer's magazines with articles on many specifics of the craft. *The Christian Writer* magazine (P.O. Box 5650, Lakeland, FL 33807) is like a writing course by mail, and all from the Christian viewpoint.

There are teaching tapes and writer's seminars and workshops in many areas. However, the most important thing you can do is to start writing! Write up a teaching tip. Write a description of a craft your Vacation Bible School enjoyed. Write about an experience with answered prayer. As you write you'll learn how to express yourself better each time.

Writing is not for everyone, but for me it is a way to minister. I am not a public speaker by choice. I would rather write a note than telephone someone. The written word is my vehicle for sharing my thoughts. People have written to say that a devotional met a specific need one day or that my advice on moving was helpful. As long as God can use my words on paper, I'll keep on writing them.

Christian Education Publications

The Alliance Teacher
3825 Hartzdale Drive
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Builder
616 Walnut Avenue
Scottdale, PA 15683

Christian Leadership
Board of Christian Education
P.O. Box 2458
Anderson, IN 46018

Church Educator
Educational Ministries
2861-C Saturn Street
Brea, CA 92621

Guide (preteens)
Insight (teens)
55 W. Oak Ridge Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21740

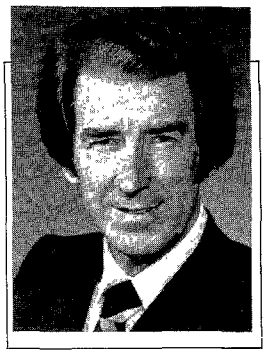
Key to Christian Education
8121 Hamilton Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45231

Our Little Friend (Kindergarten)
Primary Treasure
1350 N. Kings Road
Nampa, ID 83687

Resource
6401 The Paseo
Kansas City, MO 64131

Sunday School Counselor
1445 Boonville Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802

Teacheraid
2900 Queen Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19120



The minister: a perpetual student

Continuing education is not new! The current emphasis on professional growth experiences appears to be rather recent, but the practice is not. Regular academic graduate programs, summer conferences, denomination-wide seminars, extension schools, various institutes, and intern-orientation programs have been conducted for some time.

Mark Rouch's definition of continuing education describes what many ministers in many periods of the church's history have engaged in; to wit: "Continuing education is an individual's personally defined program which begins when basic formal education ends, and continues throughout a career and beyond. An unfolding process, it links together personal study and reflection and participation in organized group events" (*Competent Ministry: A Guide to Effective Continuing Education* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974], pp. 16, 17).

An effective continuing education program may fulfill several purposes: the need to be brought up-to-date on the recent trends in scholarly discipline; the necessity of acquiring competence in a new specialty; a consciousness that the church must be in constant dialogue with the contemporary world of which it is a part and the need to clarify and redefine her mission in the context of an enlightened understanding of society; an awareness that a minister may serve more effectively in another form of ministry and the development of competence for it; or simply satisfying the desire for an advanced degree.

Whatever avenues of continuing education may be developed by seminaries, colleges, universities, or other institutions, it must be remembered that the heart of any such program is the serious study that should take place daily as the seminary graduate prepares to minister effectively in an ever-changing society. There is no substitute for this daily program if the pastor is to be biblically literate, historically clear, and theologically sophisticated. Other forms of continuing education, whatever their source or direction, should enhance this effort and not in any way attempt to displace it.

Continuing education must have some end in mind; it must not be simply an activity for activity's sake. But before we can establish the purpose or even the desirability of extending theological education, we must come to some understanding as to what it properly attempts within the scope of its present professional curriculum.

To a large degree, ministers function as teachers; they are ordained as pastor-teachers. Since the ministry of Jesus Christ belongs to the whole people of God, the theological education a seminary gives should enable its graduates to "equip the saints" for ministry. Seminary training should also assist the student to become a self-learner; it should create a lifelong thirst for study and growth. No quantity of schooling is an adequate substitute for this. A program of continuing education, then, is not merely an opportunity to "get more in," but must serve, in a very real sense, to encourage the seminary graduate to be a perpetual student.

There are several continuing education programs that can assist ministers in this task. Perhaps the most obvious is that of formal graduate study at the master's or doctoral level. Many universities and seminaries also offer convocations, conferences, and institutes on a variety of subjects that may or may not be part of a degree sequence. The opportunity to spend some time—perhaps a week or two—in concentrated study as a "pastor-in-residence" on a seminary (or perhaps a college or university) campus can be professionally helpful as well as spiritually refreshing. Home-based continuing education courses (such as are provided by the General Conference Ministerial Association) are an inexpensive option that allows private study at one's own pace. Bibliographies, books, and scholarly journals from seminary and university libraries also provide opportunity for personal and professional growth. All of this is a part of continuing education.

In his early work Reinhold Niebuhr expressed his view of the Christian ethical norm, the ethic of Jesus, as "the impossible possibility." The demands on their time and energy ministers face today sometimes make the task of continuing education and allowing it to mold their ministry seem impossible. Yet the many resources and opportunities now available provide fresh hope that the impossible may become possible. —Rex D. Edwards.

Conflicting church conflict

Pastor, I saw Joe helping himself to some money from the offering plate during the worship service. That's stealing, and you ought to do something about it."

"Well, Mary, thank you for telling me about it. Have you talked to Joe?"

"Certainly not; that's your job, not mine."

Whose job is it? Should anything be said to Joe? Maybe he was just making change. When someone comes to you

with a problem, what is your usual response? What if it is an allegation of adultery? Do you go and talk with the couple?

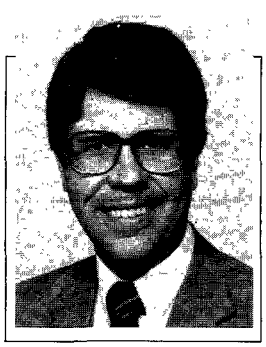
How do you handle potential conflict in the church? Paul says, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).* Usually we wait before we act, until the problem has spread and polarization is taking place. We then expend enormous amounts of energy solving a major problem that should never have been allowed to grow to such an extent.

The Bible gives a four-step method for dealing with conflict. When someone comes to you with a problem that involves another person, you should immediately ask the accuser if he or she has followed the counsel of Matthew 18:15-17. In most cases the answer is no.

Step 1: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you" (verse 15). We can prevent much conflict right here. However, most of the time we would much rather discuss the problem with anyone except the individual involved. Often a direct approach to the individual reveals that the real problem is just a misunderstanding or lack of communication. People do not always hear what we mean. Always give others the benefit of the doubt.

It is important that you ask if this first and most vital step has been followed. If it hasn't, then insist that it be followed before you become too involved. If the individual says the problem really isn't that important anyway, you have saved yourself some grief. However, if a person is unwilling to take this step and instead informs others of the problem, that person becomes part of the conflict and should be subject to church discipline for actions in violation of a direct command of Scripture.

Step 2: "If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses'" (verses 15, 16). If there is no resolution after a personal visit, then the persons involved need the help of a third party.



J. David Newman

It is crucial to choose the right third person. Remember, the purpose of the visit is to clear up a problem, to help someone, or simply to communicate more effectively. If you take along one of your friends who has no special relationship to the other person, all you do is further intimidate the one you visit. The third party should be one who has the mutual respect of both sides. The purpose of having a third party is to help bridge the gap between the two sides, to help in the listening process, and to filter out some of the emotional roadblocks that have developed.

This step may take some time and involve several meetings. It is amazing how effective having a third party present can be. Since both sides trust this person, they will listen to him when they are not listening to each other.

Step 3: "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church" (verse 17). Only after the first two steps are followed should anyone else be involved. Now it is appropriate to discuss it at an elders' meeting or a church board session. The group must develop comprehensive strategies so that the fellowship of the church is not hurt or destroyed.

If you have followed steps 1 and 2, you will find that you do not have to worry so much about step 3. It is because the first two steps are often omitted that church boards have to spend so much time debating interpersonal issues.

Step 4: "If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (verse 17). This is the final and most drastic step. If the situation deteriorates to the place where the very life of the church is threatened, and if no more help can be given, then to save the body the person or persons need to be disciplined, maybe even disfellowshipped. No one has a right to keep disrupting the body.

Yes, we do have a duty to deal with the faults of others, but to quote Paul again, we must do it "gently" and watch ourselves, or we might be tempted. We must go with the spirit of Jesus lest we add fuel to the fire. If we will pray for love and learn to love, we will find little need to be in conflict, for true love covers "a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).—J. David Newman.

* Texts in this article are from the New International Version.

Religion and Communism

From page 9

bound in one volume.

Our church in Czechoslovakia owns, with official permission, a very good offset press and several binding machines. The church has had books printed for it by the state and has also printed its own. It publishes a children's magazine entitled *Little Light,* and is preparing a new church hymnal. At the present our press is located 100 miles outside of Prague, but the church has purchased a new property in Prague and is in the process of remodeling the building and moving the press.

Czechoslovakia operates on a five-day workweek, so Adventist children do not have to face the question of attending school on Saturday. Although the state controls the educational program of its citizens, our church is allowed to conduct Sabbath schools for our young people on Saturday mornings.

We are also allowed to run a theological training program on the second weekend of the month 10 months a year. For this program we bring together students from all over the nation on Friday afternoon, meet all day Sabbath, and end our program on Sunday afternoon.

Twenty of our students are allowed to attend a seminary in Prague. Our headquarters office in Prague receives 15 copies of MINISTRY magazine every month. Permission to bring in books and materials for our church program is not difficult to secure.

As we came to the end of our six-week tour, we felt that God truly is blessing the Christian work in all these countries. The challenge is great not only here but throughout the whole world. What we do to prepare a people for the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ we must do quickly.

The question raised earlier comes to those of us in the West, too: Are we making use of all the opportunities and liberties we have for sharing the good news with the world?

Alcohol and the pregnant woman

Elizabeth Sterndale

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Down's syndrome, and spina bifida are the three most common problems leading to mental retardation in newborns. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is the direct result of alcohol in the mother's blood transferring to the blood of the unborn child. Each year some 3,000 to 5,000 babies born in the United States have FAS—and this is probably a low estimate because many of the symptoms of FAS are not apparent at birth or in the early months of childhood.[1]

FAS is a group of defects and symptoms exhibited in varying degrees in the children of drinking mothers. Some babies and young children are diagnosed quickly and easily as having FAS. The symptoms of others are barely perceivable at birth. Only as the child goes through some of the developmental stages and fails to keep up with the accepted norm is the syndrome diagnosed.

Yet FAS is preventable. Women who do not drink do not produce children with FAS. But pregnant women who take alcohol into their systems in any form are giving alcohol directly to their unborn babies. And the concentration of alcohol in the baby's blood is double that in the mother's blood. Alcohol is metabolized through the liver; the fetus, however, must release that alcohol back into the mother's circulatory system for elimination from its body.

Elizabeth Sterndale, R.N., M.S., is an associate director for the Department of Health and Temperance of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

At birth the average American infant weighs 7.2 pounds, with only 7 percent weighing less than 5.5 pounds.[2] In contrast, the average FAS infant weighs less than 4.5 pounds, and 75 percent of these infants weigh less than 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams).[3] This low birth weight is a good predictor of increased sickness and mortality.

FAS is characterized by several birth defects, including irreversible mental retardation, delayed development or motor retardation, and distortion of physical features. There may be problems in any one of the body's major organ systems. Frequently the baby has a small head and distinctive facial features: a flat profile, small eyes, short nose, ears set low, and sometimes other deformities. The IQ of an FAS child averages between 65 and 70. The child may manifest hyperactivity, learning disabilities, and motor disturbances that may include fine and gross motor activity.

FAS has been divided into three classifications: true FAS children, those manifesting all symptoms; moderate FAS children, those showing some functional impairment and physical signs; and mild FAS children, those with only from one to a few minor signs.

Researchers are still debating the mechanism by which alcohol affects the infant. But we know quite a bit about the effects of alcohol. Evidence shows that alcohol inhibits cell multiplication, which is vital to the developing embryo or fetus. In addition alcohol, even in low doses, may cause a decrease in oxygen delivery to the fetus by causing constriction of the umbilical artery. Unlike the moderate constriction that occurs with low doses, high doses bring severe prolonged constriction or even complete collapse of the blood vessels in the umbilical cord. This then leads to fetal oxygen deficiency.[4, 5]

A recent Swedish study reported that children of alcoholic women showed an IQ score 15 to 19 points below that of a control group of normal children. One half of the children of alcoholic women showed signs of FAS and had lower IQ scores than those who did not show signs of FAS. Sixty percent showed signs of hyperactivity, distractibility, and short attention span, and one-third showed signs of low perseverance.[6]

At what stage of her pregnancy, then, should a woman stop drinking? How much alcohol is safe during pregnancy? Studies indicate that even when a woman isn't drinking enough to be considered an alcoholic, her drinking has a negative effect on her baby. Researchers have been unable to show how much, if any, alcohol can be consumed without harming the unborn. If a woman wants assurance that no harm will come to the unborn, she should stop drinking before she becomes pregnant. In terms of deformities, the greatest harm occurs during the early weeks of pregnancy, the very time when the woman may not know that she is pregnant.

In July 1981 the United States surgeon general mailed a bulletin to more than 1 million physicians and health professionals in the United States. It said, "The surgeon general advises women who are pregnant (or considering pregnancy) not to drink alcoholic beverages and to beware of the alcoholic content of food and drugs."[7] "Even if she does not

bear a child with full FAS, a woman who drinks heavily is more likely to bear a child with one or more of the birth defects included in the syndrome. [Small head size,] which is associated with mental impairment, is one of the most common of these defects."[8]

Two years after the surgeon general's recommendation, the American Medical Association's Council on Scientific Affairs also came out against the use of alcohol during pregnancy. Their statement presented clear evidence tying heavy alcohol consumption with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Though the evidence was still not clear as to the effect of less-than-heavy drinking on fetal outcome, the AMA recommended that "physicians should be explicit in reinforcing the concept that, with several aspects of the issue still in doubt, the safest course is abstinence."[9]

Babies born to a mother with alcohol in her system at birth go through withdrawal symptoms. Children of alcoholic mothers may be born alcoholics. The day they take their first alcoholic drink, they may exhibit every symptom and have all the problems of an alcoholic. This first drink may come any time in life. These children do not develop alcoholism over a period of time. They *are* alcoholics from the very first drink.

To prevent FAS, women must refrain from alcohol use immediately prior to and during pregnancy. Getting them to abstain during these times means we must teach them values before they make the decision to imbibe alcohol. They learn these values from parents, from society (including school and church), and from immediate peers.

Our efforts at prevention should focus on assisting the community to control alcohol and alcoholism effectively. The church in its preventive measures needs to consider both the smaller community of its own members and the larger community that surrounds it. The church's role includes both ministry and mission. Ministry means tenderly supporting those in the church and those who come to the church for help. Mission includes the church's outreach to let people know that the church has a ministry to offer. The church must confront individuals with the facts and then comfort them as it helps them change their lifestyles. The church can then present natural remedies as alternatives.

Education for both parents and children should be given early. Two types of parent and teacher groups are needed: information groups involving the total community, and "squeal" groups consisting of parents and teachers who encourage one another to speak up when they have concerns about local drug and alcohol use. As parents listen to the squealing of others, they can lovingly confront their children with their behavior. This will make them better chaperons for children's parties and better observers of children's behavior.

The church should support Alcoholics Anonymous and its related bodies (Al-Anon, Alateen, etc.), and encourage members to use these groups. It can also provide further support for its members through small groups within the church. And to have a broader impact in the community the church can get involved with action groups, such as SADD, MADD, and Straight, that are campaigning against alcohol and drugs.

Parents should be role models of nonalcoholic behavior not only to their children but to the community. Since 10 percent of social drinkers become alcoholics, we must not consider social drinking acceptable. Yet we must help the drinker feel accepted and assist him or her to a healthful lifestyle that excludes alcohol.

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[2] L. J. Querec and E. Spratley, "Characteristics of Births in the United States, 1973-1975," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 21, No. 3 (Hyattsville, Md.: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978).

[3] E. L. Abel, "Prenatal Effects of Alcohol on Growth: A Brief Overview," *Federation Proceedings* 44, No. 7 (April 1985): 2318-2322.

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[6] M. Aronson, M. Kyllerman, K. G. Sabel, B. Sandin, and R. Olegard, "Children of Alcoholic Mothers: Developmental, Perceptual, and Behavioral Characteristics as Compared to Matched Controls," *Acta Paediatrica Scand.* 74, No. 1 (January 1985): 27-35.

[7] *FDA Drug Bulletin* 11, No. 2 (July 1981).

[8] National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism, *Preventing Fetal Alcohol Effects: A Practical Guide for OB/GYN Physicians and Nurses*, Publication No. (ADM)81-1163 (United States Department of Health and Human Services 1981).

[9] Council on Scientific Affairs, "Fetal Effects of Maternal Alcohol Use," *JAMA* 249, No. 18 (May 13, 1983): 2517-2521.

Data Base Management and Church Growth

James Ellithorpe

Can a computer data base management system guarantee growth for your church? Of course not, but it can help. What follows is a description of how I use a data base to help locate and minister to prime interests. I use the ENABLE integrated software package, which includes a data base management system (DBMS) along with other important features such as a word processor and spreadsheet.

My DBMS keeps track of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of members and interests in my area. I add other important data to each person's record, including level of interest, date of inquiry, most recent pastoral visit, comments, and codes I define to give me further information about the person.

While I could keep track of all that information in a Rolodex card file, the DBMS will do much more than a simple card. For starters it will sort my file alphabetically, or according to postal zip codes, and even alphabetically within each zip code. Better yet, it will selectively sort my file—pulling only names of those who have attended two or more seminars, for instance.

I keep track of about 350 interests—people who are not church members but who have some relationship to the church. Whenever we are planning a seminar or health-related program, I have the DBMS sort the whole file and print a personalized invitation and envelope for each person. Since the letters and envelopes are sorted by zip code, it is easy to bundle them for bulk mailing.

When people come to a church-sponsored event, they fill out a form giving us their name and address. If they are new, we enter their information into the computer; if they have come before, we simply update their record. Then the next time we sponsor an event, they automatically get an invitation.

I can also selectively sort my file. If I want to send a special letter to those who have attended a health-related program in the past year, the DBMS can quickly find all of those people and send my letter to them.

Periodically, I have the DBMS give me a list of people who have attended more than one event recently. This helps me prioritize my visitation schedule so I can stop by and talk and pray with those who show the most interest. After my visit I can tell the DBMS my assessment of the level of interest, or make notes about special needs.

Of course setting up my DBMS to record the data I wanted took time at the start—several days in fact—but since then it has saved me time. If you don't have the time or inclination to set up your own DBMS, I would be glad to share the definitions and input screens that I use with the ENABLE software package. For more information, phone me at (518) 798-1631.

A DBMS cannot guarantee church growth. Computers do not win souls, but a warm body appearing on the front porch at the right time may be just the key to helping a person make the most important decision of his (eternal) life.

(A Software Information Packet describing various integrated DBMS systems and other software for church use is available from MINISTRY, *6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012 for $4.00.)*

James Ellithorpe, a pastor and computer consultant, writes from Glens Falls, New York.

Forced Termination

Brooks R. Faulkner, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1986, 120 pages, $4.95, paper. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, Sabbath school and Stewardship director, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

This short, valuable, and relevant book is clear, direct, and easy to read. No pastor will read it without experiencing a sense of the serious nature of his call to serve God.

Although written from a Baptist perspective, its message transcends denominational boundaries. It deals with those situations in which the pastor has few options other than resignation—situations that all religious groups are being forced to face.

The book's subtitle is significant: "Redemptive options for ministers and churches." Chapter headings such as "Why Ministers Become Expendable," "Why Churches Become Dissatisfied With Ministers," "Retraining: The Ultimate Option," and "Steps to Take to Terminate" reflect the practical, down-to-earth nature of the book.

Crises can be precipitated by a variety of conceptions and misconceptions. Midcareer can bring a pastor to a crisis point, as can entrance into the 50s. Maturing pastors may view young, intelligent, able graduates as threatening figures.

This is a compassionate, constructive, understanding, and helpful response to the problems of ending a ministry. Ministers are not held in awe and unquestioned esteem as they once were. Churches today feel that they have the right to challenge their pastors. Cool heads and Christian hearts are invaluable in the tension that a church/pastor conflict generates.

This book is relevant to any ministry. It may well ring a few warning bells. Certainly it will remind a pastor that God can and will richly bless his ministry. He can make it satisfying and fulfilling, but He cannot do it without our cooperation and commitment. If these elements are missing, we are headed for trouble—perhaps for a forced termination. Faulkner's counsel is well comprehended in the proverb "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."

Studies in Creation

John W. Klotz, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 216 pages, $9.95, paper. Reviewed by Harold G. Coffin, Geoscience Institute, Loma Linda, California.

John W. Klotz, a professor at Concordia Seminary, has degrees in both theology and biology. A previous work *Genes, Genesis, and Evolution* has been used for many years by those interested in creation and evolution. This volume provides a good summary of the conflict between creation and evolution, and the evidences for and against each, though a reader without a strong interest in the subject may not find this book exciting.

The author is least qualified in the area of paleontology (with the possible exception of his discussion of ancient man). He overplays the importance of imperfections in the fossil record, and he seems too impressed with differences between fossil organisms and their modern counterparts. It is true that fossil organisms usually are different species and genera than their living counterparts, but family and higher classification categories are often the same. Because of their belief in the geologic time scale and the theory of evolution, some taxonomists have been biased in their assignments of fossils to new genera and species.

One thing annoyed me as I read. Klotz fails to clearly differentiate between expressing his own position and describing the prevailing position of the scientific community concerning time and geologic processes. If in these ambiguous passages he is expressing his own interpretation, he seems overly convinced by arguments for long geologic ages. If, on the other hand, he is merely expressing others' views, his readers would have benefited from a discussion of catastrophe as a possible explanation of what we observe.

The 10-to-20-billion-year age of the earth given on page 75 is puzzling. Geochronologists estimate our planet's age at 4.5 billion to 5 billion years.

There are other minor factual errors, but overall the book is helpful, especially to the pastor or teacher who wants to keep abreast of developments in the field of creation studies.

Christians in the Political Arena

Vern McLellan, Associates Press, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1984, 179 pages, $5.95, paper. Reviewed by Clifford Goldstein, editor, Shabbat Shalom, *Washington, D.C.*

Vern McLellan is preaching a new gospel. A gospel of politics. Fed up with the rampant immorality in America, he sounds the shofar, calling fellow believers to enlist in a holy war: "If ever there was a need for patriots—for concerned Christian citizens—in the political arena, that time is now!" he writes.

He makes a strong case for the need of a moral revamping in America. Pages of figures and examples of degeneracy in America fill the book: statistics of drug abuse, divorce, suicide, pornography, child molestation—the gamut of ills that are indeed ruining our nation.

Like Christ, McLellan rails against these moral and spiritual sins. Unlike Christ, he calls the faithful to political action to remedy the situation.

One of the few times Christ even gets mentioned in the book, McLellan uses Him as an example of political involvement (or at least he tries). "Jesus Christ's actions," he writes, "both spiritual and political, were closely watched by the government."

What political actions? McLellan gives no examples.

Jesus stayed out of politics because He knew that mankind's needs were spiritual, not political, and that change will come only when His laws are written on people's hearts, not in their legal codes. The only time Christ even mentioned politics was His appeal that it be kept separate from religion ("Render unto Caesar . . .").

The book does have its valid points. Things in this country have gotten out of hand. We do need to return to a semblance of moral sanity. And Christians, like all citizens, have a right, even

an obligation, to be part of the political system and to help bring needed changes. But McLellan seems to be advocating a total involvement in the government at every level by every Christian. His book is more than just philosophy; it is a handbook giving information and strategies designed to turn the electoral Laodiceans of America into political warriors.

It is a new gospel.

People of the Lie

M. Scott Peck, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1983, 269 pages, $7.95, paper. Reviewed by George Akers, director, Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

When the *Wall Street Journal* called this pioneering discussion by Peck "a ground-breaking book," it was right. Peck, indisputably well-trained and respected as a teacher, researcher, and author in clinical psychology, managed to shake up his profession thoroughly in this straightforward reflection on the essential nature of the human spirit. In addressing the problem of evil, Peck has issued an unapologetic challenge to the conventional wisdom in his field.

He takes on the dilemma of the cosmic conflict through the ages from the vantage point of the psychotherapy chamber. It is fascinating to witness a keen mind such as his hard at work, grappling to reconcile reason and revelation.

Lie could be taken as a quasi-scholarly, popularized inquiry into the nature of evil and the amazing hypocrisy of people. But when Peck advances the notion of inquiry into human orneriness as a serious new frontier of research, it seems that he is firing a shot across the bow of his profession.

The artificial separation between the natural and the supernatural, contends Peck, is a "social contract struck between science and religion," one that grew out of the mutual embarrassment of the Galileo affair, which has immeasurably stifled both ever since. For all its pretenses of liberation and maturity, he asserts, his profession could stand a healthy dose of broad-mindedness. (Science apparently has its own special orthodoxies too!)

The notion of a personal devil is not to be reserved to the Dark Ages, Peck informs us. It's just that professional taboos have so intimidated modern practitioners and researchers in the behavioral sciences that they are afraid to tell the world that which in their inmost souls they strongly suspect to be true (and which has been borne out by many in their own private clinical experience).

Is Peck suggesting that this brand of supercautious professional buddyism is really a denial of high professional integrity—a misrepresentation of truth, and as such a corporate lie? If so, he might in effect be indicting his own profession, dubbing them, rather than their clients, "the people of the lie," coconspirators in a clinical cover-up as it were, weak-souled professionals who have betrayed their calling by withholding from laity what they deserve to know.

I think I hear Peck between the lines warning his colleagues that the great denouement hasteneth on apace, and that the profession is not going to look very good or honest when the truth about the devil is finally out.

Lifeviews: Understanding the Ideas That Shape Society Today

R. C. Sproul, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1986, 220 pages, $13.95. Reviewed by Pastor Wayne Willey, Amesbury, Massachusetts.

Sproul delivers what the title promises—he helps readers to understand better the ideas that shape our society today. He deals with nearly every significant worldview, and his writing is careful, understandable, and very readable. His definitions of terms enable the reader to work past misconceptions that often result from misuse, as when "humanism" is mistaken for "humanitarianism."

While Sproul provides clear insight into the "isms" that shape our society, many readers may take exception to his definition of the Christian's role. He says that "profit is the goal of all economic exchange." If this is the case, what is the difference between Christian and secular businesspersons? While a reasonable profit is necessary to continue one's ministry or service, surely profit itself must not become the chief goal of the Christian.

The concept I find most disturbing is Sproul's thesis that the pluralism and relativism of society today will cause a vacuum that will ultimately result in totalitarianism or statism so that "the good of the 'state' will become the ultimate point of reality." I wonder whether Sproul gives sufficient weight to those studies that show that the majority of Americans still believe in those transcendent realities that have provided a bond of unity in our nation for 200 years, while maintaining separation between organized religion and the state.

I found Sproul's alternatives and applications somewhat inadequate, but the book is still an important work and should be in ministers' libraries not only for its own value but because "as missionaries to our culture, we need to support Christians who will make a serious contribution . . . which will communicate with our culture and influence it for good."

This People, This Parish

Robert K. Hudnut, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, 192 pages, $7.95, paper. Reviewed by David J. Greer, Dean of Shreveport Convocation, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Shreveport, Louisiana.

This rich volume of short essays makes it plain that its author is a lover of God and His people. Hudnut comes across as a person who rejoices in Christian growth by stretching and caring in new ways. He is sensitive to his own hurts and those of his people. As he notes, seminaries ought to make issues of the heart much more central to those they are preparing for the ministry.

As the author describes events, good and bad, in his parish, pastors will see mirror images of themselves. And seeing themselves in this way will help them get in touch with their own feelings and receive a clearer vision of what God can do in the church. How true it is that the medium is the message. A loving pastor reflects Christ and in turn brings out Christ in others.

The book could also be interesting and helpful to lay members who want to encourage their pastor and help the church to grow close to the Lord.

Creative Guides to Successful Family Living

You can have happier, more rewarding relationships with those you love. Family life specialist Nancy Van Pelt shares a wealth of information in these helpful guides.

The Compleat Tween
This guide to adolescence was written especially for 9- to 14-year-olds. It presents the facts of life in a simple, straightforward way, complete with illustrations. Paper, 94 pages, US$5.95, CD$8.35.

The Compleat Courtship
Candidly addresses the major issues confronting young people as they make the decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Paper, 206 pages, US$7.95, CD$11.15. The workbook is designed to be used in group study or individually. Paper, 76 pages, US$4.95, CD$6.95.

The Compleat Marriage
A manual for those considering marriage, for happily married couples, and for those who feel their marriages could be better. Paper, 175 pages, US$7.95, CD$11.15. The workbook provides additional material and tests for self-evaluation. Paper, 76 pages, US$4.95, CD$6.95. Audiocassette (four cassettes), US$12.95, CD$18.15.

The Compleat Parent
A practical guide to parenting that contains advice on discipline, character building, and communication. Paper, 156 pages, US$7.95, CD$11.15. The workbook provides ways for parents to evaluate themselves and their relationship with their children. Paper, 76 pages, US$4.95, CD$6.95.

From This Day Forward
This blueprint for family happiness is perfect for sharing with your friends and neighbors. Dating, courtship, marriage, and parenting are all discussed from a Christian perspective. Paper, 143 pages, US$1.95, CD$2.75. Workbook, US$1.00, CD$1.40.

Available at Adventist Book Centers or call toll-free 1-800-253-3000 (Visa and MasterCard orders only).

Civil Air Patrol chaplaincies available

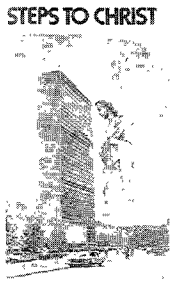
The Civil Air Patrol, an auxiliary of the United States Air Force involved in emergency and ground disaster work, needs chaplains. Those who fill this office will spend between one and three hours each month per squadron; the time of service can be arranged for the convenience of the chaplain. Clergy enrolling as chaplains or part-time (visiting) clergy will be assigned squadrons in their locality.

Interested clergy may write Lt. Col. Abraham Veroba, Group Chaplain, Headquarters, Westchester Group, Civil Air Patrol, Hangar A, Westchester County Airport, White Plains, New York 10604.

Sample book free

In the article on faith and reason that appears in this issue of MINISTRY, Richard Rice refers a couple of times to a chapter entitled "What to Do With Doubt" from the classic *Steps to Christ*. In that book's 13 short, easy-to-understand, but challenging chapters, Ellen G. White considers the whole of Christian experience from a perspective that is both practical and devotional.

We believe you'll agree with us as to this book's value. In fact, we're so sure that when you've read it you'll want to purchase quantities of this book to share with your parishioners (100 paperback copies for $25) that we're offering you a sample copy free. Write to *Steps to Christ* Offer, MINISTRY Services, Box 217, Burtonsville, MD 20866. (The sample copy is yours to keep whether or not you order other copies.)



Health and Happiness

In several of our recent issues we have featured concepts of health that, if put into practice, would prevent many of the diseases rampant today. The book *Health and Happiness* details these principles and more, covering mental, social, and spiritual, as well as physical, health.

While our supply lasts, you can obtain a paperback copy of this book for US$1 (price includes postage). Write to *Health and Happiness*, MINISTRY Services, Box 217, Burtonsville, MD 20866.

Hear the Word of the Lord

We still have a few sets of the New Testament and Psalms and Proverbs on cassette tape. These tapes make for interesting listening; they are, in effect, dramatized, while using the exact words of Scripture. Where the Bible records more than one speaker, the tapes have more than one narrator. And they include sound effects and background music.

We're selling the New Testament tapes (King James Version) for US$29 and the Psalms and Proverbs (specify either King James Version or New International Version) for US$14. Order them from MINISTRY Services, Box 217, Burtonsville, MD 20866.

$10 for your thoughts

We'll pay you $10 for each publishable Shop Talk item that you submit that is not selling a product or service. We're looking for practical ideas for making ministry easier and more effective. Send your ideas to MINISTRY, Attn. Shop Talk Editor, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.