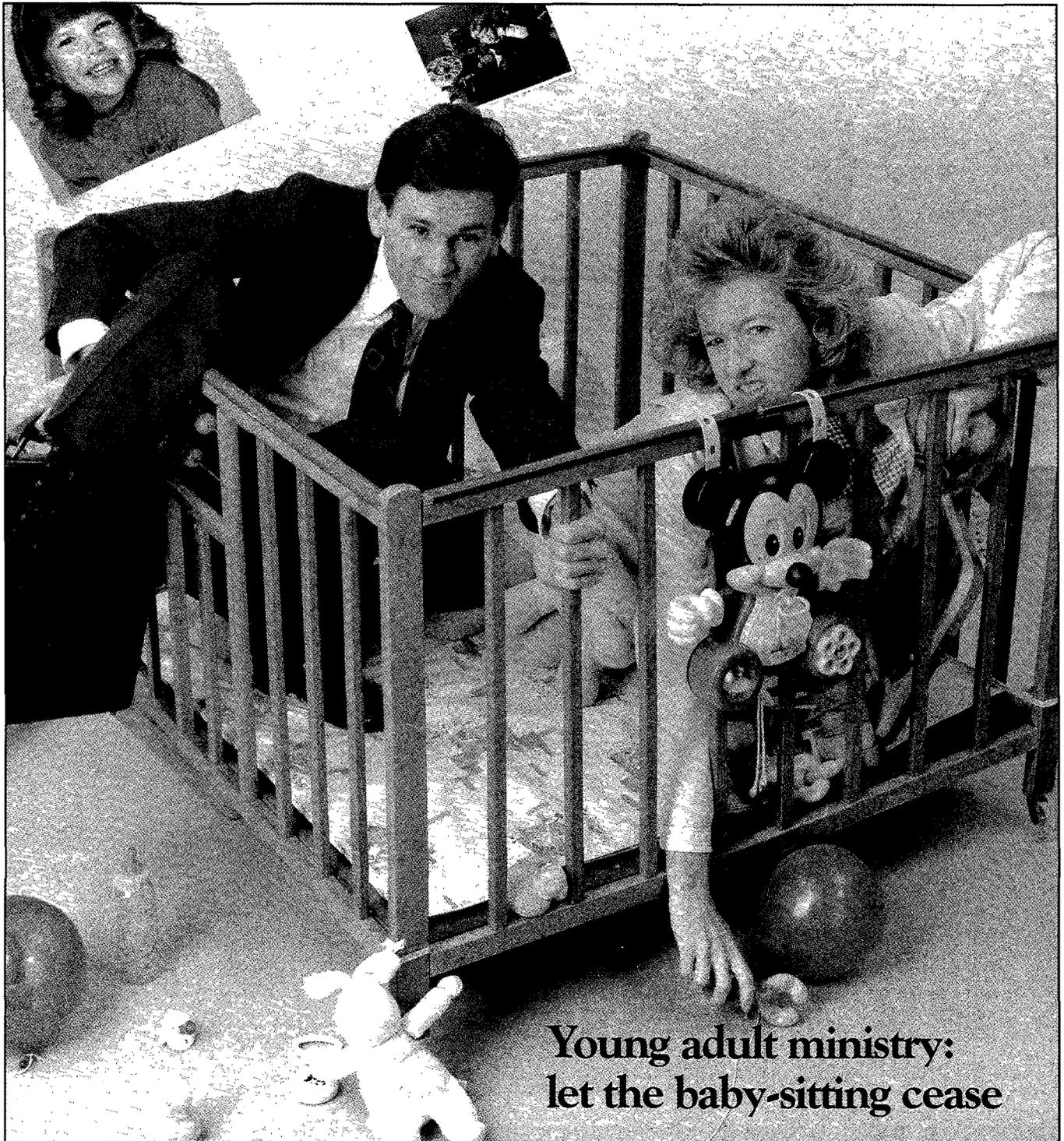


Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

December 1991



**Young adult ministry:
let the baby-sitting cease**

Pleasing cover on the special issue

Your October cover featuring the graphic artistry and calligraphy of Michael Podesta was particularly pleasing to me. I happen to have the same presentation of Psalm 150 hanging on my office wall.

Michael has many more scriptural presentations equally inspiring. It would be helpful to our pastors and churches to know where they might be able to obtain a catalog of the materials he has available. Perhaps some of our churches or conferences might wish to arrange for a showing in their area.—Gary B. Patterson, assistant to the president, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Entitled Trumpets, the picture that appeared on our October special issue on worship is available from the artist, Michael Podesta, 8847 Eclipse Drive, Suffolk, Virginia 23433. Price: \$65 matted and framed; \$40 matted only (14" x 16"); \$32.50 print only (10" x 13").—Editors.

Life, abortion, and the Christian

You have done us a service by publishing "The Christian View of Human Life," by Miroslav M. Kis, and "Abortion: History of Adventist Guidelines," by George B. Gainer (August 1991).

The first article elevated the value of life and its sanctity. The second showed us how far we have fallen away from our original principles. I was heartsick to read of decisions that have been made by some.

I would like to comment on just one point by asking a question. Where in God's revealed Word do we find justification for man to judge in cases of life and death, between the "greater good" and the "lesser good"?

A recent article in *Seminary Studies* (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan) pointed out the danger of reason versus the revealed Word. I suggest that we take another look at the Word. It still says "Thou shalt not kill."—Robert C. McPherson, pastor, Red Wing Seventh-day Adventist Church, Red Wing, Minnesota.

■ The articles by Kis and Gainer were outstanding and informative. While Kis very nicely and succinctly gives us the foundation for our respect for life, Gainer uncovers the unhappy events that have led to great confusion over this issue.

Let's go back to the 1970 abortion guidelines and insist that Adventist hospitals comply with them. While I am very thankful for those Adventist hospitals that have been careful in this area, I feel great sorrow that others have chosen to grant abortion on demand.

The church needs to take a stand and make it clear where we stand.—Jay Gallimore, president, Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Lansing, Michigan.

■ It's too bad that after admitting that abortion is "one of the most divisive social issues," the editor still feels he has to plunge us into the debate.

Surely it should be clear to everyone by now that the fact that this issue has been debated ad nauseam is an indication that neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy makes a clear, unequivocal statement on the interruption of pregnancy, a practice as old as time itself.

It would seem that if we as a church want to make a contribution in this area, it should be in teaching teenagers how to avoid unwanted pregnancies, or in showing love and care for the thousands of unwanted and unloved children roaming the streets. But I see us making no great effort in either of these directions.

Could it be that we prefer a debate more than we do a demonstration of love and compassion?—Paul F. Bork, Ph.D., Napa, California.

■ The article "The Christian View of Human Life" points out a serious weakness that our church has. We can no longer make a decision unless we go through several committees, and then a decision is not really reached. The abortion issue is a classic example.

Have we become so intoxicated by

the praise of the world that we want to retain our "good" image even if it means not calling sin *sin*? I believe we again should let the world know where we stand whether such a stand is popular or not. The question is: Are we standing with God?—Ralph Harmon, Amarillo, Texas.

■ I call on all SDA pastors and laypersons who feel strongly that the slaughter of innocents in our hospitals must end to move as God directs them and to petition current church leaders to repudiate the liberalized abortion guidelines (as amended in 1971), and to reject the Christian View of Human Life Committee's draft statement (*Ministry*, July 1990) that would add a pregnancy's adverse effects on a woman's mental health as another justification for abortion. Again, let those who regard abortion on demand as legalized murder take action to at least end this outrage in SDA institutions, or be prepared to answer before God for their indifference and inaction. We've been expending and exhausting ourselves for years debating wedding rings, women's ordination, the human nature of Christ, and just about everything else. What difference will any of it ever make if we can't stop church hospitals from offering abortions?—Kenneth B. Blake, pastor, Purlear, North Carolina.

■ Dr. Kis's article "The Christian View of Human Life" was well thought out and presented. I think it gives a good background for forming an attitude toward abortion. Of course, a single short article can't address all phases of a question, but a little personal experience would help in applying to everyday life the principles he cites.

For example: Has he had close contact with a child who has had complete cerebral cortical destruction so that feeding can be accomplished only by gastrostomy? No voluntary or involun-

(Continued on page 27)

Do you find the month longer than the paycheck? Are there unpaid bills, looming commitments, cherished desires, but no way to meet them? Have you ever felt that it is impossible to survive on a pastor's salary amid escalating costs and a shrinking economy? This month two authors share their experiences. Celia Cruz in the North American Division office discusses the budget dilemma of a minister's family. Karen Holford from England suggests earning options for pastors' spouses.

From family finances we move to the problem of ecclesiastic baby-sitting. One of the temptations facing the minister is to assume the role of an authoritative parent and provide pastoral care from that perspective. Gary Russell examines the issue in "Young Adult Ministry," and calls for a ministry that will assist the process of ensuring one's faith and commitment.

This issue also carries a report on the Annual Council in Perth, Australia. In addition to voting some cost-effective and work-efficient changes in church governance strategies and procedures at the General Conference headquarters, the council took three significant actions: (1) to declare 1993 as Year of the Pastor (p. 20); (2) to set up a commission on world church organization and another on the life of the church; and (3) to adopt a declaration on Adventism's role in today's world (pp. 18, 19).



Cover photo by Todd Park

Ministry is the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association

ASSOCIATION SECRETARY:
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EDITOR:
J. David Newman

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:
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EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:
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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Carlos Aeschlimann
Galen Bosley
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James Zachary

EDITOR EMERITUS
J. Robert Spangler

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Russell L. Staples
Sally Streib
Richard Tibbits

INTERNATIONAL
CORRESPONDENTS:
Walton Whaley, Ministerial Secretary
Africa-Indian Ocean Division of SDA
22 Boite Postale 1764
Abidjan 22, Cote d'Ivoire
West Africa

Baraka Muganda, Ministerial Secretary
Eastern Africa Division of SDA
PO Box H G 100
Highlands, Harare
Zimbabwe, Africa

Johannes Mager, Ministerial Secretary
Euro-Africa Division of SDA
P. O. Box 219, CH3000
Berne 32, Switzerland

V. F. Bocala, Ministerial Secretary
Far Eastern Division of SDA
800 Thomson Road
Singapore 1129, Republic of Singapore

Jaime Castrejon, Ministerial Secretary
Inter-American Division of SDA
P.O. Box 140760
Miami, FL 33114-0760

William C. Scales, Jr., Ministerial Secretary
North American Division of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600
Amasias Justiniano, Ministerial Secretary
South American Division of SDA
Caixa Postal 12-2600
70279 Brasilia, DF, Brazil

John H. Gate, Ministerial Secretary
South Pacific Division of SDA
148 Fox Valley Road
Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076, Australia
P. V. Jesudas, Ministerial Secretary
Southern Asia Division of SDA
SDA Complex
Post Box 2, HCF
Tamil Nadu, India

A. David C. Currie, Ministerial Secretary
Trans-European Division of SDA
119 St. Peter's Street
St. Albans, Herts, AL1 3EY, England
Mikhail P. Kulakov
ul. Severodvinskaya 9
Apt. 407
Moscow 129224
USSR

ART DIRECTOR:
Bill Kirstein
DESIGNER:
G. W. Busch

MARKETING:
Ginger Church

ADVERTISING SALES:
Michelle Rader

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:
Larry Butnett

Ministry, (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1991, is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A. Subscriptions: US\$22.00 for 12 issues worldwide. Single copy US\$2.25. US\$39.85 for 12 issues air mail worldwide. Member Associated Church Press. Second-class postage paid at Hagerstown, Maryland. This publication is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International. Call toll-free 1-800-521-3044. Or mail inquiry to: University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Editorial Office: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD, 20904. Stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts. Office telephone: 301-680-6510

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Ministry*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

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How candid should *Ministry* be?

J. David Newman

Why does *Ministry* publish controversial articles?"

"*Ministry* should publish more controversial articles."

"I like to read *Leadership* more than *Ministry*."

"*Ministry* doesn't publish enough Black writers."

"*Ministry* does not publish enough articles by pastors."

"*Ministry* does not publish enough authors from overseas."

"*Ministry* does not publish enough on public evangelism."

"I wish there were more theological articles in *Ministry*."

"I wish . . ."

Do you have a wish to add to the list? I could add many more from the various questions raised about the purpose and editorial stance of *Ministry*.

Ministry has grown and changed much—from a digest (5" x 7½") in 1928 to a full journal of 32 pages in 1991; from a readership of a handful of ministers, mainly in North America, to 15,500 subscribers every month, half of whom reside outside North America, and then to an additional 65,000 ministers of other denominations. Our regular mailing list also includes 1,700 laypeople who subscribe on their own.

The monthly *Ministry* currently reaches only English-speaking pastors. However, many of its articles are translated into Spanish for the Latin American quarterly edition of *Ministry*. One of our goals is to have a regular edition in French and in Spanish.

Each year we publish articles within the following categories: minister's personal life, family and spouse, theolog-

ical and biblical studies, professional skills, issues in the church, and reports. At our planning retreat we vote percentages for each of these categories so that we keep a balance during the year.

Further goals include 60 percent of articles written by pastors or their spouses, with a minimum of 20 percent of articles coming from overseas. We have recently begun an elders' column that we hope will become a regular feature.

Since pastors constitute the major portion of our readership, we target our articles mainly to ministers. However, we do face a dilemma in that the magazine simultaneously has to meet the varying needs of pastors of a wide range of congregations, from highly sophisticated churches in large cities or connected with institutions to simple rural churches. That is part of the reason our magazine does not always read like *Leadership*. We cannot cover just one area of ministry—the professional skill areas. We have to cover a wide range of issues relating to theology, the church, science and religion—and also meet the needs of a nationally and culturally diverse audience.

There are benefits from reading an article written by a Third World pastor. It enables a world church to have a feeling of unity. It lets the First World know a little bit of how the Third World is thinking. Instead of the Third World pastor always receiving, he can now make his contribution to the denomination's ministerial magazine.

Controversial issues

Some question why we publish articles such as "Does Our Past Embarrass Us?" (April 1991). We do so for several

reasons: (1) while truth never changes, it needs to be dressed in its cultural context; (2) some concepts that were adequate for one generation may no longer be adequate today; (3) while principle never changes, application may—we need to understand the difference; (4) many pastors begin to lose faith in the church if its leaders and magazines are unwilling to face or discuss controversial issues. Credibility is enhanced when the church is candid about the problems it faces.

When Robert Spangler called me to work here, he presented three reasons I should come. The one that caught my attention concerned investigative reporting. He wanted to cover church issues that are often left to independent journals to report on. Why shouldn't church papers discuss issues confronting the church?

Our desire is to build credibility in the church, not destroy it. We want our doctrines and structure to be firmly rooted in Scripture, not in tradition. We can always find a better way to state what we believe.

We often send articles to our consulting editors and other individuals for review and counsel. As a result we have not published some authors.

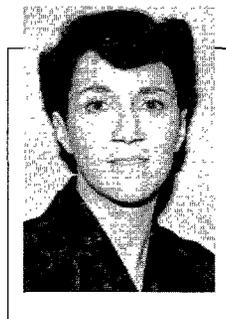
The burden of this magazine is to exalt Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the answer to every need. The strength of the Seventh-day Adventist Church lies, not in its unique doctrines, important as they may be, but in how well it is presenting Jesus Christ and His righteousness. And in doing that we need to be candid and truthful even as the Bible is.

The Associated Church Press (of
(Continued on page 27)

How to solve the budget dilemma

Celia Cruz

Stay out of debt and stretch your paycheck to the limit with the help of these strategies.



Celia Cruz is a pastor's wife, the mother of five children, and an administrative secretary in the North American Division office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The room is quiet except for the ticking of the clock on the mantel and the steady, rhythmic breathing of my dog peacefully sleeping by my feet. My husband and children are in their beds dreaming pleasant dreams. It is two minutes until midnight, and the light from a full moon is shining through the kitchen window. On the table in front of me are the checkbook, pen, calculator, a stack of bills to be paid, and a bank statement waiting to be balanced. How I dread this time of the month! Will we ever have enough money to cover all the bills? I breathe a silent prayer for a miracle and for wisdom as I begin the painful task of balancing the budget again.

Does this scene sound familiar? Are you caught in the trap of more bills than money? Are the clergy's families the only segment of society facing this problem? Is the problem really one of too little pay, or is it one of confused priorities and uncontrolled spending?

For years we lived from month to month, stretching each penny, hoping to have a tax refund to use for a vacation, struggling with the bills for five children in church school and academy, and trying to keep everyone clothed and the car running. It seemed that no matter how hard we tried and how much we prayed, we were never able to save a cent, even though I helped supplement the income by baby-sitting at home.

While searching for a solution to our financial dilemma, I have amassed some interesting information I would like to

share with you. You see, the scope of the problem is much broader than how tight a pastor's budget may be; it encompasses our whole society, including the young.

According to the March 20, 1989, issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, 25 million children between the ages of 9 and 15—"tweens"—buy or influence the purchase of \$45 billion worth of goods a year. Where are they and their parents getting this money? The magazine article attributes the major portion of these purchases to credit card usage.

More than 30 percent of Americans draw some form of government subsidy (welfare), and more than 65 percent of all Americans have borrowed more money than they can ever repay in their entire lifetime, says Larry Burkett, of Christian Financial Concepts. In 1990 a nightly business-news program reported that the average American family spends most of its annual income to pay off debts.

In just the first 10 months of 1990, more than 753,000 bankruptcy cases were filed, which is two and a half times the number filed in 1986! The catch is that once people have filed for bankruptcy they cannot file again for seven years. This leaves habitual debtors vulnerable to creditors, who are more than willing to lend them money again, knowing full well that now they must pay their bills and have no easy way out of debt. Besides that, now that they have a bad credit rating, they will have to pay a higher interest rate on the money they borrow.

What we do in managing our money is a clear indicator of what is happening in our spiritual life. We cannot live like the world and still do God's will. We are His stewards.

The spiritual implications of spending

Of course, Christians have a responsibility to pay their bills, stay out of debt, and not allow their finances to become an embarrassment culminating in bankruptcy. The Lord has given us counsel on this. For example, we read in Psalm 37:21 that the person who borrows and does not repay is wicked. Luke 16:12 tells us that if we cannot be trusted with someone else's property (money), we will not have property of our own. In *The Adventist Home* Ellen White advises us to pay as we go, know what we can call our own, learn when to spare and when to spend, and be careful that our expenses do not exceed our income (pp. 392-394).

One of the perils of using credit cards is that it encourages spending what we do not have. Some experts estimate that a family using credit cards spends 25 percent more per year than a family without credit cards. Credit card families buy more often, pay higher prices, and are not as prudent in what they buy. This is why merchants are more than willing to sell on credit—it boosts their sales. The credit card is not the real problem; the misuse of it is the problem!

What we do in our management of money is a clear indicator of what is happening in our spiritual life. The world tells us that possessions equal pleasure and success. In our self-centered society everyone tries to get as much pleasure out of life as possible. Could it be that many Christians have

unwittingly taken on the world's mindset? We seem to have forgotten that we are the stewards of the possessions God has given us to manage. We cannot live like the world does and still do God's will.

What does stewardship mean? Is it limited to paying our tithe and offerings, or does it encompass our whole life and lifestyle? I believe God expects us to be faithful with the 80 to 85 percent we have left after paying our tithe and offerings. Let us compare our stewardship to the parable Jesus told of the wealthy land owner and his servants (Matt. 25:14-30). The wealthy man gave each servant a different amount of money and said to invest it. The money did not belong to the stewards; they were just to use it to benefit the owner. The two servants who wisely invested what the master gave them were praised and blessed. The one servant who did nothing with the money was condemned. Likewise, we are God's stewards. He expects us to use wisely and to His honor all that He gives us.

Just how is it possible to survive on a pastor's salary amidst a shrinking economy in which inflation escalates almost daily? My experience has shown that survival on a pastor's salary depends on two things: controlling spending and setting up a yearly budget and financial goals.

How to control spending

The following suggestions have helped me control spending:

1. Keep a diary of your spending for 30 days. Put down every nickel you spend. List categories—housing, food, cleaning supplies, clothing, recreation/entertainment, medical needs, transportation, etc.

2. At the end of 30 days, add everything up and find out what it cost you to live during that time. Where can you trim your spending?

When I present this concept to people, I get mixed responses. Some are willing to expose their spending habits; others are afraid to let their spouse see how free they are with the money, and some feel that their authority is being threatened. Of course, this entire process will work only if you and your spouse agree to cooperate.

3. Be willing to change your attitude

toward borrowing; make changes to reverse the process.

4. Determine what your financial goal is for one year, two years, and five years. Setting a goal gives you something to aim at.

When we first went on this program years ago, we set as our first goal to be out of debt in one year (except for our house and car payments). The thought was overwhelming because we had so many debts, but we decided we had nothing to lose. Our finances could not be any worse than they were.

5. Commit yourself to living on what you make—no credit cards and no bank loans (except for buying a home).

This can be very hard to do if you are locked into a high-cost area of the country. Years ago it was much easier to accept a pastoral call and move the family to a new area. But today, with the cost of living being totally out of proportion with pastoral salaries, it has become necessary to study carefully each call to determine the financial impact the move would have on the family.

6. Stop using credit and stop doing impulse buying. We get into debt by spending money we do not have. The only way out of debt is to underspend. If you do not borrow money, you will not get into debt. If you stop borrowing money, you will not get further into debt.

7. Begin paying off your debts. You probably will not be able to pay off your house, but pay off your car, credit cards, small loans, etc.

As we paid off each small loan, it freed up money to apply toward another debt. Instead of taking 12 months to pay off all our debts, we were able to do it in 8 months! We were thrilled! As a matter of fact, we celebrated with a party.

8. Discover ways to cut your expenses. Find a salvage depot where you can buy dry food items like beans, rice, and canned foods at very discounted prices, and a farmers' market where you can buy vegetables and fruits by the bushel and save. If a bushel seems like more than you can use, find another family willing to split it with you.

In one place we lived we found a salvage depot where we could buy many items for a fraction of their cost. Once we bought a 100-pound bag of sesame seeds for \$1.00! We put them into

quart-size freezer bags, gave a lot away, and still had sesame seeds for several years. I put them in homemade granola, sandwich spreads, bread, crackers, and everything else I could think of.

In another town, I joined a local co-op where I could buy food items at a lower price than at the grocery store and make new friends from other faiths at the same time.

9. Begin the habit of saving—even if it is only \$10 a month.

As you are able, put more aside. Soon you will be surprised by how much you have. Do you realize that if you start brown-bagging your lunch on workdays instead of eating out, you will save about \$1,000 a year? Double this amount if your working spouse does the same thing.

How to set up your yearly budget and financial goals

Setting up a yearly budget and deciding on financial goals is a tremendous help. The following budget allocations are only a guide. You can adapt them to your own situation and income. This sample budget assumes that your taxes have already been deducted.

Tithe	10.0%
Offerings	5.0%
House	25.0%
Mortgage/Rent	
Electricity	
Water and Sewer	
Natural Gas	
Telephone	
*Furniture and Repairs	
Food	8.0%
Transportation	10.0%
Car Payment	
*Insurance	
*Repairs and Tires	
Child Care/Education	16.0%
Debts	5.0%
Allowance Husband and Wife	2.0%
Medical	2.0%
*Medical Insurance	2.0%
*Clothing	3.0%
*Christmas	1.5%
* Vacation and Entertainment	4.0%
*Miscellaneous	1.5%
*Savings	5.05%
	100.0%

As you can see, some of these expenses are fixed monthly expenses and others are yearly (the asterisks denote

the ones that are yearly). Set up sub-accounts to take care of each budget item. That way, when the money is needed for a specific thing, it has already been set aside, saving you a lot of anxiety.

Here are some suggestions concerning the yearly budget items:

1. Furniture: Look in the local newspapers and advertising papers for ads about moving sales and furniture salvage stores. We have been able to buy good-quality furniture for a fraction of the cost this way. We found a salvage depot selling furniture that had been in a warehouse fire. The only thing wrong with it was that it was smoke-stained. We bought dressers, chests of drawers, nightstands, and bed frames, and cleaned them thoroughly at home—good as new. That was in 1974. We still have the furniture, and it still looks good after weathering 10 subsequent moves.

2. Clothing: Establish a clothing budget for each member of the family. We give all our children over 12 years old their own clothing allowance, letting them decide what they need and then having them make their own purchases. They have learned to shop for bargains, no longer turning up their noses at the idea of patronizing clothing stores. They take much better care of what they have paid for, and have learned to save some of their money for big items like winter coats, shoes, boots, etc. A side benefit for us is that they no longer come to us asking for new things.

3. Christmas: We decide how much we can afford to spend on each member of the family for Christmas, and we save with that in mind. As I find items on sale throughout the year, I can buy them and put them away because I already have money to shop with. Careful planning even makes it possible to begin next year's shopping at this year's after-Christmas sales.

4. Vacation: Be innovative; find ways to take a vacation on less money. Maybe you can go camping or take day trips to interesting places nearby.

5. Entertainment: Determine how much you can afford to spend on entertainment during the year and divide that amount by 12 months. This includes renting videos, sports, eating out, having a party, miniature golf,

Survival on a pastor's salary depends on two things: controlling spending and setting up a yearly budget and financial goals.

hobbies, etc. If you do not spend everything in a given month, the next month you can do something extra-special.

6. Miscellaneous: Choose a certain amount to put in a miscellaneous fund, specifying what kinds of things it can be used for. We use ours for buying birthday presents, flowers and cards for the sick, and any other legitimate need that does not already fit in one of our other categories.

7. Savings: Put something aside regularly throughout the year to make the long-term goals you set a reality, such as a new car, a nicer house, college education for the kids, etc. You and your spouse know what you need or would like to have. Setting specific goals you want fulfilled makes it easier to save.

As we pledge ourselves to giving God His portion first and to turning our finances around and being faithful stewards of all He entrusts us with, we can claim the promise found in Deuteronomy: "The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, and not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom" (28:12, 13, NIV). ■

How to stay at home and still earn money!

Karen Holford

Are you a spouse who needs the money and yet can't go out to earn it? Consider the flexible option of working from your own living room.



Karen Holford teams with her pastor-husband in family ministry in south England.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a job that fits around your children's needs, your husband's schedule, and your own talents? A job that helps toward a camping trip, flute lessons, a decent outfit, presents for the family. A job that brings you into contact with other people. A job you enjoy.

For a pastor's wife, working from home could be an exciting option! You choose the hours. You are your own boss. You take on no more than what you can handle. You do what you enjoy the most, and what fits your skills. You may not earn a lot, but you do give that needed boost to your family income and to your self-esteem as well. You are in step with the "virtuous woman" of Proverbs 31 who made and sold fine linen and girdles and also ran her own vineyard business. And what's more, church members would find it easy to accept the pastor's wife working from home, for she would be there if they needed her.

An Anglican curate's wife felt frustrated during her pregnancies because she couldn't have interesting clothes to wear. But her frustration gave birth to an idea: why not have a rental facility for maternity clothes? So she started a rental business from her home, providing her community attractive maternity clothes for a fee. The idea became so popular that the small home-based business is now a national franchise in England, with a London store selling designer maternity wear. The onetime frustrated person is now an accomplished executive who now travels abroad to find new designs, but runs

most of the business from a small office that can be set up wherever she and her husband have to live.

But you need not get involved in that big a business—unless you want to! Start where you are. Think of what you are good at, what you have been trained for, what you enjoy, what your hobbies are. Think about areas in which you can meet a need, something new that you yourself would have found helpful.

My husband's family ran a small pet food business from their garage. The five children helped weigh and bag the different dry goods, and sell them on Sundays. Originally the business was set up to help pay school fees, but it saw Bernie through college, and is now a major small business, employing the parents, three brothers, and several others.

What skill do you have that you can market from home? Typing, writing, word processing, bookkeeping, dressmaking, or whatever? For every skill you have, there's someone needing the use of that skill. Match the skill and the need, and you've got something going. Here are some ideas to try.

Crafts

Offer a service to complete unfinished craft kits and projects. Set an hourly or stitch-based rate. A stitch rate has the advantage of computing the exact cost. Be prepared to do the "boring bits." Have a display of samples of your work so that the customer can see your high standards.

Parents love their children's striving at art. Set up a way to turn children's attempts into a permanent piece of artwork. Use fabric paints and crayons to

copy a picture, and then quilt the design to make a place mat for grandma; or lay a transparent grid over the design to help you transform it into a cross-stitch picture. Advertise the service in kindergartens and schools.

I make greeting cards and sell them at craft fairs and through craft stores. Making cards requires very little space in the home, lends to creative ideas, and has high turnover.

Kitchen skills

Are you a good cook? Can you bake? The increasing health consciousness of people makes home-cooked or baked products attractive. Your kitchen skills can be turned into a ministry for healthful, wholesome living. Stores and cafés welcome delicious, attractive, and nutritious homemade products.

Or you could provide a catering service for children's parties. It is not easy finding food that is healthy and at the same time appealing to children's taste buds. Advertise your service, offer a rate per child. Provide different samples for the client so she can select her menu. Offer to mark the occasion by a specially decorated cake with a personal touch. Turn up on the day with everything needed for the meal, including drinks, and maybe even disposable tableware. If you cannot deliver, then the client can collect from you.

Rental services

Like the curate's wife, you can venture into rental services. Is there a possibility in special children's clothing for parties, portraits, and weddings? Do current fashion trends suggest a rental option? Are you gifted in dressmaking, and is it something you can turn into a collection of custom-made designs? Can you buy used clothing and turn it into elegant but inexpensive wear? What about baby equipment?

Green fingers

If you have green fingers, offer a plant-sitting service, either in your home or where the plants are. People who want to get away on vacation will appreciate your help. Of course, growing plants is a good source of income. Orchids, bonsai trees, and other specialized plants always have a market in local plant shops. Growing and arranging flowers is another excellent source of income. If you know how to dry flowers, you can make attractive basket

arrangements by drying the flowers after a wedding or a banquet.

Interiors

Have you considered stenciling? All you need is some special brushes, stencil paints, old rags, a stepladder, a long ruler, and a pencil. If you have the interest and the skill, you can cut stencils to match designs of existing furnishings. Stencils enhance the appeal of drapes and pillows, and coordinate soft furnishings. So be sure you are skilled, or you could make an expensive mistake. Read all you can on the subject, get some help from the local art institute or community college, and practice in your home first.

Teaching

Are you a teacher? Perhaps you can conduct a tutorial for children in your home? Or how about a craft class? For women, a craft class is a great morale booster. A housewife would be happy to pay a fee for learning to make crafts. She gets a sense of achievement, and also gets to meet other women and make new friends. I have made many friends teaching craft in my home. During each session we learned a new skill and made something that could be taken home. Handmade crafts make excellent gifts, too.

Child care

Local regulations may restrict your ability to provide child care at home, but you could try a weekly preschool craft class. The children can learn to make simple but attractive items. The local library is full of books with craft ideas. Another way of providing care for children is to have a nature club for preschoolers. Take them for walks in the country and show them trees and flowers. Before you take them out, talk to them about the things they will see or do. Show them pictures of what they should hunt for. On rainy days, have some old-time indoor activities: baking bread, churning butter, making popcorn or taffy. Research and plan your sessions well to ensure variety, quality, and fun.

Ready-made options

If you are a person looking for package deals, you have other options, such as party-plan businesses and home selling, often advertised in local papers. Be wary of selling products that work on a tier system where you obtain your mer-

chandise from one person in the tier. When you move away, you may find it difficult to maintain the business in a new area without the initial network, and someone else may reap the benefit of all your hard work.

Things to consider

Think carefully and pray earnestly before taking on any type of home-working. Be especially cautious about investing much money in a project until you have tested it and are sure you will succeed. Home-working does not work for everyone.

Talk it over with your husband and family. Will they be able to help you? What do they think about your working from home? Is there room in the house? Do you need to invest some time and money in getting special training for your new venture? Training could save you much money in the long run, and qualifications do raise your professional authority with your customers.

Test your market. Study reactions from others. Keep track of all the costs involved: time, materials, advertising, competition, a reasonable profit, improvements, and research. Price your services and products realistically. Set regular hours of work so as to have time to be with your family. Your work should not take over the home. Take on only what you can handle without stress; if necessary, close the order books for a while, or recruit temporary help.

Working from home provides opportunities to make new friends every day, and you can use these occasions for personal and spiritual ministry. Whenever possible, pray with your customers. Leave free magazines and literature around for them to take. Enjoy what you do and enjoy the people you meet. If you don't enjoy what you are doing, then stop doing it and find an alternative. Consider whether the money earned is worth your time and effort. Maybe there are more important things for you to do at this time in your life. Maybe your husband and family need all your best energies. Whatever you choose, remember you want it to be fulfilling for you; to enable you to be a better wife, a better mother, and a better witness to the happy, honest, and caring life God has given you. So make sure to keep God with you in all that you do. He will show you where He wants you to be. Wherever that is, it will be the happiest place for you. ■

Burn the chariots and lame the horses

J. H. Zachary

Do our plans rely too much on human resource and too little on the power of God?



J. H. Zachary is an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The speaker's statement stunned me. It has troubled me, haunted me, prodded me. "Of all the work the church has accomplished,

95 percent of it could have been done without the aid of the Holy Spirit." There was a stir in the headquarters church in Burma as the Southern Asia Division president spoke.

The voluminous reports raced through my mind: 187 countries entered, thousands of schools and medical institutions established, more than 4 million (now more than 5 million) members worldwide, and more than 1,000 souls joining the church each day. Had all of this been accomplished by mere human plans, budgets, and personnel? I was reluctant to believe that there was any truth in the indictment.

What is the truth?

We are Laodiceans. The Spirit of Prophecy makes this clear. "The message to the Laodicean Church is highly applicable to us as a people. It has been placed before us for a long time, but has not been heeded as it should have been."¹

Remember the first Laodiceans? Their city was located on one of the main trade routes of Asia Minor. Their banking system, medicine factories, weaving industries, and agricultural products made them leaders of their world.

They were proud, self-centered, and economically independent. When their city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60, they refused to accept Nero's

offer of financial help. They had plans, budgets, and personnel to finish the rebuilding task.

Take a look at modern Laodicea. We know that we have the truth. We are rich. Our stewardship programs have made us the envy of most other churches. The Sabbath school emphasis on missions has helped us circle the earth with Adventist institutions.

Today we are a multinational organization. And the church is beginning to act more and more like such an organization. Many of the committees on which I have sat in recent months have placed before us the organizational philosophy and policies of these international companies. We are busy trimming the system and gearing it up for action.

But the downside of this businesslike strategy is that it often seems impossible to make a move unless every cent of the budget is in hand and every detail of the program has been approved by several committees. Only when we are certain that the plans and budgets will guarantee success do we move forward.

Faith makes a difference

We need to let faith add a different dimension to our planning. Faith moves forward to follow God's bidding even when the path is not clear and the coffers are not full. It moves forward when defeat seems certain. The poorest, weakest person who distrusts himself can, through the prayer of faith, move the arm of God.

Which is not to say that planning is unimportant.

Financial planning is crucial. Jesus

made this clear by reminding His hearers that a king who wages war without counting his men and equipment is a fool. Likewise, the man who lays a foundation without sufficient cash in hand to complete his project will never finish his task (Luke 14:28-33).

But when Jesus sent His followers to enter villages with the gospel, He gave instructions that present another aspect of His counsel regarding planning. "Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep," He told the disciples (Matt. 10:9, 10, NIV). What a challenge to faith! The worker was not to wait until he was fully equipped with extra shoes and clothing. He was to go in faith and trust the Lord to provide for his keep.

The builder to whom Jesus referred was a fool if he did not have sufficient material resources to complete his building. The unfinished skeleton would be a monument to his lack of careful planning.

Likewise, workers for God must have sufficient spiritual resources to finish their tasks. The worker with a living, personal relationship with God, the worker who is filled with the Holy Spirit and supported by a dynamic faith, has access to more than enough material and spiritual resources to complete whatever task God may give.

Plan we must! But there are two ways to plan.

There is a type of planning that is so self-sufficient that it gives humanity all the glory and pushes God out of the picture. It may include formal prayers. But this kind of planning makes intercessory prayer that confesses that nothing good can happen without God's blessing seem unnecessary, because that program rests secure in human plans, budgets, personnel, and equipment. We are ready for all the contingencies. There is no vital faith relationship with the Lord to push our feet into the flooded waters of the Jordan, trusting the Lord to do His marvelous work.

Then there are the plans in which the participation of God is so obvious that He receives all the glory. This is the pattern found again and again in the Word of God. I have seen it happen in the mission field repeatedly.

In 1970 my wife and I arrived in the Philippines, where I took up the chairmanship of the Bible Department of

Mountain View College. Just a few days after our arrival one of the senior ministerial students came to my office. He had an earnest request. Would I help the Ministerial Association present a formal request to the college board to raise funds to construct the college radio station?

The union had attempted to raise funds on two occasions, but had backed away from the challenge. What could a few students do?

The college gave us permission to raise 12,000 pesos (\$2,000). With this money we could convert an old U.S. Navy 250-watt transmitter to 1,000 watts of power, set up a corner of the chapel as a broadcast room, secure some used recording equipment and microphones, and place an antenna atop a bamboo pole.

We were working against time. The government permit was about to expire.

In answer to our prayers the Lord gave those students 2 million pesos! And almost every month we found it necessary to enlarge our plans to catch up with the funds the Lord was bringing in. Not because of our human planning and budgeting, but because that station was part of the Lord's plan.

There were so many other blessings: three loads of logs were donated. In return for half the timber, a sawmill cut them down into lumber. Scores of students and villagers donated thousands of hours of labor for the construction of a studio. A typhoon closed the road to the American bases. We were the first to get through the flood to the surplus office. A brand-new 180-foot antenna was waiting for us, along with a truckload of office equipment. A Chinese businessman who had learned his English at Philippine Union College gave a very special discount on a 5,000-watt transmitter.

The Lord also opened the way for a new hydroelectric plant that supplies more than enough power to keep the latest transmitter of 10,000 watts on the air almost 18 hours each day.

At no point did we make plans beyond the money in hand. But the Lord had bigger plans. He rewarded the faith of that young senior and his friends a thousand times.

Entering new territory

As I write these lines I have just returned from a 15-hour hike to visit the Da-a tribe of central Sulawesi. What a

Almost every month we found it necessary to enlarge our plans to catch up with the funds the Lord was bringing in.

hike! We traveled through rain, mud, fallen logs strewn across the path, rocks, steep mountain trails, slippery, slimy wet clay until four o'clock in the morning!

The Da-a are a primitive people living in the remote highlands of the island. They do not have a cash economy. The mission currently has calls pending from five villages requesting that teachers and pastors be sent. If the mission moves forward, they will have serious financial problems. It is expected that there will be no tithe income to speak of from the Da-a for years to come.

Many times work has been started in similar situations. But as soon as the division or Sabbath school funding stopped, the mission has had to retreat because of financial hardship.

A strong faith coupled with some new methods is needed to move ahead. The Lord gave a Da-a woman a dream 25 years ago that a Sabbathkeeper would bring them the truth of God. But it required strong faith and creative planning to enable the mission to follow up.

The plan calls for tribal chiefs to provide each teacher and pastor with land and a house. Tithe will be paid in produce to the pastors and teachers. Leaders will be trained in the first tree-house tribal seminary in the world (the Da-a build their houses in trees).

The 10 struggling Da-a companies are expected to double by 1990. And this will be done by figuratively scraping the bottom of the widow's barrel.

But we know God responds to the prayer of faith. During one of the major crusades in Manila, the 11,000 church members prayed for Bibles for the 350

There is no greater joy than to see God provide funds to run His errands when there are no funds in sight.

cottage meetings that were planned. They needed 100,000 Bibles. A request went to the Quiet Hour. Pastor LaVerne Tucker discussed the request with his father. The Quiet Hour had never before taken on a \$200,000 project. They realized that it might take two years to reach the goal. But that very day the Lord impressed a woman to drop by the Quiet Hour office. "I feel convicted that you need some funds for Bibles," she said. "Here is \$15,000. As soon as my husband agrees, we will send the funds from his portion of the property that was just sold." Thirty thousand dollars brought in by the Lord before the fund-raising started! It took only five months to raise the \$200,000 and print the Bibles! Everyone knew that God had done a marvelous thing for those who prayed in faith.

At no time in the above experience did we sign a document that would place the church in debt. Planning and faith can go hand in hand. I have seen it happen again and again in the construction of 40 churches around Mountain View College in a six-year period.

Just six days after a Manobo tribal chief requested a school, a check for \$1,000 arrived from a total stranger. He was ignorant of the existence of the Manobo tribe.

Just a few days ago I returned from a trip to Bangladesh, where there are so many needs. The brethren requested help to secure motorcycles to assist pastors in making their rounds. Upon my return home, there was a letter from a lady asking if she could help with a project in Bangladesh.

There is no greater joy than to see God open doors to give His work new directions, bring people together from opposite sides of the earth to accomplish His mission, and provide funds to run His errands

when there are no funds in sight.

We are told that angels direct the work of evangelism (*The Great Controversy*, p. 312). If we are in close fellowship with heaven, we will begin to see more and more of the planning, funding, and accomplishment of God's work in God's ways.

Biblical examples

Let us take a closer look in the Bible at a few examples of planning that gave God all the glory.

Look at Joshua.

The army of Israel was about to start its campaign into the north. The Commander in Chief gave this order: "Cripple their horses and burn their chariots" (Joshua 11:6, TEV).

What a strange command. Soldiers are careful to keep their arsenals filled with weapons. What did God have in mind?

The loot from the victory over Jabin and his allies would have more than filled Joshua's armories, but God's command was clear. Get rid of all the enemy's weapons!

God does His work in ways far different from the planning of people. Again and again God had promised His people: "I will give you the land" (Gen. 35:12, TEV). The army of Israel had sufficient evidence that faith in God would do just that: there was manna in the desert, the waters of the Jordan piled up, the walls of Jericho crumbled. Their parents had told them about the path through the sea and the plagues that destroyed the military machine of Egypt. They were convinced that God was the sole source of the power for their victories!

There are two important points here. An army with strategic superiority in soldiers and weapons would have reason for self-assurance and human boasting. But an inexperienced, poorly equipped, outnumbered army has no chance for victory in its own power. The issue was clear in Joshua's day. Cut back on your weapons and supplies. When you sense your total reliance on Him, God will give the victory, and He will receive the glory.

There is more for us in the experience of Joshua. With the barrier of the Jordan River between the people and the land of Canaan, Joshua asked the people to do two things.

First, they were to sanctify themselves (Joshua 3:5). *Sanctify* means "to separate." Joshua promised the people

that if they would separate from sin and draw near to God, something wonderful would happen. Read the promise: "The Lord will do amazing things among you" (verse 5, NIV).

I have seen this happen again and again during my 18 years of mission service. Students have gotten me out of bed at 4:30 in the morning to pray for their outreach projects. And how the Lord worked for them! There have been several cases of visions and dreams. In one village the chief and his people saw the angels walk into their village. This helped them to firm up their decision to build a church for their people.

In Joshua 3:3 we see the focus on another significant point: "When the ark moves, you move out to follow it." The Shekinah, the visible presence of God, moved with the ark. We could paraphrase Joshua's command thus: "Keep your eyes on the Lord. When He moves, you follow Him."

What a lesson for the church to put into practice in every undertaking today! When we come to know God's will, we can fit our plans into God's plans.

Let us follow Joshua a little further. God's methods challenge people! Joshua gave the command "Forward march!" Priests, army, women, and children marched toward a river at nearly flood tide. It did not make sense.

But the instant faith pushed the priests' feet into the water, God acted. The New International Version says that the water of the river piled up (verse 16). God is still the same today. He is ready to do marvelous things, greater things than any person or group has yet accomplished. The greater the challenge, the greater the disadvantage, the more hopeless the situation, the greater the opportunity for all people to know that our God is the all-powerful Lord of Creation. We need leaders with the faith of Joshua who can be used by God to reveal the Lord's power to the Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and secularist world in such a way that all will know that "there is a God in Israel."

Let us make room for God to act in carrying out the mission of reaching the whole world with the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Before us are many mountains, raging rivers, deep seas, and powerful enemy forces to challenge us. Almost four fifths of the population of the world still has not heard the message of Jesus with clarity. But through the eyes of faith we can see that the greater the

obstacles, the more clearly God will show His glory and power as He leads us to victory.

But there is still more that we can learn from Joshua's example. After the march through the Jordan, where did he go? All alone he crept up to a spot near Jericho's wall to pour out his heart to God. This wall, he knew, was the next obstacle in his path, and he wanted to talk to his Commander before launching an attack.

The two soldiers visited late into the night. Carefully Joshua memorized each detail of the commands for the coming battle.

No military council would have accepted such a foolish war strategy. But Joshua was no ordinary military leader. He and his army had witnessed what the armies of the God of heaven could do.

On the final march around Jericho, the Lord's army stopped, faced the walls, and waited. The silence was broken by the sound of a trumpet and a great shout. And God did the rest!

We have been self-sufficient far too long. We have tried to finish the work of God in our own strength. And all the while God has been saying, "Prepare yourselves, put away your sins, come into a close personal relationship with Me, be ready to obey, and I will do marvelous things for you."

Look at how often in God's plan the impossible happened. Jesus was born of a virgin! Gideon's 300 routed a vast multitude! The multitude of Israel ate manna in the wilderness for 40 years! And the list goes on.

God waited for Sarah to experience menopause before Isaac was born, because he was to be the child of promise. Abraham and Sarah could claim no credit. All the glory for the birth of their son belonged to God.

King Jehoshaphat went out to challenge three powerful enemy tribes with his church choir! And while the choir sang hymns of praise, God fought the battle.

Too often we are ready to cry with Elisha's servant, "Look at the massive army surrounding us. We are in big trouble! What shall we do?" At that point the trembling servant wished for the security of a large, well-equipped, friendly army. Then Elisha quietly asked the Lord to open his servant's eyes to see the forces of heaven waiting to do marvelous things.

Planning that places every detail

within our resources and leaves no place for God to do His wonders is truly counterproductive. Ellen White's testimony is very clear: "If divine power does not combine with human effort, I would not give a straw for all that the greatest man could do. The Holy Spirit is wanting in our work."²

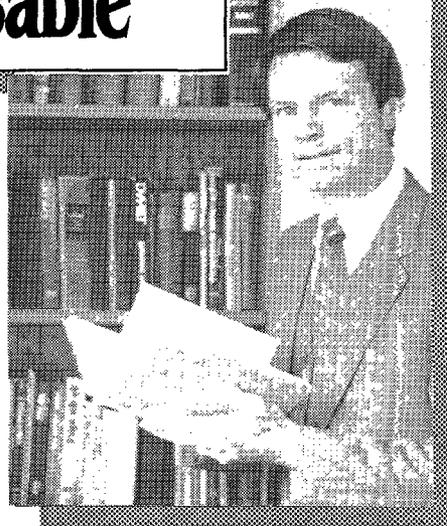
What will happen when 95 percent of what the church does is undeniably accomplished through the agency of the Holy Spirit? ■

¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 7, p. 961.

² *Review and Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890.

"Indispensable"

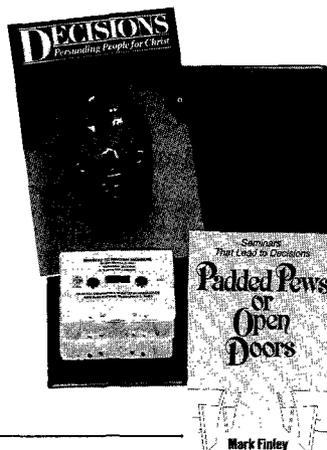
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Young adult ministry: let the baby-sitting cease

Gary E. Russell

Do not panic if the young adults are disappearing from your church. Reclaim them in caring, innovative ways.



Gary Russell is pastor of the Dowagiac and Glenwood Seventh-day Adventist churches in Michigan.

Young adult ministry. Not only is ministering to this group we call young adults a challenge, but just trying to define them is a conundrum. A friend of mine, the youth pastor of a large church in northern California, recently told me that there are three young adult groups in his church. The group called “young adults” generally includes 30- to 40-year-olds. The 25- to 30-year-olds have their own group called “young singles”—and includes both singles and marrieds. Recently a third group, the “collegiate” group, formed to include those of college age, even though not all of its members are attending college.

Why be concerned with this group? Monte Sahlin recently reported in the *Adventist Review* that nearly 50 percent of the dropouts from the Seventh-day Adventist Church are 20 to 35 years of age.¹ The Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church has hired an associate pastor to minister specifically to young adults. Several doctoral projects are focusing on finding ways to stem the tide of young adults exiting the church.

Who are the “young adults”? And why a special ministry to them? In her book *The Critical Years*, Sharon Parks suggests that young adulthood is that time in a person’s life when one senses the need for spirituality, but not necessarily religion; for community, but not necessarily church; for faith, but not necessarily belief; for God, but not necessarily Yahweh. In terms of faith development, she suggests that there is

another stage between Fowler’s stages of “individuating-reflexive faith” and “conjunctive faith.”² This stage consists of a time when a person moves from a questioning relativism that is counterdependent on external authority, to a commitment within questioning as one moves to an inner dependent and an internal authority. Young adult faith is that time of transition between adolescent faith and adult faith, a time, if you please, of truly *finding* one’s faith. V. Bailey Gillespie calls this “reordered faith” and describes it:

“This involves a reinterpretation of one’s faith. On a cognitive level there is new theological reflection and the desire for dialogue. Experientially faith focuses on relationships, lifestyle, and the future. Professional development may overshadow one’s faith, possibly placing faith on moratorium until a crisis arises. For some, family interests, especially children, rekindle the spark for faith development/reordering.”³

As a pastor I have watched people struggle through this transition. And it does not always take place during what we usually call the “young adult years” of about 20 to 30. Many people continue in adolescent faith until a crisis forces them to reconsider their faith. All too often, this crisis causes them to abandon their faith.

Have you looked around your church lately for young adults? Are they there? If your church is like most, you will have a few. You will have some who are there because they are still in their adolescent faith; whatever the church, the pastor, or some other authority tells them to do, they do. There will be a few

who have made it through the young adult struggle and are attending because they choose to. Somehow they have been able to come to grips with the fact that all their questions will not be answered, that all the paradoxes of their faith will not be resolved, and that they will just have to live with them. But the majority of your young adults just *are not there!*

I currently pastor two small churches in southwestern Michigan. Our records show that one church has 95 members; the other, 75. About a year and a half ago I did a census of young adults, particularly young single adults, in these two churches. When I told the church boards that between the two churches we had more than 20 young single adults who were members, they were astonished! "Who are they?" the boards cried. Who are they indeed! Church board members, seeing only four or five coming regularly to worship, assumed that they were all the young adults we had. The others, still members according to church records, were "out of sight, out of mind."

My wife and I had no formal training in young adult ministry, but we had a deep interest in young people. We talked over the situation and decided we would offer to sponsor a young single adult group in our home. Shortly after this decision, a young lady who had recently returned to the church asked if something could be done for young adults. I shared with her what my wife and I had been discussing, and that was the beginning of our young single adult support group.

Our group meets twice a month at our house, 6:00 Sabbath evening. Though following no formal structure, we generally plan for an hour of study, prayer, and fellowship. Almost without exception the meeting lasts longer than planned. Sometimes we decide in advance what we are going to discuss during the next meeting, but most of the time we just start discussing whatever seems to be the hot topic of the day. Our discussions range from personal needs and problems, to what we can do to help the church, to what we can do to help in the community. Last year some of our group helped provide Christmas presents for children living with parents who were in a shelter for abused spouses.

Most of the time we have popcorn and juice after the meeting. Occasion-

ally we fix or order pizza, or eat ice cream, or do all of the above. We have had special times like a New Year's Eve party, vespers on the beach by Lake Michigan, or an all-day fun day.

We found that even this was not enough. We were not reaching all of our young adult singles. In fact, the majority of them were not coming to the Sabbath afternoon meetings, nor were they coming to church. We tried a different tactic with them. Last summer our local Ministerial Association sponsored a church softball league. The two churches I pastor went together to field a team. What happened was great. Many of those who were not attending church came out for the softball games. The neat thing was that we then had active church members and inactive (at least in terms of church involvement) young adults coming together each week to play ball. And the games were usually followed by pizza at the local Pizza Hut for anyone who wanted to come.

Now some of these young adults are beginning to come back to the fellowship of the church. My part in this process has consisted of just being there, playing, and getting acquainted with them in nonthreatening situations.

Other young adults in these two congregations still need to receive ministry. A couple of them come to me individually, and we are developing a relationship. They are not quite ready to commit to the church, but somehow they feel comfortable around me and let me share in their struggle to find meaning and faith.

I relate these experiences to help other pastors see that young adult ministry cannot be packaged or programmed. These people are not little kids who need baby-sitting. They are not adolescents who need chaperoning. They are adults searching for an adult faith. Their search may take them along different paths. Our young adult group is in a state of almost constant flux, not given to long-term commitment.

Young adults quickly change careers, jobs, special friends, and even churches (or from church to no church). Effective young adult ministry is one that provides a place of stability in the midst of chaos. That is what my wife and I have tried to do for the young adults in our churches. We are not their parents or even the official leaders of the young adult group. In a

Ministry for young adults cannot be packaged or programmed. What is needed is a shared discovery, caring, and commitment.

real sense, I am not actually their pastor. My wife and I have become mentors for many of them. Not authority figures, but older friends with whom they can discuss career, love life, family, school, whatever—and not feel threatened, judged, or condemned. If asked, we share our views with them openly and honestly. If not, we listen with receptive minds and hearts. In short, we are there for them.

And we've watched them grow. Several have recommitted their lives to Christ. A few have made decisions to further their careers or to go back to school, and have moved away. That is painful, but it is a realistic part of young adult ministry. They leave . . . we grieve. Yet in our grieving we realize that our ministry has been effective; that somehow God has been able to use us to help them in their faith development; that whatever they do in the future, we are a part of their lives forever, and they are a part of ours.

Young adult ministry. Confusing yet rewarding. Time-consuming yet fulfilling. Frustrating yet satisfying. And desperately needed! ■

¹ Monte Sahlin, "Where Are Our Missing Members?" *Adventist Review*, May 4, 1989, p. 19.

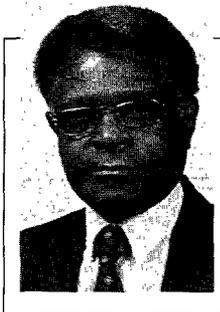
² James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 174-198.

³ Adapted from V. Bailey Gillespie, *The Experience of Faith* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988), pp. 176-190.

Should the pastor be ambitious?

Horace A. Taffe

Consider the two faces of ambition. What part should they play in a pastor's personality?



Horace A. Taffe is pastor of the Holloway Seventh-day Adventist Church in London, England. He is also completing his doctoral studies in Old Testament at the University of Sheffield.

A

mbition. Is it desirable or deplorable? The dictionary calls it a desire for distinction; a wish to be or to do; an eager, sometimes inordinate longing for honor, power, and fame; a determination to distinguish oneself above others.

Surely the desire to achieve one's fullest potential socially, politically, economically, educationally, and spiritually is not necessarily bad, for what would the world be without these kinds of people? The Bible declares a fundamental guiding principle in this context. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom" (Eccl. 9:10, NIV).

Ambition is not a characteristic only of the talented or the rich. It is, rather, a quality of those who are easily inspired or self-motivated; who aim high and work hard; who follow their goals to the utmost.

With these general points in mind, what about the pastor, specifically? Should he be ambitious? If so, in what way, and to what degree?

The ministry is one of the most challenging vocations imaginable. Its psychological, ethical, and moral demands, when taken seriously and in their true light, can be enough to dissuade those considering it halfheartedly. In other words, a person should feel truly called to be a pastor. He needs to be ambitious on behalf of Christ, using this consecrated ambition to improve

his talents for service twofold, threefold, and fivefold.

Individual perception

Many individuals attracted to the gospel ministry develop faulty ideas concerning the kind of ambition appropriate for a pastor. Not everyone who has been baptized has experienced conversion. In the same way, not all who have found their way into the ministry are suited for it. In addition, there are those who, though once called, have lost their vision through neglect and irresponsibility. Pastors in these two categories may mistake worldly ambition for consecrated ambition. They fall prey to desires of honor, fame, and power as ends in themselves rather than receiving them as gifts of divine grace that should engender a sense of humility, gratefulness, and privilege on the part of the one who has received them.

The question that still begs for clarification is this: How does the pastor identify ambition in his own heart? The success or failure of a pastor's lifework often depends on his perception of, and attitude toward, ambition.

Some dreaming takes place before the actual task of ministry begins. All along the way, a person picks up ideas about the kind of minister he would like to be, particularly as he begins to discover where his real talent lies. In this context, a desire to pursue a certain model of ministry may be quite legitimate. One basic wish on the part of every red-blooded, and I dare say, sober-minded ministerial intern is to be ordained. This, of course, is embedded in the call itself. Beyond this, there is often (and quite rightly so) a wide range of ministerial ambitions. God's call to pasto-

ral ministry is usually, though not always, in the area of pastor-teacher or pastor-evangelist. Even though opinions vary as to the purpose of individual calls, no other call supersedes this, and whatever else the pastor does is subservient to this.

The calling often becomes complex when the basic pastoral ideal, the main thing for which God has called a pastor, becomes subjugated to an inordinate ambition to become a famous evangelist, the president of an institution of higher learning, a departmental director, or a professional counselor, to name a few.

If a person has specialized talents and training, there is nothing wrong with desiring a position in which he can best be of service. Obvious dangers exist, however, in striving for the highest place or what might be considered enviable positions of responsibility, which are best obtained through the collective will of the people directed by the Holy Spirit.

Dangers also are inherent at the other extreme. For example, some potentially successful pastors make no effort to improve their skills in ways that would fit them for certain necessary tasks in the Lord's work. This lack of drive for self-improvement on the part of some workers often leaves an unwelcome void that, if filled, would result in personal advancement as well as the carrying out of the church's mission. Too often this gap is not bridged.

A pastor should be ambitious to the extent that he uses every ability to its utmost and seizes every opportunity to do service for God. The motivating factors should be a realization of the importance of God's work, an acknowledgment of the pastor's own role in fulfilling that work, and a desire to perform that role with excellence.

God's view of ambition

It is clear from our discussions so far that ambition may be either "right" or "wrong" in the sense of good or bad. Ellen G. White, steeped in a knowledge of God's Word, has referred to what one might call "right ambition." She declares, "Jesus sees His true church on the earth, whose greatest ambition is to cooperate with Him in the grand work of saving souls."¹ This statement is for the general body of which the minister is a part. She, however, has stronger words for the ministers themselves when she remarks, "The men who now stand before the people as representatives of Christ have generally more ability than they have training, but

they do not put their faculties to use, making the most of their time and opportunities."² Some may contend that this comment does not pertain to current times, because training and further opportunities have much improved, and there is no doubt about this. However, the counsel is still relevant in that it is essential for ministers to "aim high."³ Ellen White's definition of ambition in this context involves the minister putting his power to the test and aiming for an "elevated standard in knowledge and in religious intelligence."⁴

Ellen White regards diligent Bible study as "ambition": "Let the ministers' ambition be carefully to search the Bible, that they may know as much as possible of God and of Jesus Christ."⁵ This obviously will result in a more forceful proclamation of the gospel. Ellen White also says that "the joy that sustained [Christ] . . . was the joy of seeing sinners saved. This should be the joy of every follower of His, the spur to his ambition."⁶

To those who dream of attempting some great work or mission while neglecting the small duties at hand, the advice is "Let your ambition be aroused to be useful."⁷ Being ambitious in the positive sense and being useful are the same. The context here seems to suggest that in seeking to do some great thing, the individual might miss the degrees by which he must ascend. Instead of ambition arousing him to be a workman in the world, he would end up being a spectator.⁸

On the subject of "wrong ambition," she observes that "vainglory, selfish ambition, is the rock upon which many souls have been wrecked and many churches rendered powerless."⁹

It is sad to contemplate the fact that "through a selfish ambition some have kept from others the knowledge they could have imparted."¹⁰ Selfish ambition parallels the desire for supremacy. Both "will die when Christ takes possession of the affections."¹¹

The conflict between good and bad ambition is still with us, and this honest discussion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can inspire each pastor to reflect on his own ambition and what form it takes.

Ellen White says that worldly ambition "is death to spiritual advancement."¹² We should understand that there is "ambition for riches and honor" and there are "lovers of the world even among those who profess to be waiting for the Lord."¹³ Ambition

keeps company with pride, prodigality, and indulgence, all of which bear "fruit in cruelty and exaction."¹⁴

Ambition was the cause of Solomon's demise: His desire "to excel all other nations in power and grandeur led him to pervert for selfish purposes the heavenly gifts hitherto employed for the glory of God."¹⁵

The saddest evidence of the travesty and tragedy of ambition, originally a good thing planted by God in the human heart, has been the pride and ambition of Satan, which resulted in his banishment from heaven. To counteract this, "we should seek for true goodness rather than greatness."¹⁶

Isaiah describes how "wrong ambition" can enter: "For thou hast said in thine heart . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14). Little did Lucifer know that to be great in God's kingdom meant to eliminate all pride, overcome all jealousy, and give up all ambition for supremacy.¹⁷ The words of the prophet Jeremiah have relevance here: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord" (Jer. 45:5). Total trust in God will cure this malady of the soul.

It must be understood that a movement away from the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus is failure, but a striving toward the mark always constitutes the central ingredient of righteous ambition. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1944), p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ ———, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 181.

⁶ ———, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1917), p. 172.

⁷ ———, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 2, p. 568.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 174.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 554. (The dualism of the "ambition" motif throughout Ellen White's writings ought to be well understood.)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 419.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 456. (Ambition characterized by this worldly emphasis must be corrected along with all other worldly emphases.)

¹⁴ ———, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 242.

¹⁷ ———, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 349; *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 198.



Annual Council Report

J. David Newman

The 1991 Annual Council meeting in Perth, Australia, was dominated by commissions — two reporting and two new ones being established. In addition, those attending the council heard encouraging news concerning the success of Global Mission.

During the past year, Global Mission has helped penetrate new areas and establish churches where none previously existed. We still have 2,300 population segments (groups of 1 million) that have not been penetrated. The council listened to exciting reports about what God is accomplishing in the Union of Sovereign States (the former U.S.S.R.). This newest division of the church was renamed the Euro-Asia Division.

The first major item that the council tackled concerned the eight recommendations of the Commission on Governance that reorganized the internal workings of the General Conference. The recommendations as voted are indicated by italics.

1. That there be fewer and, in most cases, smaller standing committees, but that both the authority and accountability of these committees be increased. This led to reducing the number of standing committees from 85 to 22. The commission reported that “too many committees are simply rubber-stamping the decisions of other committees” and that “many committee decisions must pass through several committees (sometimes as many as six or seven) before recommendations are implemented.”

J. David Newman is editor of Ministry.

As a result committees were often poorly attended, as members knew they could always intercept the recommendation somewhere else. Some General Conference personnel sat on more than 50 standing committees. They spent the main part of their week in committees.

2. That the general vice presidents be given administrative responsibility by the General Conference president to assure the effective operation of assigned General Conference departments and services. Currently 37 persons report directly to the General Conference president. This being more than he can adequately supervise, he is delegating some of his authority to the vice presidents so that departments can make major decisions without having to wait for direct presidential approval.

3. That all departments/services have clearly defined authority to accomplish their missions. This means departments will have more control over their budgets. Departments will be given a fixed sum, and they will decide how much goes to each person for travel and other expenses.

4. That responsibility for specified in-house operations and support services be consolidated under an in-house operations manager responsible to a general vice president who shall be chairman of an In-house Operations Committee. This item provoked more debate than any of the other items. The General Conference treasurers objected to this In-house Operations Committee coming under a General Conference vice president. One of the treasurers proposed an amendment that would

place the committee under the General Conference treasurer.

A vigorous but kind debate followed. This item had been introduced with the statement that the issue was not a “turf battle,” but it soon became obvious from the discussion that it did concern power. The commission had felt that too much power gravitated toward the Treasury Department, and that Treasury should not both manage and account for its functions.

Some of the areas that Treasury managed had budgets that no one held those areas accountable for. Treasury had become the largest department at the General Conference and at many other church levels.

Our dedicated Christian treasurers give invaluable service to the church, but I have talked to scores of individuals on conference, union, division, and General Conference levels who feel that money now controls the church, and many treasurers see themselves as controllers of this money rather than custodians.

After many speeches, with some of the treasurers predicting dire consequences for the church if the amendment was not passed, a vote was taken. The amendment failed by a vote of 152 to 61, while the original motion passed by a vote of 180 to 26.

5. That the General Conference Executive Committee meet at least quarterly and at the call of the chair and focus primarily on worldwide mission, goals and plans, budgets, and the formation of the general church policy. The General Conference Committee comprises 365 persons who never meet as a total group. Since a majority of the members are from outside the General Conference, they cannot at-

tend weekly meetings. Even at an Annual Council all the members do not meet, mainly because of finances. Therefore, the General Conference Committee holds the distinction of being a committee that never meets with all its members present.

As a result, weekly meetings are often limited to voting such items as currency exchange rates, overseas travel for headquarters staff, transfers between divisions, etc. At times the chairman had difficulty getting a quorum of 15.

Most of the routine items have now been delegated to the new Administrative Committee or other committees.

6. *That the Administrative Committee (General Conference Officer Group) shall have delegated authority given to it by the General Conference Executive Committee.* The council voted clear lines of authority and responsibility for the Administrative Committee. This is the first time in the church's history that the officer group have had their power clearly defined.

7. *That a clearly defined strategic planning budgeting process that is mission-driven be established.* This action, if implemented, would mark a milestone for the church. Over the years the church has become finance-driven rather than mission-driven. It first examines its finances, then decides what can be done. When hard times come, the item often cut from the budget first (at least at conference levels) is evangelism.

The commission now recommends a process in which the church begins with mission, develops its plans, then seeks the resources to accomplish the mission. A faith factor must be involved. When the church concentrates only on what it possesses, not much faith is required. The church does not need to become irresponsible, but we must recognize that the church is more than a business enterprise and more than just budgets and plans. The church is to be used to save lost men and women. It is to reach out to the unentered parts of the world using programs like Global Mission to take the gospel to everyone.

8. *That an ongoing process of in-service education and evaluation be developed and implemented by the General Conference administration to better qualify the staff and to measure the contribution to mission of all headquarters programs, committees, and personnel.* The church seldom evaluates its

products and programs. Many times departments are not sure if what they are doing is really helpful at the local church level. People sometimes report that many of the services are not helpful. Now a system will be put in place to separate fact from fiction.

South Africa

The Commission on the Church in

South Africa made its final report, recommending that the two unions—one White and one Black—be united by December 31, 1991, and that all the conferences be reorganized along geographical lines rather than ethnic ones by the end of 1993. The presidents of both unions gave strong support to these proposals. The delegates made a number of speeches lamenting the divisions that had arisen in



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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MINISTER'S CODE OF ETHICS

Note: The General Conference Ministerial Association is in the process of developing a statement on the professional and personal ethics of a Seventh-day Adventist minister. Given below is a preliminary, tentative draft. Church administrators, pastors, and readers are invited to send their opinions on this statement to the editor.

I recognize that ordination to the gospel ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not for the purpose of bestowing special privilege or power, but rather a call to a life of devotion and service to God, His church, and the world. I affirm that my personal life and professional activities shall be rooted in the Word of God and subject to the Lordship of Christ. I am completely committed to the 27 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I am dedicated to the maintenance of high standards of professional conduct and competence in the ministry. I mean to build relationships based on the principles expressed in Christ's life and teachings.

I shall, by the grace of God, apply these standards in my life so as to:

1. Maintain a meaningful devotional life for me and my family.
2. Practice healthful living.
3. Manage church and personal finances with integrity.
4. Commit myself to continuing professional growth.
5. Give full time and attention to the ministry as my only vocation.
6. Perceive my family as a primary part of my ministry.
7. Initiate and maintain meaningful interprofessional relationships.
8. Respect the personhood of every individual, without bias or prejudice.
9. Relate to those of the opposite sex without trespassing borders of propriety.
10. Practice strictest confidentiality.
11. Love those to whom I minister and commit myself to their spiritual growth.

South Africa. Some wondered if there were any parallels with North America. Others said that the circumstances in North America were entirely different, and no comparisons should be made with South Africa. Whether this is true or not, North America will become the only division in the world where some conferences are organized on ethnic rather than geographical boundaries.

The delegates unanimously voted the commission's recommendations. One of the biggest concerns is how to pay for the merger. Currently Black pastors receive one fourth the wages of their White counterparts, while on the union level there has been wage parity for some time. The Annual Council voted a special exception to the 1992 Annual Sacrifice Offering. It will be capped at \$2.4 million and all moneys in excess of that will go to help the combined work in South Africa.

Commission on World Church Organization

The Annual Council voted a commission, similar to the Governance Commission, that will study the total world church organization. It would evaluate such details as the relationship of all

entities to the constitution, bylaws, policies, and *Church Manual*. It would evaluate the relationship between the General Conference and its divisions and the role, function, and representation of the General Conference Committee. It would evaluate the function of the General Conference, division, union, and local conference departments.

It would *not* evaluate the need for unions.

Survey Commission

The Annual Council also set up a World Survey Commission to study the life of the church. This commission will examine the church's spiritual life: how we are saved, assurance of salvation, the imminence of Jesus' return, the Sabbath, Creation and the Flood, the sanctuary, and the great controversy worldview.

It will look at family life, personal Bible study, impact of church on individual life, stewardship, the Spirit of Prophecy. It will examine all areas of evangelism, including its effectiveness and attrition rates.

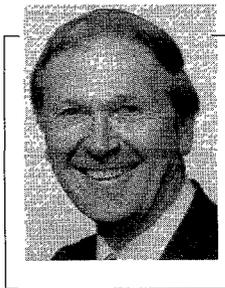
It will pay attention to leadership and administration, the role of institutions,

ministerial services, finance, etc. It will look at church life and nurture, worship services, Sabbath school, education, children, youth, women and church life, marriage and divorce, church discipline, tithe, etc.

This commission's task is so awesome that it has not set a deadline for reporting. The Annual Council appointed 37 members. Of the 37 members, two of them are women. In addition, divisions will appoint two representatives each.

The Annual Council also adopted a statement regarding the Adventist church's role in the world and in the prophetic time line. It dealt strongly with the many dissident movements dividing the church. In particular Elder Folkenberg reported that John Osborn (noted for his opposition to the "celebration" churches) has been disfellowshipped in the Florida Conference. A little more than a year ago the Florida Conference disbanded the Rolling Hills company. The Pacific Union has also revoked Ralph Larson's honorary ministerial credentials.

These are some of the highlights from a very interesting Annual Council. ■



1993—Year of the Pastor

Floyd Bresee

The 1991 Annual Council enthusiastically voted 1993 as "Year of the Pastor." The plan calls for each world division to find a way to listen effectively and consult with its pastors, especially during 1992, in preparation for the pastors' special year.

Sometimes pastors feel that everybody uses them but nobody listens to them. Conference presidents *use* them to reach administrative goals. Conference secretaries *use* them to provide church records and statistics. Treasurers *use* them to raise the money treasury spends. Departments *use* them to promote their programs.

Congregations too *use* their pastors to do the work the membership should be doing. Laodicean members *use* them to provide all their spiritual food during one hour of Sabbath worship, freeing the members to spend the rest of their week at secular pursuits. Hurting members *use* them to vent their feelings and solve their problems.

No wonder pastors feel so often used and so seldom heard.

In some ways our organization poorly reflects our theology. Theologically, we declare that the local church is the heart, the core, the center of the church. Yet congregational leaders are represented only tokenly at the most significant decision-making levels. We would more accurately reflect our beliefs if a majority of those preparing plans and programs for our churches were lay leaders and pastors directly representing local congregations.

We need a more effective way of listening to our pastors. Workers' meetings are helpful. Usually, however, they concentrate on telling, and include very

little listening. Ministerial secretaries are helpful, but their job descriptions tend to include significant administrative responsibilities. Incontrovertible, repeated research shows that the vast majority of pastors will not take their most significant frustrations and problems to anyone involved with either their *discipline* or their *placement*.

Just before the Annual Council we brought together a representative group of pastors and asked how they felt about a "Year of the Pastor" concept that would emphasize listening to and planning with pastors. The consensus was "It would be great if it were genuine. But it will never really happen."

I feel much more optimistic than that. Many church administrators, including our world president, are aware of our need to depend more on our pastors in developing plans for the church. Let's use the Year of the Pastor as a time for pastors and administrators to talk and listen to each other. Let's form plans *together* for a finished work.

Here is the Annual Council action that can help us make a start:

YEAR OF THE PASTOR—1993

SECTION I: Preamble

WHEREAS denominational leadership recognizes the key role of the church pastor in the mission of the church, and

WHEREAS some pastors perceive that church leaders have not always carefully listened to their needs, and

WHEREAS some church leaders need to find better ways to involve, encourage, equip, recognize, and strengthen the pastor, and

WHEREAS concepts such as family

solidarity, Sabbath observance, Christian education, stewardship of finance, and influence are being vigorously attacked by an increasingly secular society,

Denominational leadership dedicates itself to working hand in hand with the church pastor to improve the pastor's effectiveness and reverse these perceptions and trends.

SECTION II: Objectives

1. Reaffirm the importance of the pastorate in the minds of church leader, pastor, and member as the pivotal function of ministerial endeavor.

2. Update and strengthen communication and understanding between pastor and administrator.

3. Define how the biblical roles of watchman and shepherd are appropriate in modern society.

4. Address the issues threatening the church's mission.

5. Structure with broad input from pastors systems of evaluation, communication, and accountability for all levels of church organization that will assist them in improving their effectiveness in achieving church objectives.

SECTION III: Implementation

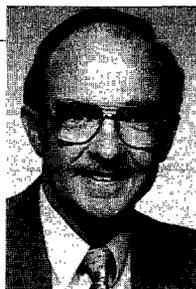
We propose, therefore, that each division address these objectives in consultation with pastors early in 1992 and pass recommendations on to the General Conference at the Spring Meeting. The 1992 Annual Council shall consider a world document resulting from this input.

RECOMMENDED, To designate 1993 as the Year of the Pastor and to request each division in consultation with pastors and in harmony with the above objectives to prepare its own approach to implementation. ■

The misunderstanding of the church

Fritz Guy

This article first appeared in the August 1980 issue of *Ministry*. We are reprinting it because administrators, pastors, and laity need to take heed of its message.



Fritz Guy, Ph.D., is president of La Sierra University, Riverside, California.

The title of this article is deliberately equivocal. On the one hand, it could refer to a misunderstanding *about* the church, and there are certainly many mistaken ideas about the Christian church in general and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular. On the other hand, the title could refer to some misunderstanding that the church *itself* has. After all, it does not possess perfect wisdom. As a matter of fact, the title is intended to include both of these meanings—a misunderstanding about the church and a misunderstanding the church has. And yet the two are only one misunderstanding, for one of the characteristics of contemporary Adventism is the church's misunderstanding of itself.

Professionalization of the church

This misunderstanding stems from our tendency to think of the church primarily as an organization or institution, rather than as a fellowship or community of faith and the Spirit¹ (which is the predominant meaning of "church" in the New Testament).² Three phenomena confirm the reality of this misunderstanding. The first is the *professionalization* of the work of the church. Almost all important church activity is accomplished by people who are employed by the church—namely, the clergy.

Consider, for example, the decision-making process of the church. How many members of the General Conference Committee, or the typical conference or union conference committees, are not clergy or other church employ-

ees?³ In a move to broaden representation at the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas, the 1978 Annual Council voted that "at least 10 percent of the regular delegates appointed from the divisions should be composed of women, youth, and church members not denominationally employed."⁴ That will be a noticeable improvement over the situation in Vienna in 1975, but nine tenths of the delegates will still be paid employees of the church.

Just as significant are the respective roles of pastor and people—not in theory, but in the actual life of Adventist congregations. The general impression is that the function of the members is to support their pastor in doing the work of the church. For example, when a minister conducts a series of evangelistic meetings, the members are needed—and expected—to support the endeavor by attending, bringing friends, helping with the ushering or music, or in other ways. And of course the people support the global work of the church by their tithes and offerings.

Although this picture seems natural enough because of its familiarity, it is not the proper function of the people, according to Scripture, to help the professional ministers do their work; it is rather the function of the ministers to help the people do *their* work. Because "the church is the people,"⁵ it simply will not do for them to abdicate their responsibility to a group of professionals whom they have hired to do their work for them.

Centralization and bureaucracy

A second phenomenon that discloses this basic misunderstanding of the church is its *centralization* and accom-

panying *bureaucratization*. Church administrators, ministers, and people everywhere in Adventism widely feel that for all practical purposes the General Conference speaking is really the church speaking. Thus when a need was felt a few years ago for a statement of the present Adventist understanding of Creation, it seemed only natural that the statement should be prepared by administrative officials in Takoma Park.

Likewise, it is a fact of organizational life that centralization is regularly accompanied by an increasing proportion of administrative and promotional personnel. In 1957, for every 10 persons employed by the conferences of North America as pastors, evangelists, ministerial interns, and Bible instructors, there were another seven persons employed in administration and promotion. In 1977 the ratio was 10 to 9. Thus for every 100 persons employed directly by conferences and union conferences (not counting those employed by medical and educational institutions), 52 were "in the field," while 48 were doing administrative and promotional work. Of course, these figures are based on totals for *all* conference employees, which includes both ordained and nonordained personnel.⁶

Quantification of objectives

The third phenomenon that discloses a misunderstanding of the church is the *quantification* of its objectives—the attempt to define its success in statistical terms. Playing the numbers game is a very natural, almost inevitable, result of a genuine desire to know how well the church is doing in the work we believe God has commissioned it to do. Since we know that our own personal feelings and subjective impressions are not reliable enough to tell us what is really going on, we look for something "objective" that we can measure.

But in measuring so carefully whatever we can measure, we unconsciously slip into the faulty assumption that what we can measure most readily is what is most important. Thus it becomes easy for us to take as our goal the improvement of our statistics.

Ever so naturally and subtly we come to believe that bigger means better, and better means bigger. We take it for granted that God's blessing is evident in numerical growth, and that such growth is evidence of God's blessing. The more persons we baptize, the more churches we organize, the more tithes and offer-

ings we receive, the more schools, hospitals, and publishing companies we operate, the more God is blessing our efforts and the more we are succeeding in doing His will. On the other hand, if the numbers are not increasing, it seems evident that we are *not* doing His will, and our feelings run from serious disappointment to renewed determination, or to profound despair.

To the extent that these situations prevail, and to the extent that we are comfortable with this condition, we have seriously misunderstood what the church really is.

The cost of misunderstanding

The first cost is the possibility that we may not be actually doing the work that God most wants us to do. In the light of eternal value, it may well be that quality is more important than quantity, and the *kind* of people we are in the church may be more important than *how many* we are.

This indeed seems to have been Ellen White's view. In a familiar sentence that expresses what has come to be called "the harvest principle," the emphasis is obviously on quality rather than quantity: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."⁷ Nor do we need to wonder what is meant by "the character of Christ," for this is explicitly described in another impressive (but unfortunately less well known) sentence: "The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance."⁸ There is no way to quantify "the sunshine of heaven" or to include "the impulse to help and bless others" in a statistical report. Thus one of the dangers we confront in thinking of the church primarily as an organization is the possibility that we may not be putting first things first after all.

Another problem lies in the possibility that a church simply cannot succeed as an organization, but only as a fellowship. By its very nature, an organization is task-oriented and goal-directed; the task and the goal constitute the reason for its existence. But sometimes a "management by objectives" approach just will not work. Some things cannot be achieved in this way. Personal happiness, for example, is never a direct achievement, but always a by-product.

Can the sunshine of heaven be measured in figures? Can the impulse to help and bless others be quantified? Are statistics always a measure of true growth?

Likewise, the effective communication of the gospel is not so much the result of determination, organization, preparation, and implementation as it is a gift of grace. For no matter how diligent our efforts may be, the Spirit, like the wind, blows where He wills.

A third problem is the possibility that a preoccupation with organizational (i.e., statistical) success is a kind of "righteousness by works." For the church, as for its people individually, there is spiritual danger in worrying too much about how well we are doing. The church can become obsessed with taking its own temperature when it should be looking primarily at God's love and secondarily at the tasks that are immediately before it, letting God take care of the results. We should concentrate on "doing God's work"—finding opportunities to make God's love visible and effective, and His will clear and compelling, through appropriately gracious words and thoughtful actions—and leave "finishing the work" to Him.⁹

A fourth problem is almost too sensitive to mention—the possibility that we are dishonest with ourselves and each other, pretending to be doing better than we are, because we cannot face the idea that God is *not* blessing our efforts. Because of our identification of God's blessing with numerical growth, we have made it nearly impossible to admit—at conference workers' meetings, constituency meetings, or even in informal conversations—that our work has met with little if any success that can be statistically reported. So we often indulge in wishful thinking and "evan-

gelistic arithmetic.”

So long as we think of the church primarily as an organization, these dire possibilities remain before us. We always confront them, and we sometimes succumb to them.

In trying to understand our misunderstanding of the church, it is helpful to consider some factors that have contributed to its development. In the first place, it is easy to think of the church in organizational terms because it is an organization and cannot successfully avoid being one. Among our Adventist ancestors there was much discussion about this very question of organization. Some objected strenuously that organization characterized “Babylon,” the church of anti-christ. They warned that it would form “a throne upon which the man of sin might sit.”¹⁰ In a sense they were right. Organization is always dangerous to, and often subversive of, religion. But the fact that organization is unavoidably hazardous does not mean that we can get along without it. Neither does it mean that organization is an unmixed blessing. It is, to be sure, a risk that we must run, but while we are running, we must not forget that it is indeed a risk. The risk comes from the fact that because we recognize that a church is necessarily an organization, we tend to suppose that it is primarily an organization.

Organization does for the church what a skeleton does for the human body. A person could not function without bones. But if he were told that what was really attractive about him was his skeleton, he would probably regard the comment as some sort of joke or he would feel insulted. In the same way, what is important about the church is not its organization, but its fellowship, its experience of community, and what happens among people who belong to each other in Christ.

There are two other prominent reasons for our tendency to think of the church in organizational terms. Adventism has always been characterized by a strong sense of mission and urgency, a conviction that there is a task to be done. And if there is a task to be done, the best way to go about doing it is to get something organized. By planning and working together, combining their resources and their talents, people can do whatever they need to do—including communicating the Advent message—more effectively than they can as separate individuals. Any religion needs some kind of organization

in order to survive, and an activist religion (such as Adventism) feels this need for organization much more acutely than does a quietist religion.

In addition, modern Adventism emerged and developed first in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America, where progress has been the motto and production the goal. To get things organized, and to expect bigger and better things, is “the American way.” The notion that “small is beautiful” is a very recent suggestion, with little evidence that it is being taken seriously.¹¹ For the Seventh-day Adventist Church to have been born in America may be seen as providential; but its long-lasting cultural consequences should also be noted.

So far there have been no “villains” in this narrative. Rather, the misunderstanding of the church seems to be the inevitable result of the very nature of things—the necessity of organization, the Adventist sense of mission, and the historical and cultural context. But to have the whole picture, we must incorporate another, more embarrassing element—the temptation to take the easy way. It is always easier to “let George do it,” especially if George has been educated for it and is paid to do it. In this case, of course, the idea is to “let Elder George do it.” And unfortunately, it is often easier for Elder George to do it himself than to persuade some of the reluctant saints to do it (even if he really believes that they are the ones who ought to be doing it). So in congregation after congregation everyone is happily actualizing the church’s misunderstanding of itself. The minister gets paid to do the work of the church, the people faithfully provide the money and moral support, and the church functions as a more-or-less efficient organization. But that is not what the church was intended to be, and it is not what the church must continue to be.

Remedying the misunderstanding

Remedying the misunderstanding can best be accomplished by identifying and then living out some of the possibilities of the church as a fellowship, a community of faith and the Spirit.

Such a fellowship and experience of community is not just a matter of spatial proximity—being in the same place at the same time, like the dollars in an offering plate. It is a matter of knowing that we belong to each other because we belong to the same Lord. In this “be-

longingness” there is a security, an “at-homeness.” The church is never regarded as “they”—the pastor, the elders, the church board, or the conference or General Conference officials. The church is always seen as “we.”

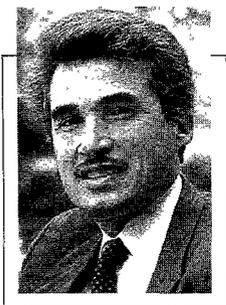
A church is a fellowship of love. In the early days of Christianity, when it was the kind of minority religion that Adventism is now, the pagans who knew Christians exclaimed to one another, “How they love one another; and how ready they are to die for each other.”¹² This kind of self-giving love is, of course, precisely what Jesus had demonstrated and then formulated in His “new commandment”: “Even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34, RSV). And He predicted that this would be their identification: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (verse 35).

It happened in the early centuries of Christianity, and it can happen now in Adventism. An Adventist church can be a fellowship of persons who know the mutual fulfillment of self-giving love, a fellowship in which the estrangements and hostilities so typical of our world can be overcome, a fellowship so rewarding and valuable that no one would ever want to leave it. An Adventist church can be a fellowship in which every person is respected in his uniqueness—not only accepted, but valued for what he alone can contribute to the experience of his brothers and sisters in Christ—a fellowship in which the differences of race, culture, vocation, age, temperament, and economic status are not occasions for separation or suspicion, but opportunities for enriching the quality of our life together.

A church is also a fellowship of ministry. A church that is a fellowship of love is not content to live for itself alone; it insists on communicating love to others. If a church is genuinely a fellowship of love, it is also—and for that very reason—a fellowship of ministry.

One part of this ministry is service. A fellowship of love and ministry wants to give to the world more than it gets from the world. Another part of this ministry is proclamation and witness—talking enthusiastically and effectively about God’s love and forgiveness, and about His will and His claim. A fellowship of love and ministry thus wants to communicate the good news of Christ and of the Sabbath and the Advent hope.

(Continued on page 30)



Potomac constituency votes abortion appeal

Martin Weber

My brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, abortion is testing our church." So began a daylong discussion that ended with Potomac Conference delegates voting by an overwhelming majority to request that two Adventist hospitals strictly limit abortions performed. The official action occurred during a special constituency meeting on Sunday, September 29, in Vienna, Virginia.

By a vote of 190 to 58, delegates passed this resolution: "We, the Potomac Conference constituency, appeal to Washington Adventist Hospital and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital to immediately adopt and implement abortion policies that institutionally prohibit abortions for social or economic reasons including convenience, birth control, gender selection, or avoidance of embarrassment; limiting the abortion procedure to those times when a pregnancy threatens the mother's physical life, when the fetus is gravely abnormal, and in cases of rape and incest. The appointment of a committee charged with prospectively reviewing all requests for abortion would be essential to ensure implementation of these guidelines.

"We further ask the Abortion Study Commission to continue monitoring the abortion policies and numbers of abortions performed at our hospitals and to report to our next constituency meeting on the hospitals' response to this appeal. The committee shall consist of at least 50 percent female representation."

Martin Weber is an associate editor of Ministry.

The meeting was an outgrowth of an unresolved discussion at a previous constituency meeting in 1987. Two years before that, Washington Adventist Hospital had been the target of an abortion protest organized by nearby Covenant Life Church. Its pastor was quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying, "We find it very inconsistent for a hospital run by a Christian church to be practicing murder of unborn children."

Various area Adventists, alarmed by this allegation, launched an investigation of the hospital's abortion policy. Regarding such an explosive moral issue, they decided that Potomac members needed input from hospitals bearing the name of their church within their conference territory. George B. Gainer, now chaplain of Columbia Union College and an associate pastor of Sligo church, organized the initiative that eventually ripened into the resolution just passed at the special constituency meeting.

Delegates wrestled with apparent discrepancies between abortion limits recommended in 1970 and a more liberal policy adopted in 1971 (see *Ministry*, August 1991). Under the authority of the liberalized "Interruption of Pregnancy" statement, a number of Adventist hospital boards apparently felt obliged to permit what some Potomac delegates described as "abortion on demand." One pastor summarized his concerns: "And if all these abortions in our hospitals merely 'interrupt' a pregnancy, please explain how it gets started again."

Both sides freely expressed their points and counterpoints. Some delegates urged respect for a woman's right to control what happens within her body. Others responded that one person's right to choose ends where an-

other's body begins, and no human should stop a heart from beating with the life of God.

Defenders of abortion rights insisted that our hospitals must not withhold a legal service from the community. Opponents argued that Adventist institutions have both the option and the responsibility to serve as a moral lighthouse to the community. "Adventists have never been silent about comparative trifles such as makeup and amusements," one pastor's wife observed. "Surely we can stand up and be counted on the greatest moral issue of our time."

Women delegates frequently stepped up to the microphones to voice their convictions. One nurse defended "safe" hospital abortions by describing a teenager's trauma from an illegal "back alley" operation. A pastor's wife told about the depression and remorse of many women whose abortions were legal.

One pastor read the words of Jesus in John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (NIV). "Abortion belies the unselfishness of this agape love," he declared.

Debate lasted through the afternoon. The conclusive argument, some said, was that God, the life-giver, wants Adventist hospitals to conduct the ministry of healing human life—not the abortion of it.

Most Adventist health-care institutions already disallow abortion in all but extreme circumstances. For example, at Florida Hospital, our largest in the world, policy states that "termination of pregnancy for socioeconomic reasons is prohibited." ■

Tools for Evangelism

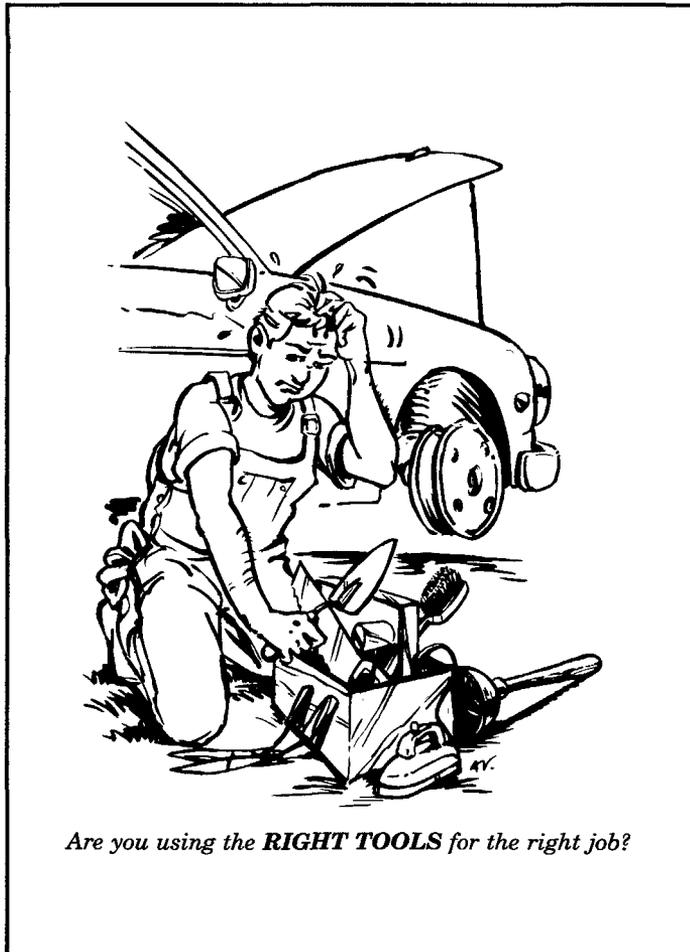
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Letters

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tary muscular movement is possible. Life is maintained by the pons and medulla only. While knowledge of Kis's experience with such individuals would not change the truth of anything he says in his article, it would change the interpretation by some readers. — Robert A. Dexter, M.D., Porterville, California.

■ Would an Adventist ordained minister be tempted to leave the "remnant church"? For me the issue of abortion is nearly the cause. My head hangs in shame before all Christian leaders who receive *Ministry*. Are we not the remnant that keep the commandments? Is the sixth commandment less important than the fourth? In evangelism I have lost at least a dozen souls because of this inconsistency. Driving by Adventist hospitals and seeing anti-abortion picketers brings tears to my eyes. Especially when the Catholic or Baptist hospital down the road is known as a "nonmurdering" facility. May God help us put principle ahead of policy and not succumb to any pressure—financial, social, or any other. —Leo Schreven, evangelist, Frederick, Maryland.

■ I commend *Ministry* for providing a forum to bring into the open such issues as abortion. I am deeply distressed with my church's stand (or lack of one) after reading your August issue.

As a health-care administrator for two medical clinics and one dental practice, I empathize with those who have to make the hard decisions in today's topsy-turvy world of health care. However, when it comes to abortion, let's make it clear that we are dealing with not a financial or political issue, but a moral and ethical one.

Although I do not adhere to Roman Catholic theology, I applaud that church's stand on abortion. I challenge my church leadership to abolish administering abortions at all SDA health facilities—at the very minimum, abortion on demand. —David F. Crawford, M.B.A., Tok, Alaska.

■ Upon reading the articles by Kis and Gainer, I didn't know what to think. Suppose during the past hundred years we had handled the fourth commandment from an economic standpoint as we appear to be doing with the sixth now, would we have a Seventh-day Adventist Church today?

It seems to me that as a church body we need to do some confession and a good deal of repentance.

"To choose the right because it is right; to stand for truth at the cost of suffering and sacrifice—'this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord' " (*Education*, pp. 154, 155). —Jeremia Florea, Doe Branch, Arizona.

Responding to institutional doldrums

George Knight's article on Adventism and institutionalism and L. A. King's analysis on the dilemma of legalism or permissiveness (June 1991) leave us with one of three responses.

We can retort defensively by enumerating the many "good" achievements our institutional functions have conjured up, and take cover behind statements by E. G. White that indicate that this movement will go through to the end (the one prophetic utterance we hesitate to categorize as conditional).

Second, we can go on as we are, making minor adjustments as we go, patching here and programming there, sincerely believing that we are on track.

The third response to our institutional doldrums is the one I believe in. Its core is found in the power of the cross of Christ. That event sparked an idea that was practiced by the early followers of Christ, was lost sight of until the Reformation, and has not yet come to its fullest potential. Simply stated, it calls, equips, and sends each born-again believer in the gospel of Christ to exercise radical discipleship in being the church in the world. When the priesthood of believers becomes a grass roots concept, when institutions are de-emphasized, when hierarchy becomes servant, when the true focus of the organization is on the local church member, when spiritual growth becomes the springboard for numerical and financial growth, and when we become "determined not to know anything . . . except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2,

NKJV), not only will we escape King's dilemma, but we will be the church God can use to get the good news out quickly. —Ivan C. Blake, pastor, Urbandale Seventh-day Adventist Church, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Disappointed

As I opened the June 1991 issue of *Ministry*, I was excited to find the article "The Beast From the Earth" by Robert Surridge. However, after studying it, I can only say that I was disappointed.

First of all, I cannot agree when he says that our traditional interpretation of the word "earth" "is not so soundly based," that it is based on "conjecture and assumption," that "the scholar familiar with the terms involved will likely still entertain serious doubts," and that we need to develop an interpretation that "does not violate the principles of biblical symbolism."

Of course, you realize that when he takes issue with SDA commentators from Uriah Smith on, he is also taking issue with the interpretation given by God's prophet, Ellen G. White (who, by the way, has both devotional and doctrinal authority). Ellen White clearly uses the traditional SDA argument. —Stephen P. Bohr, Multilingual Ministries, New Jersey Conference, Trenton, New Jersey.

How candid should *Ministry* be?

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which *Ministry* is a member) in its Standards of Ethics and Professional Practice declares: "Disciplined journalistic curiosity seeks out information and insight in the service of the reader and the common good, out of the knowledge that the individual readers—the ultimate 'consumers' of journalism—need truth to form their opinions and conduct their lives in consonance with God's will, and that society as a whole, and each community within society, specifically the churches, needs trustworthy sources of information and interpretation in order to function as community."

As Jesus so succinctly stated: "The truth will set you free" (John 8:32, NIV). ■

Inspiration

Alden Thompson, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1990, 332 pages, \$15.95, hardcover.*

Reviewed by Gosnell L.O.R. Yorke, associate professor of religion, Atlantic Union College, at the time of this review. He is now at Solusi College, Zimbabwe, Africa.

Thompson's book comes at a time when the difficult doctrine of inspiration is being vigorously debated not only within the context of post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism and post-liberal Protestantism, but also against the backdrop of discussions and developments within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In four parts comprised of two lengthy excerpts from Ellen G. White's writings, 21 chapters and seven appendixes, Thompson introduces us to and elaborates on the thrust of *Inspiration*. His basic thesis: The doctrine of inspiration is credible and defensible only when it makes allowance for both the divine and the human at work in the creation, transmission, and translation of the Scriptures. To ignore either, he contends, is to play havoc with doctrine.

A book like this one can best be reviewed by analyzing it on two levels: message and method. As to the former, the author, a professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla College, Washington, seeks to keep the divinity and the humanity of the Scriptures in creative tension by opting for an "incarnational model of inspiration." Without negating the infallible divine, he stresses the fallible human side of the equation because it is here we find the most challenging problems. Thompson draws out the implications of this emphasis on the humanity of the Scriptures by directing the reader's attention to the following: 1. A great deal of literary overlap and unacknowledged borrowing exists in some Scripture. For example, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles in the Old Testament and the Synoptic Gospels in the New. 2. Inspired authors used uninspired secretaries, as Paul used Tertius

(Rom. 16:22). 3. Inspired books such as Psalms and Proverbs were either compiled and edited by anonymous and uninspired editors or they adopted and adapted uninspired African (Egyptian) wisdom traditions (cf. Prov. 22:17; 23:11).

Thompson is aware that whatever we, fallible humans, touch we tarnish. Therefore, he is not surprised when inspired Matthew makes mention of the murder of Zechariah, the son of *Berachiah*, when he really meant Zechariah, the son of *Jehoiada* (see Matt. 23:35; Zech. 1:1; 2 Chron. 24:20). Thompson also raises a slew of other issues (perhaps too many) having to do with the genealogical lists of both Testaments, Ussher's chronology and the age of the earth, the date of the Exodus, and the interpretative problems posed by the inflated number of those who crossed the sea of Reeds.

The author makes his overall message clear, well-articulated, and informative. His inductive and responsible reasoning allows him to argue that the Bible is the Word of God, more practical than philosophical in purpose. He sees the Bible more like a casebook than a codebook, a book filled with principles based on God's love and meant for contextual application and reapplication rather than for providing precise answers to be legalistically enforced in any given situation. Thompson states, "Let the Bible—all the Bible (*omnis Scriptura!*)—determine our theory of inspiration rather than bringing a predetermined view of inspiration to the Bible" (p. 316).

Written primarily for an Adventist readership, Thompson draws parallels between church pioneers (like Prescott and Haskell). He points to their views of the doctrine of inspiration as they apply to the Scriptures and Ellen White's writings. He shows in a number of cases that the former gets mirrored in the latter—and not always with White's endorsement.

Now to the book's method. The author has made a serious and commendable attempt to approach the potentially touchy subject of inspiration with pasto-

ral and pedagogical tact and sensitivity. Throughout his work, he writes as a pastor-teacher rather than as a hypercritical and iconoclastic scholar. He begins his discussion with two excerpts from *Selected Messages* (book 1, pp. 15-23) and *The Great Controversy* (pp. v-xii). In both these passages White's commitment to the incarnational model of inspiration is clear. Without attempting to be original in his view of inspiration, Thompson helps make clear the implication of White's inspired position on the subject. Further, he draws on his own classroom experience as a student and teacher to alert the reader that a responsible and inductive discussion of the humanity of the Scriptures (without negating its divinity) can be uncomfortable or liberating, depending on one's mind-set. Thompson tries to keep the cognitive dissonance to a minimum by assuring the reader that regardless of what the humanity of the Scripture implies, it remains God's Word. For him, "it is possible to see the human and still believe in the divine" (p. 90).

Thompson's book is an excellent attempt to deal with a difficult subject. No book ever satisfies everyone, and *Inspiration* will have its detractors. Some may question the author's (and publisher's?) judgment not to include footnotes or endnotes. Others may want to amend the subtitle of the book and have it read "Hard Questions and Honest Attempts at Answers." Still others, including myself, would want to register mild discomfort with the author's tendency to extrapolate somewhat loosely about what "most Adventists" (p. 128) are or do based solely on the author's Euro-American experience of, and exposure to, a church that is global. These minor irritants, notwithstanding, Thompson makes a significant contribution to the topic of the doctrine of inspiration. I highly recommend it.

Reviewed by Norman R. Gulley, professor of theology, Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.

Thompson, professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla College, writes lu-

cidly on his subject. My review will not look at ideas I agree with, but will attempt to discuss my basic concerns. The author states that he overcame his fear of Scripture, and wrote this book to show the humanity of the Bible so others can avoid "the possibility of a deadly surprise" or a "fatal contradiction," that might cause the collapse of their faith. My personal journey differs from his and influences this review. My faith in the Bible becomes stronger by focusing on the unity rather than contradictions of Scripture. (See Hans LaRondelle's *The Israel of God in Prophecy*.) The New Testament becomes the authoritative interpreter of the Old Testament as we view the plan of salvation with Christ as the center.

Christ as center is important because Thompson proposes an "incarnational view." The incarnational model is not new and is attempted in as different perspectives as those of the inerrantist Rene Pache¹ and the liberal James Barr.²

Thompson claims he bases his idea upon two incarnational documents of Ellen White, constituting a "primary point of reference for all that follows" (p. 16). He notes that "authors tend to emphasize either the human or the divine, rather than keep both in balance" (p. 17), yet he devotes most of his book to the human side.

The author says his thinking and spiritual formation have been influenced by Ellen White's writings. He states that after reading the book in manuscript form, one of his friends described it as "an act of gratitude to Ellen White" (p. 258). He quotes Ellen White and refers to her writings at least 166 times throughout the book. But judging by his own standard (her two basic documents and other writings), I feel he does not do justice to the balanced³ incarnational view of Ellen White or to other positions she takes that differ from his. Thompson uses Ellen White selectively.

Because of limited space, I can only briefly evaluate his incarnational model in the context of Ellen White's two documents and other writings. Many other ideas in the book need to be addressed.⁴ First, note the differences between the basic Ellen White documents Thompson claims to use and his use of them:

Ellen G. White focuses on the Bible as "revealed truth" with a unity throughout. Divine thoughts in human

words as Christ clothed in humanity are God's revelation to man.

Alden Thompson focuses on the biblical "parallel accounts" with "many differences." Preoccupied with the human, without proper reference to the divine, he does not present an incarnational model.

Thompson denies that an inspired author can be the final interpreter of another inspired author, which calls in question the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* (the Bible interprets itself). Biblical interpretation, for Thompson, involves not just knowing the Bible, but knowing God. There is some truth in this. But if knowing God replaces the objectivity of the Bible being its own interpreter, then we are left with only a subjective norm (experience) as the final interpreter of Scripture.

Thompson poses a question: "Could you imagine circumstances in your church in which . . . the participants would be able to say . . . , 'I understand that Old Testament passage differently than Paul does'? Would such a statement imply loss of confidence in Paul?" (p. 213). He answers the question: "Inspired writers should not hinder ordinary believers (i.e., those not inspired in a special sense) from pursuing their God-given responsibilities to interpret the text of Scripture for themselves, even if their interpretation may differ from that of a credentialed inspired writer" (p. 211).

These basic presuppositions lie behind Thompson's "casebook" view of Scripture, as well as his focus on differences, rather than unity, in the Bible. This method places the reader as judge over which biblical passage should be applied in each specific situation. By contrast, in the two Ellen White documents, on which Thompson allegedly bases his thesis, I find a different focus.

From *Selected Messages*, book 1, pages 15-23.

There are others, but I will mention only three.

1. "Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures" (p. 20). Compare Thompson's "apparently contradictory proverbs" (p. 101). "Many differences" (p. 19); "Let some authority do

their thinking for them . . . , even the Bible" (p. 106).

2. "The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread" (p. 20).

3. "How quickly He [Christ on the Emmaus road] straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and divine verity of the Scriptures. How much men in these times need their understanding opened" (p. 21).

From *Great Controversy*, pages v-xii.

Again, I am giving only a sample.

1. "And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony" (p. vi). Compare Thompson: "We could begin to relieve the constant need for harmonization" (p. 191).

2. "A different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all" (p. vi). Thompson: "diverse interpretations" (p. 264).

3. "The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will" (p. vii).

In contrast to Ellen White's focus on the unity of Scripture, Thompson speaks about a "theoretical unity," and also says it is "inappropriate . . . simply to turn around and impose the New Testament interpretation on the Old." If that is so, what about progressive revelation, which, paradoxically, Thompson finds in Ellen White? Further, Ellen White maintains that "the New Testament explains the Old" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 381), and that the "doors of the New Testament are unlocked with the key of the Old Testament" (*Evangelism*, p. 579). She says, "Christ's lessons were not a new revelation, but old truths which He Himself had originated and given to the chosen of God, and which He came to earth to rescue from the error under which they had been buried" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 4, p. 1689).

Thompson finds both unifying and motivational force of Scripture in what he calls the "law pyramid"—love, love to God and man, and the Decalogue (p. 216). Ellen White, however, finds Christ the center of Scripture: "The Old Testament sheds light upon the New,

and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 128). Christ's "ministry is the key that unlocks the Old Testament Scriptures, giving access to their rich treasures" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 229). Both the Testaments meet "together in Christ" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1092). She further advises that "every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 315). She never suggests the "casebook" method Thompson proposes. Even in the two basic documents that Thompson claims as the basis for his book, Ellen White speaks twice of the Bible as a "guide-book" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 15, 16).

The Jews rejected Jesus because they focused only on the human about Him. The same can happen to the Bible. Christ focused on the divine (Luke 24:27; Matt. 26:55, 56; John 5:30), and so did Ellen White. In her third incarnational model, besides the two referenced by Thompson, she says, "In the work of God for man's redemption, divinity and humanity are combined" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 747). It is this joining of the two that makes Christ and the Bible unique compared with all other persons and books. Paul understood this. He said, "And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe" (1 Thess. 2:13, NIV).

A true incarnational understanding of Scripture must involve the way Christ related to Scripture. He overcame temptations by the Word (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10), based His teaching on it (e.g., looking just at Matthew: 5:18, 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32-48; 11:13, 14, 21-24; 12:3-6, 40-42; 19:4-9; 21:42-44; 22:37-40, 43-45; 24:9-21, 29; 26:31, 32). He quoted the Old Testament (Matt. 21:13, 16), found reference to Himself throughout the Old Testament (Luke 24:27), affirmed that "scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35; Luke 16:17), and accepted it as the Word of God (Matt. 15:4 quoting Ex. 21:17; Matt. 22:31, 32 quoting Ex. 3:6). He was a constant student of the Old Testament (*The*

Desire of Ages, p. 84), and there is no record that He ever spoke about differences in Scripture, as does Thompson.

Says John Stott, Christ's "submission to Scripture is for us Evangelicals a sign of our submission to Christ, a test of our loyalty to Him. We find it extremely impressive that our incarnate Lord, whose own authority amazed His contemporaries, should have subordinated Himself to the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures as He did, regarding them as His Father's written Word."⁵

¹ Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scriptures*, trans. Helen I. Needham (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), pp. 35-42.

² James Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), pp. 125, 126.

³ Cf. his suggestion for both sides, advocates for the human and the divine (p. 96). Neither would be a balanced incarnational view. He calls for seminars to give "human aspects" but says "that should not be an overriding concern. Food for the soul must be foremost. That means not showing too much of the skeleton that carries the flesh" (p. 248). Thompson's book falls into the skeleton category.

⁴ I have written a 26-page single-spaced evaluation with more than 160 footnotes, so this is but a brief view, only one aspect of my concern.

⁵ David L. Edwards with a response from John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials . . . A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1988), p. 85.

Real Prosperity—Biblical Principles of Material Possessions

Jean A. Getz, *Moody Press, Chicago, 1990, 438 pages, \$24.99, hardcover. Reviewed by Richard A. Hansen, M.D., director, Poland Spring Health Institute, Poland Spring, Maine.*

A pastor and seminary professor, Getz tackles a subject important to Christians. Materialism saps strength from church members and pastors, encroaches on our benevolence, even steals from our regular tithes and offerings. Approaching the topic from a biblical perspective, Getz presents a comprehensive and well-illustrated theology of giving. *Real Prosperity* makes an excellent study guide on stewardship for church groups.

I wish Getz had included case histories from his pastoral experience and used more current statistics. Some suggestions of how to tithe systematically and give offerings in the most productive way would increase this book's usefulness for congregations. However, the questions and evaluation exercises at the end of each chapter will prove helpful in applying biblical principles.

The misunderstanding of the church

From page 24

In such a ministry everybody is involved; no one is left out, for everyone has some gift of ministry. The New Testament makes it clear that it is not just the pastor who is to serve, to teach, and to invite. The special function of the pastor is something like that of a coach to show the players what to do, to help them develop the appropriate skills, to plan the most effective strategy, to encourage and inspire. But the pastor-coach is not the star of the game; it is the members of the team who hit the home runs, shoot the baskets, and make the touchdowns, as they fulfill *their* ministry.

So the misunderstanding of the church is not incurable. When Adventism becomes this kind of fellowship and community of love and ministry, we will not be inclined to think of the church primarily as an organization. For we will be captivated by the surprising power of grace as our loving God acts to finish His work in our world. ■

¹ See C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

² See, for example, Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), pp. 19-47; G. C. Berkouwer, *The Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 77-102.

³ There is at least one exception to the general pattern: the Potomac Conference, of which the executive committee comprises equal numbers of ministers and lay members.

⁴ 1978 Annual Council of the General Conference Committee, General Actions (Washington, D.C.), p. 17.

⁵ See Gottfried Oosterwal, "The Church Is the People," *Insight*, Oct. 30, 1973, pp. 12-15, and Nov. 6, 1973, pp. 15-18.

⁶ See the analysis of "evangelistic workers" (which include administrative and promotional personnel in the conferences, but exclude institutional personnel) in the *Annual Statistical Reports* of the General Conference for the respective years.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1941), p. 69.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁹ For the significance of the difference between "doing the work" and "finishing the work" I am indebted to my colleague Robert M. Johnston.

¹⁰ Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 300-302.

¹¹ See E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

¹² Tertullian, *Apology* 9. 7.

A get-well wish from those at worship

At worship each week, we encourage our church members to send a message of care to those hospitalized and/or a designated shut-in. We place in the pews 4¼" x 5½" note sheets with such headings as "A Get-Well Wish" or "Thinking of You Today." Early in the worship hour, we encourage members to write personal notes to the individuals concerned. The names of the hospitalized and the designated shut-in for the week are placed in the bulletin. The deacons collect the notes during offering time and after service sort them out and put them in envelopes. During the week, one of the elders or I hand-deliver these notes along with the bulletin to the individuals concerned. If a personal visit is not feasible, the package is mailed. This system has worked well for us, and gives the entire church an opportunity to express their care and good wishes, on a personalized basis. —Walter L. George, pastor, Oak Grove Christian Church, 5703 Oak Grove Road, Kansas City, Kansas.

Dialogue for SDA students on secular campuses

Have you felt a pastoral burden for Seventh-day Adventist students in non-SDA colleges and universities? Have you sensed a need to keep them in touch with Adventist faith, mission, organization, problems, and culture? Have you felt a concern for Adventist involvement in secular intellectual arenas?

Could the thousands of Adventist young people in non-SDA universities be involved in an Adventist witness and ministry?

You will find in *Dialogue* just the help you need. Published three times a year in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, the journal projects Adventist values and priorities, and carries the mandate to keep in touch with an ever-growing body of Adventist students on non-SDA campuses. Articles deal with Christian education, philosophy and ethics, family concerns, campus life, Adventists in secular leadership, first-person accounts, and book reviews. For information on how you may help the university students in your congregation, write to *Dialogue*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 10904.

Creation Enterprises ventures in Adventist publishing

Creation Enterprises International, a self-supporting publishing venture initiated by Nancy and Juan Carlos Pardeiro, is about 2 years old and doing well. With many years of experience in publishing and marketing, the Pardeiro couple started out this faith experiment to produce literature, music, and videos to help in the global advancement of the church. Already 20 products have been in the market, including North American Division's *Evangelism and Church Growth Manual* and *Practical Evangelism Sermons and Soul-winning Techniques*, by William C.

Scales, Jr.; Mark Finley's cassette tape series on prophecy, coming events, and studies in Daniel; *Managing Stress by the Power of God's Love*, by Walter C. Thompson, M.D.; *Family Life Evangelism Manual*, by Gordon O. Martinborough. For prices and other titles, write to Creation Enterprises International, P.O. Box 274, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

Tape ministry: a new idea for witnessing

Marketing is the key to selling a product. Our church at Mount Holly, New Jersey, took this seriously when we realized that we have the best product in the world, and yet not sufficient success attends the selling of that product. How do we take the gospel to a secular and indifferent neighborhood?

We innovated a cassette tape ministry. We prepared a series of 24 tapes, each one a Bible study, in the sequence of an evangelistic series. We placed the first tape in a brown envelope with the word "sample" on it. A church member and I made our first knock on a door in the neighborhood, and began the sales pitch: "Hi, we're just passing out a sample." To our surprise, no one refused the sample. A note inside the envelope encourages the recipients to listen to the tape to find out what the program could do for their lives. The tape, in addition to a simple, life-related Bible study, also alerts the listeners that we will be back the following week to pick up the tape and give them another one.

So a 24-tape-study chain began, and soon developed into many personal studies and interests. Accompanying the tapes is a feedback instrument of simple true or false quizzes, which are marked and returned the following week. Eight churches in the New Jersey Conference are using more than 3,000 tapes already in this new type of witness program.

The strength of the tape ministry lies in its simplicity and usability. The teaching style adopts a human interest approach. At the end of each tape, a question-answer session reinforces the message. And anyone can use the "sample" approach. Even a small church can easily give 100 Bible studies a week.

The *Truth for Today* set of tapes costs \$65 post-paid. Contact Truth for Today, P.O. Box 553, Woodbine, NJ 08270 (phone: 609-499-3844). —Bob Forss, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Mount Holly, New Jersey.

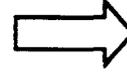
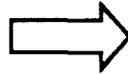
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