

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

September 1992

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The abortion dilemma

Our greatest sin

Allow me to commend Martin Weber's bold appraisal and condemnation ("Our Greatest Sin," January 1992) of one of Christendom's spiritual and social aberrations that continually plague humanity: racism as practiced and perpetuated in the Christian church.

Unlike many modern-day clerics and theologians, Weber did not sugarcoat his medicine, but dealt with the problem head-on, and offered a redemptive solution, discovered only when the racist-prone individual falls in love with Jesus Christ.

Such honest and forthright treatment of this problem gives some degree of hope and confidence to those who are "darkened by nature's sun," and to other oppressed groups.—Lester A. Parkinson, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Sex in the forbidden zone

"Sex in the Forbidden Zone" (January 1992) is a difficult issue to address. None of us wants to believe that a problem like this can occur in our church.

Thank you for recognizing how devastating this kind of behavior can be to counselors who come to a pastor for help, and instead, find their lives newly shattered.

Recognizing the pitfalls can be one step toward helping pastors and counselors alike. Providing pastoral staffs that include both males and females will be another big step.—Kit Watts, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Women and the church

As the wife of a Seventh-day Adventist minister I find Elizabeth Ostring's "Oh, No, Not a Woman!" (March 1992) extremely offensive. To define women as enablers of men is to deny women a separate identity from men. If we must use the culture of 2,000 years ago to dictate the female identity, how are we to minister to the culture of 1992? As for the ordination

of women, I think my church disgraces itself in front of the intellectual world through its sexist attitude. Have we denied the Holy Spirit the right to give spiritual gifts to whom He pleases? It seems to me that the Holy Spirit does not reserve "ordainable" pastoral gifts for all male pastors and a few female pastors. If all female pastors don't need to be or-dained, then why do all male pastors? —Liz Lundeen, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

■ Each article in the March issue was thought-provoking. I especially enjoyed the one by Elizabeth Ostring pointing out the indispensable gifts God has given woman, and most of all, that woman is a product of deliberate, divine intelligence, an absolute necessity for the survival of the human race. God bless them all; we cannot live without them.—R. J. Roy, Prescott, Arizona.

■ Thank you for including the article "Oh, No, Not a Woman!" To see the female gender as "a gift of love from God" is to begin to understand the special role that women can play within the church family. Elizabeth Ostring handles key texts faithfully and succinctly. Her picture of "the enabling ministry" is painted in warm and loving colors.

She even found (the Holy Spirit gave her!) a way to remain true to biblical role distinctions while utilizing the spiritual gifts of women in ministry. May God use her article to lead us into loving harmony on this divisive issue.—Bill Warcholik, Seymour, Connecticut.

■ *Ministry* is to be congratulated for breaking the long silence on women in the church with its January and March 1992 issues. The internal backlash against Adventist women is at least as severe as that reported in such recent best-selling books as Susan Faludi's *Backlash* and Gloria Steinem's *The*

Revolution From Within. It takes genuine moral courage to take up this unpopular topic at such a critical time in our church's and our world's history.

Some would have us believe that the vote not to ordain women to the gospel ministry obviates our having to deal with the issues of justice and morality inherent in the question of women's role and function in the Adventist Church today. And yet it seems that the Holy Spirit will not let our individual and collective consciences rest until we put away suspicions and prejudgments that inhibit our speaking respectfully to each other as true equals under God.—Lourdes E. Morales-Godmundsson, New Haven, Connecticut.

Moral influence theory

Richard Fredericks' article ("The Moral Influence Theory—Its Attraction and Inadequacy," March 1992) says that "Calvary demonstrated that sin could never go unpunished." But Calvary showed so much more than that! In the Garden of Eden Satan claimed that God had lied, that one could eat of the tree and live. God has punished many people to death on this earth, but that didn't answer Satan's charge. It wasn't until Calvary that Christ answered Satan's charge, when He showed what happens when God withdraws His life-giving glory. Until the cross the universe had never before understood that this would happen. God had by His Son's death on the cross shown that the wages of sin is death, and thereby answered Satan's charge made in the garden. And by this demonstration on the cross, He showed what will happen when He pours out His wrath on His children who have rejected His offer of healing. He will treat them just like He treated His Son on Calvary, He will sadly give them up.—Alan Altman, Puyallup, Washington.

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

As long as we live in this world of sin we will have to deal with the results of sin and abortion is no exception. Some people regard abortion as a sin, while other equally sincere people believe that it is often the lesser of two evils. So we present three articles looking at the abortion issue.

The first article, "Pro-choice, Pro-life, and Rescue," looks at the arguments on both sides of the question. "The Fetus in Biblical Law" discusses the only text in Scripture that seems to address the issue directly. The last article by Martin Weber unabashedly argues for a strong pro-life stance.

While we believe in giving both sides of an issue where the Adventist Church has not taken a stand there is no doubt that *Ministry* leans towards a high regard for the sanctity of life. We are living in an age when life is counted cheaply; people are shot without a moment's thought. The world seems to be racing to arm itself with more and more deadly weapons. Thus Christians should not be adding to the carnage. Their voices should be heard calling for the preservation of life.

Michael Podesta designed our cover that is based on excerpts from Psalm 139 and was originally created to announce the birth of his son Alexander.

Yes indeed we need to "praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."



Cover by Michael Podesta

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Abortion: choice or life?

J. David Newman

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bortion is one of the most contentious issues in the United States and in other countries around the world. The United States Supreme Court

in a just released decision declined to overthrow the historic 1973 Wade versus Roe decision, which made abortion legal throughout the United States.

Many people take passionate stands on both sides of the issue even among Christians. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not immune to these pressures. The Adventist Church had never taken a stand on abortion but in 1971 in response to pressure from Adventist hospitals it developed a set of five semiofficial guidelines to guide hospitals in setting their own abortion policies. However, guideline number five—when for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value—was so broad that many felt it opened the door to abortion on demand.

Statement on abortion

For several years the Adventist Church has had a committee wrestling with the abortion question. It has now formulated a suggested statement which will be presented to the 1992 Annual Council. Should the church vote a statement? What authority should it have?

Many feel that the church should keep out of the debate and leave it up to each individual to make up his or her mind. Others feel that churches exist to help guide their members and society on moral issues.

Some fault the Roman Catholic Church for not taking a stand against Hitler and his pogrom of the Jews. Churches took a stand against slavery and added their voices to

bringing about important social change. So what should the Adventist Church do?

Maybe it could learn from how it has treated government relationships and noncombatancy. The 1954 Annual Council of the General Conference took the following action:

"Genuine Christianity manifests itself in good citizenship and loyalty to civil government. The breaking out of war among men in no way alters the Christian's supreme allegiance and responsibility to God or modifies his obligation to practice his beliefs and put God first.

"The partnership with God through Jesus Christ, who came into this world not to destroy men's lives but to save them, causes Seventh-day Adventists to take a noncombatant position, following their divine Master in not taking human life, but rendering all possible service to save it. In their accepting the obligation of citizenship, as well as its benefits, their loyalty to government requires them to serve the state in any noncombatant capacity, civil or military, in war or peace, in uniform or out of it, which will contribute to saving life, asking only that they may serve in those capacities which do not violate their conscientious convictions."

Now this action is not a policy statement or a rigid position binding all church members. Rather, it states a principle giving guidance but leaving the individual member free to make his or her own decision. The church states the ideal but does not discipline members if they do not live up to the ideal.

Middle ground

I believe that a middle ground in the abortion debate would be to follow the same practice as we did for noncombatancy. Let us state the ideal that we as Christians are for life rather than against life, but that

leaves the choice of how to implement the ideal to each individual.

One aspect of the abortion debate is rarely discussed. Usually we get into arguments as to when life begins, and since there is no consensus, we shrug our shoulders and say that we cannot condemn abortion. But consider this point. We would not kill a premature baby as soon as it is born, but if it is still in the womb, then it can be terminated. How is the baby different now that it is born than it was just a few minutes before? It certainly is just as dependent on others as it was before birth. It may now communicate with an audible cry whereas before it was a silent scream, but in essence it is no different.

Life a priority

We argue over what should take priority—life or choice, but if there is no life, then there can be no choice. I have to be alive in order to be able to choose. And if I could choose would I choose abortion for myself? We are not free to choose everything we want. We must all accept some restrictions on our freedoms. We are not even allowed to kill ourselves.

Now, I realize that questions are raised about rape, incest, abnormalities, finances, quality of life, etc. And there is no doubt that our sinful world poses many dilemmas. That is why Christians need an anchor point when it comes to issues of the beginning and the ending of life. Since only God can give life, it behooves us to be very careful how quickly we are willing to take away that life.

The cross reveals how much God is concerned about life. Jesus sacrificed His life that we might be able to choose life. Should not we also be prepared to sacrifice to save the life of the unborn? But even more, our churches should provide financial, emotional, and physical support to

those families who decide to keep the child. It is not enough to be against something; we must also be for something.

Thus I believe that the church should make a statement giving a high value to

life (abortion only when the life of the mother is at stake) but leave it up to each individual as to how he or she will practice that ideal, just as the church has done on the noncombatancy issue. ■

Who am I?

John M. Fowler

W

ho am I?" (2 Sam. 7:18).*

David's self-reflection is in a way a call to take stock of oneself, to pause before the Almighty and face the search-

ing question, Who am I? A mini god? A fraud? A machine?

Many answers have been provided: some far from truth; some true but futile. We shall reflect on three such answers and find fulfillment in another.

Consider the philosopher. "The unexamined life," wrote an ancient philosopher, "is not worth living." So philosophy challenges me to discover who I am. On the one hand, in philosophy's wisdom, I am born to be the rational one. Knowledge is power, and it is power that makes or breaks me. So I must learn to ask the right question, probe the appropriate place, seek the right direction; and life beckons me to come to the mountaintop: to be an authentic person.

On the other hand, in philosophy's folly, I am a tiny speck in a vast universe—alone, searching, groping, and meaningless. To be or not to be becomes the chief passion of my life. And it does not make any difference to the universe whether I am or I am not.

Between wisdom and folly, between optimistic query and pessimistic resignation, I stand alone: bewildered and hopeless.

Consider the primitive. The primitive's answer to the question "Who am I?" is one of tribal identification. I find my security in my group. My vision, my mind, my hope, my relationships are gov-

erned by my group-spirit. As a primitive I am quick to seal my identification with those visible marks: race, color, caste, status, sex, nationality, religion. The marks are not only visible, but so exclusive that I retreat into a world of my own to the point of creating a fence that splits "me" from "them." The split leads to its own extreme ends: in history an Auschwitz or a Gulag; in ideology a Berlin wall; in community life a Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict; in me a retreat into nothingness.

The trouble with such primitiveness is that I never get beyond the cave of self-interest. I become the midget of my own making: tall in stature, short in mind; strong in flesh, weak in spirit; soaring in pettiness, retreating in nobility. Tied to the unimportant, I never could become a full person.

Consider the mundane. If I were to seek my identity in the world of the mundane—be it business or politics or profession—power becomes my focus. On the way to reach the pedestal, I answer the question "Who am I?" with an affirmation of self. In the sentence of life, the subject is "I," the verb is "am," and the object is "me." I am me. Nothing else matters. Every other is a stepping-stone; everything is a tool in the direction of power. Love has no meaning. Mercy has no room. Service is a temporary flag, only to be cast down once power is achieved.

So I come back to the question: Who am I? The philosopher, the primitive, the mundane, cannot satisfactorily answer the question. And yet, answer I must. For unless I know my identity I cannot find rest or direction. Unless I know who I am, I shall not know who you are, and I cannot relate or function adequately.

So where do I go for an answer?

I turn to the cross. There I see my status: a sinner sought by God. When I look up to the cross, I see two persons: "the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20), and me. Were it not for my sins, Jesus would not have gone to the cross. He died on my behalf (Rom. 5:18) that I might live. He took the death that was mine in order that I might have life that was His. He delivered me from the bondage of sin and its consequences.

Not only am I a sinner, but a sinner sought by God. I am in a relationship with God. This relationship "between God and each soul [is] as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son."¹

With that perspective, I can affirm that I am not a cosmic accident in this universe. I am not a paradigm of a long evolutionary process. I am not a cog in a giant machine, moving in space through endless years in a meaningless cycle. No, I am a child of God—gone astray, to be sure, but pursuingly sought by the everlasting love of God. In that divine search, costing the death of the Son of God, I find my worth and dignity. As William Temple once remarked, "My worth is what I am worth to God; and that is a marvelous great deal, for Christ died for me."²

Philosophy may teach me to be rational. Sociology may direct me to live in community. Humanism may invite me to discover the relevance of interpersonal dynamic. Psychodynamics may turn me to look within for self-realization. All these have their place and their value, but at the



end of it all, I stand at the fork, helpless, and cry out like Paul: I know what I must be, but that I am not; I know what I must not be, but that I am. I am in an irreconcilable dichotomy: between the ideal and the real, between the am and the ought. I am at war with myself, and my cry reaches its hopeless nadir: "Who will deliver me?" (Rom. 7:15-25).

But the moment I turn to Calvary, I find freedom. I find forgiveness. I find reconciliation. I am at peace. I find that I am not my own. I am bought with a great price (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Indeed, at the cross I discover that the most important issue is not who I am, but whose I am. It is that

(Continued on page 30)

Pro-choice, pro-life, and rescue

Ronald D. Anton

Where is the ultimate human value to be found?



Ronald D. Anton, an attorney in Niagara Falls, New York, is a lay preacher, a former lecturer in Christian ethics at Niagara Bible College, and a former lecturer in civil rights law at the University of Buffalo Law School.

Public debate over abortion has been raging for decades, and the conflict appears insoluble and interminable. Even as the United States

has begun to brace for another round of inflammatory rhetoric, polarization, and militant campaigns to win popular and legislative support, it is time to reexamine the basic assumptions and carefully review the zeal and passions motivating opposing views. In the coming struggle to capture the nation's mind and conscience, all sides will profit from heeding both Juvenal's "Know thyself" and Aristophanes' "The wise learn much from their enemies." Then we can develop insightful and persuasive rebuttals and revive consideration for the legitimate concerns and needs of others.

To assist this dialogue, it may be helpful to have an evenhanded summary of the competing life and liberty claims advanced by pro-life and pro-choice advocates.

Before 1973 most states outlawed abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, or necessity to save the mother's life. It was taken for granted that the unborn child was included among those enjoying an unalienable right to life under the Declaration of Independence, and the right to life, liberty, and property under the Fourteenth Amendment.

In 1973 in *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an unborn fetus was not a living human being, and thus not a legal person entitled to the right to life protected by the Constitution. Rather, it was the property of its mother and

literally a part of her body over which she had control. Even though the Constitution does not expressly create such a right, the Court inferred that physical privacy was a fundamental constitutional right, and thus inviolate against state intrusion.

At the same time, state legislatures were loosed to enact laws permitting abortion if they so elected. New York, for example, authorizes abortion and characterizes it as "justifiable" if done within 24 weeks from the beginning of pregnancy, and in the third trimester provided it is necessary to preserve the mother's life. Abortion after the twenty-fourth week is prohibited, presumably in recognition of a living being then occupying the womb, and despite the rejection of the mother's claim of freedom to regulate her own body.

Pro-choice: freedom to decide

The largest group of abortion advocates is comprised of pro-choicers, who champion a woman's right of unlimited freedom to decide what will happen in the use and enjoyment of her body. If a woman cannot direct the most intimate functions of her body—her reproductive capabilities—then she cannot have control over her own life. A woman's right of self-determination, they say, should not be curtailed by irrational governmental decrees or the whims of her male partner.

Pro-choicers construe the self-evident natural law principles—the unalienable rights of life and liberty incorporated in the American Declaration of Independence—as guaranteeing a woman the right to be and do what she pleases, with liberty to fulfill that right in pursuit of her

personal choice of happiness. How can these rights to life and liberty of an existing human be disregarded, they ask, to subordinate them to rights of a potential being?

Pro-choicers regard abortion as a flawed solution, but one imposing the least anguish, affliction, and guilt in the regrettable circumstances of unwanted pregnancy—especially in the cases of rape, incest, predictable birth defects, and necessity to save a woman's life.

Pro-choice is compatible with John Stuart Mill's concept of privacy: that freedom in society ought not be restrained where its exercise affects and concerns only the individual, as might occur in the solitary, private use of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol. However, as pro-lifers observe, the corollary is that society may properly regulate individual behavior that demonstrably interferes with the rights of others, such as an unborn child's right to life.

The classic argument of nonconsent as a justification for abortion was presented by Professor Judith Jarvis Thompson of Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1971. Suppose, she posited, that some child prodigy, or any exemplar of human excellence, suffers from a fatal disease that can be reversed only by extended transfusions of a rare blood type. Suppose a woman known to have the right type of blood is kidnapped by supporters of this exceptional being, and gently but unwillingly confined in a comfortable but bolted room. She is then advised she will be coupled to him by a lifeline for nine months, and warned that disconnection before the ninth month assures his death, while uninterrupted attachment will produce his deliverance and independence.

Is it morally incumbent that the woman accede to this arrangement to preserve his life? If this unwilling captive refuses to accept such curtailment of her life, liberty, and happiness, who would not spring to her defense and sever the enslaving supply line, even if it meant the death of her dependent? For pro-choicers, the injustice of compelling unwilling participation in any symbiotic relationship, especially the servitude of unwanted pregnancy, is highlighted by thus framing the debate in terms of contractual consent and free choice.

Pro-life: right to live

Pro-lifers reply that the one who ventures into the thicket of contractual con-

sent may become entangled in the brambles of personal responsibility. Did not the woman exercise total control over her life and body when she consented to sex, with knowledge of its possible consequences? Is it not reasonably foreseeable that a consensual act of intercourse will result in conception, and necessarily produce restricted freedom? A woman is not relieved of her duty to honor the consequences of the vaunted free choice expressed in her initial copulative act, even if performance of that duty is burdensome.

Yet there may be some risks a woman is not prepared to assume, because they are un contemplated. It is foreseeable that precautionary contraceptive devices will be defective; or that the birth of a deformed child is possible, even though not statistically probable. However, it can be argued that these unwanted consequences of conception are too remote to establish advance consent or intentional assumption of their risk, despite an otherwise voluntary act of intercourse.

Indeed, in contract law, mutual mistake of fact about material circumstances can void an agreement, and relive an aggrieved party of the duty to perform. Accordingly, might not special circumstances justify abortion if conception is imposed by unwilling participation, as in cases of rape or incest, or where minors lack the volitional capacity to give informed consent to the arrangement? These are troublesome distinctions and difficult choices that require careful scrutiny in the ongoing debate about abortion.

Pro-lifers further respond that no woman's specific exercise of freedom may infringe the equal right to life of another. Every individual's freedom in society is limited, as summed up in the homely legal maxim "My right to swing my fist ends where your nose begins." There is no aspect of civilized society where one has total control over his life or liberty. In exchange for society's protection and advantages, you surrender absolute freedom. You cannot block an obnoxious neighbor's equal access to light and air by installing a high fence between your land and his. Because your neighbor has property rights, you are not free to raise odorous farm animals in the city.

A woman may be opposed to wearing a seat belt, but law and her own safety require that she wear it and thus be

The claim of freedom to choose abortion is less persuasive when we consider that every wrongful act involves a choice to act or refrain from acting.

restrained for nine minutes or nine hours while driving. She is also inhibited in her freedom to use heroin or enjoy smoking in public places. Of course, pro-choice advocates respond that compulsory pregnancy involves a nine-month servitude, and is not a relatively minor intrusion on freedom, as is the use of a seat belt. They argue that both the length of time and the nature of the infringement are mensurations in any policy that limits personal freedom.

Pro-lifers are chagrined when they are characterized as anti-choice. They point out that the claim of freedom to choose abortion is less persuasive when we consider that every wrongful act involves a choice to act or refrain from acting. The assertion of freedom to act is clearly irrelevant in the analogous case of choosing to steal or not steal. If abortion is murder of human life, then the issue is not freedom to use one's own body, but freedom of choice between killing or not killing a person, of doing right rather than wrong. The rightness or wrongness of an act can never be determined by the freedom of choice to act.

Pro-lifers especially resent being compared to Nazis simply because both groups are anti-abortion. Hitler opposed abortion because he wanted the population to increase for national military strength. Pro-lifers seek to prevent murder of innocent babies, and calling them Nazis is as illogical as calling a dog a cat simply because they both have four legs.

Advocates for abortion

Abortion advocates are clearly not a

The talent, time, and treasure expended in protesting abortion or in regulating the protests would be better spent teaching abstinence and birth control as alternatives to abortion.

homogenous group. There are some who endorse abortion because it is a population control measure that deters the alternative lifestyle of unwed mothers on the public dole. These eugenic throwbacks are not concerned with a woman's dignity or free choice, but seek only to prevent the swelling of welfare rolls.

Others regard abortion as a useful tool to control the population explosion. Still others look to abortion as a method of dealing with deformed babies, made more easily identifiable by amniocentesis and sonogram. This is equivalent to eliminating a social problem by destroying the persons who constitute or cause it, and is thus unworthy of further comment.

Other abortion advocates are concerned that outlawing abortions will not end them, but only encourage criminal activity as unqualified charlatans eagerly fill the void. Women who can afford medically safe abortions will shop around for a legal or congenial venue. Those who lack funds will revert to the furtive practices of coat hangers, unsanitary facilities, and slaughter by quackery. Legalized abortion may be an atrocity, but still one preferable to the inevitable unhygienic criminal abortions that would otherwise occur.

In point of fact, most women contemplating abortion are concerned with emotional, economic, or physical considerations, and seldom invoke feminist principles or reproductive rights on their own behalf. When a normally blessed event becomes a personal calamity, whether the decision is to terminate the pregnancy or carry to term, we cannot mea-

sure the anxiety, shame, guilt, and remorse of undergoing an abortion against the agony of enduring a compulsory pregnancy and delivery, followed by adoption, or the rearing of an unloved, unwanted child.

Although not prepared to outlaw abortion, many advocates of individual free choice for women refuse to endorse it as an acceptable public policy for mere reasons of birth control and women's convenience. They prefer that the talent, time, and treasure expended in protesting abortion or in regulating the protests be better allocated to teaching abstinence and birth control as alternatives to abortion. They would approve of society providing encouragement for paternal responsibility in parenting children, and furnishing emotional and financial support for those who would complete the pregnancy for purposes of child-rearing or adoption. They would have us focus all our energies on effecting social, rather than political, condemnation of abortion through education and persuasion, which is addressed to and consistent with a woman's right of self-determination.

Advocates for anti-abortion

Members of the anti-abortion camp are similarly diverse. Some feel that a growing population is a nation's primary resource, and that abortion only decimates the next generation, and denies a country of millions of youthful citizens-consumers, with dire economic consequences. There is also widespread concern that legitimizing any immoral conduct will attract innocents and encourage experimentation by those who would otherwise shun an activity declared to be illegal. Many characterize abortion as the leading cause of America's moral decay and degeneracy, leading to our national decline and self-destruction.

The vast majority of pro-lifers oppose abortion because of their loving concern for preserving every unborn child's life. They condemn the callous slaughter of millions of babies as violating God's sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Only God gives human life, and only God has the right to take it away. We are morally bound to protect it. Abortion is a sin that perverts the procreative purpose of sex by destroying human life.

Pro-lifers traditionally take the position that human life begins with conception, at the moment of fertilization, or shortly thereafter—following a brief de-

layed animation. In the Old Testament, Job, David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah spoke of human beings foreknown to God even before their formation in the womb. The psalmist acknowledged that God is involved before conception: "Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. . . . All my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Ps. 139:13-16).

The Gospel of Luke relates that the baby in Elisabeth's womb leaped for joy when it heard the voice of Mary, and sensed the unborn Jesus in His mother's womb (see Luke 1:41, 44). Tertullian taught that "he is a man who is to be a man, that the fruit is always present in the seed." Both the Hippocratic oath and the Oath of Maimonides proscribed abortion by physicians.

The conflict and the debate

Herein lies the root of the pro-life versus pro-choice conflict. Pro-lifers speak of murdering babies. Pro-choicers focus on a woman's dominion over her body because there is no conclusive proof that life begins at conception. It is easier for a pro-chooser to sidestep the charge of murder if pro-lifers try to establish life from the moment of conception. It is easy to regard an embryo or fetus as not yet human, but simply a fertilized ovum or inchoate tissue, if we look only at the moment of fertilization. For despite the gametes' procreative potential, no one seriously regards pristine spermatozoa or unfertilized ova as human life. Indeed, millions of them are routinely destroyed, ejaculated, or discarded every day. What makes their union any more human after a few hours or days?

Moreover, if pro-choicers can determine vitality by the occasion of quickening, when a woman can feel the fetus stirring within her, or can fix viability at the moment when infant life is presumed capable of surviving independently outside the womb, then life does not occur until the fifth or sixth month. This suggests that abortion should be permissible at least up to the last trimester.

Pro-choicers also argue that when God formed Adam out of the dust of the ground, he did not become a living soul, according to the Genesis narrative, until God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. And why, they query, has the Roman Catholic Church, that staunch opponent of abortion, declined since 1713 to baptize stillborn or miscarried fetuses?

Pro-lifers retort that the significant reality is not so much when life begins, but the fact that life has indisputably begun by the time a woman entertains the abortion alternative. Modern biologists generally accept that life begins by the seventh day after conception, when the fertilized egg is implanted in the wall of the uterus, which generally occurs weeks before any awareness of pregnancy.

Pro-lifers cite reports showing that preborns have brain activity at six weeks and heartbeats at four weeks, and respond to external stimuli in their environment. Pro-lifers decry the atrocities of dismemberment, poisoning, and strangulation of sentient beings in the womb. A preborn engulfed by the salt solution used in the saline abortion technique will wriggle and squirm in the womb until dead. A fetus prematurely delivered by prostaglandin injections (which induce muscle contractions) will be born alive and shortly die because of its immaturity.

Once a child is born, no one will tolerate murder committed by the child's mother simply because of the inconvenience to her of child rearing. How, then, can a woman justifiably kill her fetus to escape the lesser demands and dependency imposed by a developing child in the womb? That fetus will not develop into a bird or a fish, but is conceived and born as a human, made in the image of God. Our laws recognize the consistent development principle by legislation that seeks to preserve endangered species. For example, not only the killing of a bald eagle is forbidden, but also the breaking of its eggs, because they will develop only into bald eagles.

Some pro-choicers, sensitive to the accusations of infanticide or bothered by doubts there may be life soon after conception, shift the debate to devaluation of all life. They contend that not even God exalts human life absolutely, but destroys all unrepentant and rebellious sinners. They point out that God exterminated all life, including babies, in the Flood, at the time of Noah, and that He did not hesitate to kill all the firstborn males in Egypt during the Passover.

Moreover, as if on some avenging sortie through the alphabet, God delivered or directed preemptive strikes against the Amalekites, Ammonites, Amorites, and Anakims, even to the extent of annihilating all women, children, and livestock (Ex. 17:14; Jer. 49:2; Deut. 20:17; Joshua 14:12). The killing of human be-

ings in necessary self-defense or in time of war constitute other well-established exceptions to the absolute sanctity of life.

Pro-lifers retort that an abortionist is not God, and certainly claims no divine directive to kill. Rather, he executes only human will, often motivated by greed. Abortion destroys innocence rather than wickedness, whereas God never destroyed human life except to preserve the life and sanctity of His people against evil. God destroyed only nations that had become so corrupt that there was no possibility of redeeming or rehabilitating anyone. Since they rejected teachers or examples of righteousness, their offspring would have been produced with the same evil character and destined for the same fate. Their example of rebellion and self-indulgence would have corrupted God's people and worked incalculable harm to the innocent. Therefore, God lovingly imposed the least suffering then, to avoid greater suffering to His people later.

That being the case, pro-choicers rejoin, at the very least, honesty should compel us to acknowledge that abortion is justified when a woman's life is endangered by continuing her pregnancy. Congenital cardiac defects, for example, can impose formidable risks during pregnancy, as in cases of primary pulmonary hypertension or Marfan's syndrome, which also carries a high incidence of genetic transmission.

Operation rescuers

In the vanguard of the pro-life movement we find Operation Rescuers, who assert constitutional rights of free speech and assembly to declare the depth and intensity of their personal commitment. They subject themselves to arrest and imprisonment and endure other abuses to contrast the morality of the pro-life stance with the wickedness of abortion. The purpose of their demonstrations and law-breaking is to persuade others to accept their point of view, by creating a crisis of conscience that forces observers to confront the moral realities of abortion.

They employ tactics of nonviolent but obstructionist civil disobedience, in the tradition of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, such as blockading abortion facilities to prevent free access by patients. The more extremist Rescuers would picket and publicly ostracize abortionists at their homes and clubs, and literally demolish their clinics. Rescuers are zealots, dissidents, and dissenters inveighing against a

Abortion destroys innocence rather than wickedness.

majority position that has been lawfully determined in the governmental process.

Rescuers proclaim their allegiance to a higher law of God that forbids murder, feeling that their allegiance entitles them forcibly to resist unjust human laws. Since people do not derive rights from the state, but from God, they are at liberty to disobey—and ought to do so, despite personal loss or suffering—whenever civil government or human institutions transgress divine law.

Rescuers assert a citizen's right of self-defense against life-threatening attacks, and by extension, their right to intervene on behalf of a loved one or any helpless child who is being molested. Accordingly, they claim the right to come to the protection of the utterly defenseless by asserting the unborn child's right to life and removing it from a place of danger to a place of safety.

The law of necessity, as successfully invoked by anti-nuclear protesters, also entitles rescuers to break the law of the land. The exigency of a child trapped in a burning building or drowning in a swimming pool would entitle a rescuer to enter the property to save a child's life, despite a no-trespassing law.

Rescuers assert godly motives and point out that although Jesus usually submitted to authority and was passively acquiescent in death, He went beyond exhortation or admonition when He forcibly expelled the money changers from the Temple. Their commercial activity did not violate human laws, but Jesus protested and took matters into His own hands in obedience to a higher principle.

Rescuers also note that America's Declaration of Independence was born out of the struggle to challenge lawfully constituted authority, to defy corrupt government, and to disobey unjust laws when they violate God's higher law. The idea of freedom in submission to law assumes rationality, responsibility, and

integrity on the part of the free. However, the person in a minority need not submit compliantly while waiting for the majority to come to its senses, when his or her right is based on God-given rights. On the other hand, pro-abortionists could not claim the same right of conscience to disobey the law once abortions are outlawed, because they would not be acting according to a divine directive.

The sum total of majority sentiments does not lead infallibly to moral principle. The majority in Nazi Germany accepted or tacitly concurred in the Nazi objectives, but they were still wrong. The Nuremberg trials affirmed that there is a higher moral law to which all men are accountable. One could not justify Nazi atrocities under the pretext of obeying lawful commands of a superior. One is guilty of taking part in any act that violates higher moral law, and is obligated to refuse participation in such criminal activity even if lawful in one's society.

Indeed, Rescuers argue that the practical purpose of the Constitution is to protect minorities who lack power and influence, not only against oppressive tyrants but also against the caprice or passing of popular will asserted by a rabble or morally bankrupt majority. Hence, the Bill of Rights protects individuals against governmental transgressions irresponsibly applied by the incumbent majority.

We obey law in society because it maximizes enjoyment of individual freedoms, and increases aggregate personal freedom. We will submit to an orderly system of traffic controls and stop at red lights because the system generates far more freedom by allowing us to proceed whenever we have green lights. However, reasonable men will circumvent a malfunctioning part of the system, and proceed at their own peril when a light is broken and stays red indefinitely. We disobey the law in that case because it imposes more stopping than starting, and because the authorities have failed to correct the malfunction. A law that has "gone on the blink" no longer serves its legitimate purpose of expanding total personal freedoms.

Many pro-lifers are uncomfortable with the bellicosity, lawbreaking, and exploitation of publicity rampant in Operation Rescue's tactics. Since our governmental system truly offers freedom to dissent and protest, one has a correlative responsibility to persuade others, includ-

ing lawmakers, by orderly appeals to reason and conscience. Disagreement with a contrary majority opinion does not entitle one to disrupt order and destroy the very society that protects one's freedoms. Both Peter and Paul urged allegiance and submission to every established government because it was instituted by God to preserve law and order, under which personal peace and spirituality could flourish (see 1 Peter 2:13, 14; Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1).

Critics of Rescuers maintain that the public peace and tranquility ought not to be violated by well-intentioned malcontents provoking confrontations masquerading as free speech. Abortion is presently a lawful occupation entitled to protection under property and employment rights, and there are often other lawful healing activities conducted on the premises, justifying freedom of access by the public.

Some faithful Christians would prefer that religious militancy be confined to prayer warfare, and not used for social combativeness. Believers ought not to assert their own rights in protest, but commit them to the care of the Lord. It is God's prerogative to judge the unrighteous. When we entrust the struggle to the Lord, the integrity of spiritual people is maintained by submission to authority. The godliness and excellence of one's life are the best persuasions for winning souls to the Lord, which after all is the Great Commission of believers. The ultimate human value, undiluted by worldly preoccupations, involves neither life, nor freedom, but glorifying God. Which, Rescuers reply, is precisely the reason they are called to act as they do on behalf of others.

President Harry Truman once whimsically called for a one-armed expert so he could escape the customary equivocal forecast: "On the one hand, yes, but on the other hand, no." It is often difficult to consider the arguments advanced by others with an open mind. It is far easier to repose in the insularity of dogmatic certainty. Yet there are many voices mingled in the ethos, and we should listen for them. If we are to resolve honest differences of opinion, we must give equal regard to every other American's legitimate needs and rights. The footprints of the Lord are visible to one who searches for them. By walking in His love, compassion, and concern for all, we can begin to bind up one another's wounds. ■

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The fetus in biblical law

Ron du Preez

Does Exodus 21 support the practice of abortion?



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Only one passage in Scripture deals with the legal responsibility for terminating pregnancy. Interestingly, Exodus 21:22-25 is cited as support by both those favoring of abortion and those opposing it. How is this possible?

Conflicting translations

In preparing this article I examined 48 available English versions of the Bible to see how Exodus 21:22-25 is translated. Essentially, the translators interpreted the passage in one of two ways.¹ Twenty-two of them, from the Douay Version of 1610 to the New Revised Standard Version of 1989, render the text so that the fetus can be viewed as of less value than a human being. Consider for instance, the Revised English Bible, published in 1989: "When, in the course of a brawl, a man knocks against a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage but suffers no further injury, then the offender must pay whatever fine the woman's husband demands after assessment. But where injury ensues, you are to give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound."

Here the Revised English Bible implies that the death of the fetus can be compensated for by a fine, while the mother's death invokes the "life for life" legislation. This is seen by many as tacit approval of abortion, for the fetus is not treated as a human being but rather as a personal possession of the father.

In contrast to 22 Bible versions, 14 others are ambiguous enough to support either position. Twelve versions, dating from the 1560 Geneva Bible to the 1987 English Version for the Deaf, imply that

the fetus can be viewed as of equal value to its mother. Notice, for example, the 1978 New International Version: "If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."²

So according to the NIV, the fine is for the premature birth itself, and any serious injury to either mother or fetus requires equivalent punishment. Thus the fetus is treated as a real human being and not merely as a matter of material loss deserving only monetary compensation.

Which opposing viewpoint is correct? How have linguists managed to interpret this passage in such contradictory ways?

Status of mother and fetus

My analysis of available English language reference works indicates that most commentators see Exodus 21:22 as dealing with a miscarried fetus, a stillborn child. From the 1844 commentary of Thomas Scott³ through the 1986 work of Everett Fox,⁴ dozens of biblical scholars have held this view. Most suggest that the passage reveals three facts: the miscarriage results from an injury incurred; the offender should pay a fine to compensate for the loss of the fetus; and only if the woman herself suffers serious, permanent injury or death does the *lex talionis* (the law of retribution) apply.

Assuming that only a fine is required as compensation for the loss of the child, two Roman Catholic commentaries⁵ conclude: "The fetus is not regarded as a

The text makes absolutely no distinction between offspring and mother, thus applying the life-for-life legislation to both.

person, but if the woman dies the *lex talionis* is applied.”⁶ Paul D. Simmons, a Protestant, says: “The woman has full standing as a person under the covenant, the fetus has only a relative standing, certainly inferior to that of the woman.”⁷ This view is not merely a modern notion. David M. Feldman in his *Birth Control in Jewish Law* argues that, based on this passage, the ancient Talmudic commentators clearly distinguished between the miscarriage of a fetus and the death of its mother.⁸ Even though at birth a child is considered to be a living soul, if it dies during the first 30 days no funeral services are held because the infant is not considered to have existed.⁹

Analysis of the traditional perspective

This “miscarried fetus” interpretation has both strengths and weaknesses that deserve critical analysis. To begin, we will examine the strengths. First, as Jack W. Cottrell confirms, most translations favor this interpretation.¹⁰ Second, this has been the dominant view of commentators and theologians. And third, the Jewish Talmudic commentators have from ancient times uniformly understood the passage as referring to a miscarriage.

The case for the miscarried fetus may seem strong, but serious doubts are raised by the opposing viewpoint:

Translations of the Bible. Is it always safe to concur with the majority of translations? Consider Luke 23:43, regarding Christ’s statement on the cross to the repentant thief. Of the 63 English Bible translations investigated, 58 are in harmony with the Revised Standard Version: “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” By placing the comma before the word “today,” an overwhelming 92 percent of translators imply that Jesus and the thief went to Paradise the day of their death. Many see this text

as proof that humankind has an immortal soul. In reality, however, punctuation marks were added to the Greek text in the ninth century A.D. Thus Seventh-day Adventists and others, demonstrating that the rest of Scripture indicates that humans do not possess immortal souls, have shown that the comma should be placed after “today”—even though only 3 out of 63 Bibles have it so. Thus a majority opinion is not necessarily valid.

Bible commentators and theologians. The second argument in favor of the miscarried fetus theory is the support of the majority of commentators and scholars. However, a careful check of English language commentaries reveals that almost all of them base their observations on English translations rather than on the original biblical languages. More than half of these reference works use the Revised Standard Version, which translates the text as a miscarriage, and the King James Version, which because of its imprecise rendition is sometimes interpreted to make it support the miscarried fetus theory. Because these commentaries for the most part are based on English Bible translations, it seems unwise to unquestioningly accept their view, even though it represents a majority position.

Interpretation of Talmudic commentators. The third argument, based on the uniform interpretation of Talmudic commentators, is undermined by the realization that even though the Jewish law taught that a fetus becomes a living soul at birth, it also stated that the infant is not considered to have lived at all up to 30 days after birth. Since few if any Christians would support the Talmud’s teaching about life after birth, why should we endorse its position on life before birth?

Exegetical shortcomings. There are other problems with the miscarried fetus theory. Without exception, of the dozens of scholars who favor it, not one has provided any significant exegesis of the Hebrew text of Exodus 21. None of the 33 commentaries supporting this position do any etymological, contextual, or comparative study of the most crucial words in this text—the nouns *yeled* and *ason*, and the verb *yatsa*. Six commentaries actually change the wording of the Hebrew text to artificially reinforce the miscarried fetus view.

Law codes of the ancient Near East. Eleven of these reference works apparently base their interpretation partly on a comparison with other contemporary lo-

cal laws. Laws dealing with miscarriages were found in most Mesopotamian legal collections, such as the Sumerian Laws 1, 2; the Code of Hammurabi 209-214; the Middle Assyrian Laws A 21, 50-52; and the Hittite Law Code 17, 18. For example, the Code of Hammurabi specified that if someone struck someone else’s daughter and “caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay ten shekels of silver for her fetus. If that woman has died, they shall put his daughter to death.”¹¹

While most of these law codes required only a fine for the destruction of the fetus, at least two Middle Assyrian laws apparently treated the fetus as fully human. One of these laws stated that if even a prostitute were caused to have a miscarriage, “he shall compensate with a life.”¹² These regulations that differed from the majority of the legal codes cast doubt upon the wisdom of basing our interpretation of Scripture on a comparison with other local laws. While ancient codes should not be ignored, it is safer to compare scripture with scripture than to depend on extrabiblical sources. This is especially true in connection with the passage being studied, because this entire legal section, Exodus 20:22-23:33, was spoken directly by God to Moses.

Words inserted into English translations. Yet another flaw becomes evident when we realize that almost all the translations that support the miscarried fetus view insert words that are neither present nor implied in the original Hebrew text. For example, The Bible in Basic English says: “If men, while fighting, do damage to a woman with child, causing the loss of the child, but no other evil comes to her, the man will have to make payment up to the amount fixed by her husband, in agreement with the decision of the judges. But if damage comes to her, let life be given in payment for life” (Ex. 21:22, 23).

This translation, apparently assuming that the fetus was miscarried, inserts the words “to her,” implying that the word “evil” or “harm” (Hebrew *ason*) refers to the mother and not to the fetus. However, a closer look at the Hebrew original reveals two problems: first, that the words “to her” (*lah* in Hebrew) are not in the text; and second, that the position of the word “evil” in the sentence structure compels us to relate it to either the fetus only or to both the fetus and its mother.

Besides the unwarranted insertion of

the words "she," "herself," or "to her" by several translations, 16 of them add the words "other," "further," or "otherwise" in front of the word "harm" in verses 22 and 23. This implies that some harm already has been done, namely the alleged miscarriage, which is then judged to be relatively insignificant because it draws only a fine. The original text forbids such translation, indicating that even though the offspring comes out as the result of a blow to the woman's body, both baby and mother are alive and well. Only in verse 23 is the possibility of harm introduced. It reads literally, "and if harm occurs." The text does not say that this is "further" harm or that it applies only to the mother. Rather, it makes absolutely no distinction between offspring and mother, thus applying the life-for-life legislation to both.

When one analyzes the evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude with Jack Cottrell that "there is absolutely no linguistic justification for translating verse 22 to refer to a miscarriage."¹³

Legal standing of the fetus

Although only seven of the reference works I reviewed support the view that Exodus 21:22 deals with a premature birth,¹⁴ this concept has been held for centuries—from the sixteenth-century Reformer John Calvin to the 1987 work of John Durham. There is a basic consensus of opinion regarding four facts: that as a result of being struck, the pregnant woman gives birth to a live premature baby; that in verse 22 neither injury nor death happens to either the woman or the fetus; that the fine is levied for the hurt and trauma associated with the premature birth itself; that according to verse 23 if either mother or fetus suffers injury or death, the principle of life for life applies equally.

Of the seven commentators who concur with this position, only John Calvin explicitly verbalizes the natural conclusion that "the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being."¹⁵ And of the 20 books and articles I investigated that emphasize ethics, 17 go beyond acknowledging that *ason* (harm) refers to both mother and child, concluding that the fetus is actually on a par with the mother. Among them, Bruce K. Waltke states: "The fetus is human and therefore to be accorded the same protection to life granted every other human being. Indeed feticide is

murder, an attack against a fellow man who owes his life to God, and a violation of the commandment, 'You shall not kill' " (Ex. 20:13, RSV).¹⁶

Exegesis of the Hebrew text

Most writers who support the premature birth concept offer a thorough exegesis of Exodus 21. They pay the most attention to the Hebrew words *yeled*, *yatsa*, and *ason*.¹⁷

The noun yeled. Gesenius' well-respected Hebrew lexicon says that *yeled* means "child, son, boy, youth."¹⁸ No distinction is made between an unborn child and a child after birth in the Pentateuch or in the entire Old Testament.¹⁹ Furthermore, *yeled* is not the usual Hebrew noun for the product of a miscarriage, but rather, *nephel*, meaning "one untimely born" (see Job 3:16; Ps. 58:8; Eccl. 6:3).²⁰

The verb yatsa. According to the Hebrew dictionary, its basic meaning is to "go or come out."²¹ The Hebrew Bible consistently bears out this meaning. The word *yatsa* when used alone to describe human reproduction usually refers to a normal birth (see Gen. 25:25, 26; 38:27-30; Jer. 1:5; 20:18). Whenever *yatsa* refers to a stillbirth, it is always accompanied by some form of *muth* (to die), as in Numbers 12:12 and Job 3:11. Because *yatsa* appears without any form of *muth* in Exodus 21:22, we must conclude that the passage indicates a live birth.

Further evidence is that the Old Testament verb normally used for miscarriage, or spontaneous abortion, is not *yatsa* but *shakol*.²² Indeed, Moses used *shakol* to describe miscarriage in a later passage (see Ex. 23:26). Because he used *yatsa* in Exodus 21, we infer that he was referring to a live birth.

The noun ason. Lexicographers translate *ason* as anything from "hurt, damage, mischance"²³ to "mortal accident."²⁴ Outside of the two times *ason* is mentioned in Exodus 21, it occurs only three more times in the Old Testament—all in connection with the story of Joseph. There it refers to a mishap befalling one's offspring, causing an apparently permanent separation between parent and child.

To whom does *ason* apply in the passage we are considering? The text mentions a woman being struck so that her offspring comes out "and no *ason* occurs." The Hebrew expression *lah* (to her)—which would restrict the harm to the woman as opposed to the child—is

absent in the text. Most scholars who offer an exegesis of this passage suggest that *ason* refers to both mother and child.²⁵ Others, apparently because *ason* follows directly upon "her children come out," conclude that harm originally referred exclusively to the offspring.²⁶ But whether *ason* refers to only the offspring or to both offspring and mother, there is no doubt that our passage grants to the fetus the status of full humanity.

So Exodus 21:22 does not concern an induced abortion or a miscarriage. Furthermore, there is absolutely no distinction between mother and fetus: both have equal status according to the law. As Meredith Kline puts it: "The life-for-life formula is applied to the destruction of a fetus, with no qualification as to how young the fetus might be. The fetus, at any stage of development, is in the eyes of this law a living being."²⁷

Analysis of the textual perspective

The premature birth interpretation of Exodus 21:22 finds strength in the fact that most scholars who support it provide a careful exegesis of the original Hebrew text. These sources also interpret the text essentially as it stands, without adding or changing any words. Moreover, this interpretation appears to be most consistent with the overall biblical concept of the sanctity of life.

This perspective, however, is not without difficulties. Basically, two problems still need resolution. First, we must admit that the plural of the word *yeled* (child) has been interpreted in different ways, either as a generic plural or as an indefinite singular. Second, there is no consensus about the precise definition of *ason*. Some say it means merely harm or injury, others that it can refer to serious injury as well as a fatal accident. The context seems to imply that it means a mishap that results in permanent separation of parent and fetus.

Even though views may vary as to the meaning of certain terms, not one of the interpretations suggested here conflicts with the position that Exodus 21:22-25 treats the fetus as equal in value to the mother.

Summary and conclusions

A textual analysis of our passage suggests that it discusses a live premature birth for which a fine is to be paid. If harm or death comes to either mother or fetus, the *lex talionis* is to be invoked. Because

the fetus is regarded on a par with its mother, this passage protects the sanctity of life for the unborn and gives no support whatever for the practice of abortion. ■

¹ Besides these two main views, there is a variant view, unsupported by the Hebrew text, that states that if the miscarried fetus is not fully formed, it is to be compensated for by a fine; but if it is fully formed, it is to be treated on par with its mother.

² Admittedly, the NIV does add a footnote to the word "prematurely," saying "or she has a miscarriage"—a distinction in translation that is the topic of this discussion.

³ Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (London: C. Baldwin, 1844), p. 217.

⁴ Everett Fox, *Now These Are the Names: A New English Rendition of the Book of Exodus* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 120, 121.

⁵ Dom Bernard Orchard, ed., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951), p. 220; Reginald C. Fuller, ed., *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), p. 218.

⁶ Orchard.

⁷ Paul D. Simmons, *Birth and Death: Bioethical Decision-making*, Biblical Perspectives on Current Issues Series, ed. Howard Clark Kee (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), p. 84.

⁸ David M. Feldman, *Birth Control in Jewish Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), p. 255.

⁹ John W. Klotz, *A Christian View of Abortion* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1973), p. 47.

¹⁰ Jack W. Cottrell, "Abortion and the Mosaic Law," *Christianity Today*, Mar. 16, 1973, p. 7.

¹¹ James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 175.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹³ Cottrell, p. 8.

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, trans. Charles W. Bingham (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1950), vol. 3, pp. 41, 42; Christopher Wordsworth, *The Holy Bible in the Authorized Version; With Notes and Introductions* (London: Rivingtons, 1869), vol. 1, p. 278; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 134, 135; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), pp. 275, 277; John H. Dobson, *A Guide to Exodus* (London: S.P.C.K., 1977), p. 123; R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), vol. 2, p. 552; John I. Durham, *Exodus: Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), pp. 308-324.

¹⁵ Calvin.

¹⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, "Reflections From the Old Testament on Abortion," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19, No. 1 (Winter 1976): 13.

¹⁷ The *lex talionis* is also often discussed. While some understand it to mean full compensation, others believe the law must be applied literally. How-

ever, regardless of the interpretation, the law is perceived as referring equally to both mother and fetus.

¹⁸ Francis Brown et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p. 409.

¹⁹ H. Wayne House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth: Additional Thoughts on Exodus 21:22-25," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 41, No. 1 (1978): 112.

²⁰ KJV and RSV translate *nephel* as "untimely birth," NIV as "stillborn child," and NASB as "miscarriage," as do Brown et al., p. 658.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

²² William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and*

Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 369.

²³ Julius Fuerst, *A Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon to the Old Testament*, trans. Samuel Davidson (London: Williams and Norgate, 1867), p. 126.

²⁴ Holladay, p. 23.

²⁵ See Cottrell, pp. 8, 9; House, p. 118; Kaiser, pp. 103, 172; Cassuto, p. 275; Keil and Delitzsch, p. 135.

²⁶ See Bernard S. Jackson, "The Problem of Exodus 21:22-25 (Ius Talionis)," *Vetus Testamentum* 23 (1973): 292, 293.

²⁷ Meredith G. Kline, "Lex Talionis and the Human Fetus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20, No. 3 (September 1977): 200.

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The abortion dilemma

Martin Weber

We must come to terms with it.



Martin Weber is an associate editor of Ministry. This is adapted from a chapter in his upcoming book Wrestling With Reality.

Palm Springs, California, is the scene of spring break madness for thousands of West Coast college students. During Holy Week of 1989 police had their hands full dealing with drunkenness, nudity, and unrelenting revelry. More than 1,000 students were arrested before order was restored in that desert community.

Meanwhile, 110 miles away in Los Angeles an equal number of people also found themselves in jail. Not for drinking or carousing; these were praying, singing Christians crusading against the loss of babies through abortion.

Is there any matter of morality that so divides society as abortion? Many consider it to be the greatest moral issue of our time. The Adventist Church must come to terms with it.

Right from the start I want to affirm the sincerity I've met on both sides of the abortion debate, both within and outside the church. It grieves me when otherwise reasonable and pleasant people of either persuasion insist upon denigrating those of different convictions.

This controversy escapes simple solutions. Thoughtful Christians value life as God's sacred gift, but they also treasure religious liberty, with its freedom of conscience. No wonder many find themselves torn between pro-life and pro-choice. Can we possibly have it both ways? That is, can we be both pro-life and pro-choice? I think you will see that we can, in a quiet, thoughtful spirit of Christian understanding.

The abortive lifestyle

There's more here than first meets the mind. Abortion involves more than an

act of terminating pregnancy; it has become the preferred lifestyle for many in our society—the way they cope with any problem that comes their way. Is there trouble at school? Don't bother to study harder, just abort your education. That's the take-it-easy attitude we have today. Are you having problems at work? Quit—abort your job. Has holy wedlock become unhappy deadlock? Divorce—abort your vows. Are you faltering in your Christian experience? Take the easy way out and abort your relationship with Jesus.

You see, abortion is often an attempt to escape the consequences of one's actions. Those who regard abortion as a form of belated birth control belie a truth of Scripture so clearly taught from Genesis to Revelation: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:7, 8).*

There can be no doubt about it; the Bible says we will reap what we sow. But abortion as birth control attempts to escape this fundamental fact of life by stopping a human heart from beating.

Consider the case of a popular, fun-loving teenager who belonged to a church I once served as pastor. Let's call her Jennifer. Her pursuit of happiness got her pregnant. The solution seemed simple enough to her overindulgent parents: get their little girl off the hook (and save their reputation) with an abortion. Why should the family have to suffer through a disruptive and embarrassing pregnancy?

Getting an abortion is always a traumatic event in itself—a reality that escapes many pro-life activists. The fact remains, however, that the instant cancellation of pregnancy appears to provide the quickest, easiest route back to normalcy. That's why Jennifer and her par-

If unborn babies are not living beings, where was Jesus while Mary was pregnant?

ents opted for it.

Unfortunately, having aborted her problem, Jennifer never learned her lesson. Next summer she got pregnant again. And again after that. Four abortions before the age of 21, believe it or not. Somewhere along the way she stopped attending church. When I arrived as her new pastor, she had already aborted Christianity with its restrictive standards.

I wonder what would have happened if Jennifer had not attempted to escape reality with that first abortion. Nine months of pregnancy would have been tough, but that trauma might have taught her one of life's most important lessons: we must bear the consequences of our actions.

The value system of our society is in shambles. Think about it. Suppose it were a little dolphin swimming around in the pregnant mother's womb. You can be sure that Hollywood's save-the-dolphin protesters would furiously defend its right to life. But the same activists who are so militant about preserving every dolphin in the ocean don't show equal concern for humanity in the womb.

It seems strange, doesn't it? Such is the religion of secular humanism.

Christianity, on the other hand, values life as a gift from God. The bottom line for us, then, is whether a preborn child is really alive. If it is a living human being, we must ask the question: What has that baby done to deserve death?

Viability and personhood

I know what some of you are thinking. You believe that a preborn baby isn't really alive because it doesn't have the breath of life. In reality, a baby in the womb is just as much a consumer of oxygen as anyone else. Yes, mother's help is needed to process that life-sustaining air, but many adults undergoing surgery also need help breathing. Without that respirator they would die. Do they cease being human beings during their

operation because they cannot breathe on their own?

Even after a baby is born and can begin breathing, it still isn't fully "viable," that is, capable of living on its own. It can't feed itself, support itself financially, or even roll over in its crib. Obviously, viability has nothing to do with personhood.

Consider also the elderly and severely handicapped who cannot live on their own. Does that mean they aren't real people? This type of thinking gave birth to Hitler's "final solution." The Nazis considered helpless members of society to be expendable "useless eaters." Some thoughtful minds ponder the staggering cost of more than 25 million unborn lives and worry whether a new holocaust is happening right here in America.

Do you find that hard to believe? The truth is that an preborn baby has all the indications of humanity well within the first trimester of life. He or she has a perfectly formed body with organs functioning. About the 21st day after conception—even before the mother may know she is pregnant—the heart of her baby is already pumping blood. Unborn babies have amazing capabilities that medical science is just now beginning to appreciate. They already have their own personalities. They can recognize the voice of their mothers, who in turn are bonded to that life within the womb. When a mother violates the unwritten law of maternal instinct by aborting her baby, no wonder she often feels nagging guilt.

Seeking to make abortion easy for the mother, pro-choice advocates go to great lengths in denying that a human being is being killed. For example, one church policy statement on abortion refers to it as the "interruption" of pregnancy—as if John Wilkes Booth merely "interrupted" the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

We can argue back and forth about exactly when life begins, but the burden of proof belongs to those who would invade the womb and terminate that life. Obviously a short trip down the birth canal does not convert a depersonalized fetus into a human being—life must begin sometime beforehand. Some point to the passing of one trimester to another, but there is no magical transformation from one division of time to the next. The most natural, logical position is that life begins at conception. From that instant onward until adulthood there is continuous growth and maturing.

Stop and think about what is called a fetus. If it does not have life, then why does it have a beating heart? And if it isn't a human being, what kind of being is it? If it isn't a child, why is it sucking its thumb?

Here's something else to consider. If unborn babies are not living beings, where was Jesus while Mary was pregnant? Did He cease to exist for nine months? We don't have to guess. Scripture says that the virgin Mary was "with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18). Did you see that? The eternal Lord was a real, living child inside the womb of Mary!

The Bible in a number of places refers to unborn babies as people. We see this when Christ's aunt Elizabeth met His mother Mary: "And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41).

According to the Bible, what Elizabeth carried inside her womb was a baby! Not a mass of developing fetal tissue, but a bouncing baby boy. In the light of both biological and scriptural evidence, can we possibly escape the conviction that abortion terminates human life? And what right do we have to stop that precious beating heart?

Scripture explicitly defends the rights of preborn babies. If an assailant in Old Testament times struck a woman and caused her to give birth prematurely, he was fined. But if that unborn life was lost, the sentence was death: "You shall appoint as a penalty life for life" (Ex. 21:23, NASB).¹

To many atheists and agnostics, an unborn baby is just fetal tissue evolving in the womb—a symbol of the evolutionary process. Such a denial of life that God has granted violates the sixth commandment. Also the fourth. The Sabbath commandment requires respect for created life. Abortion, by sabotaging God's life in the womb, undermines the Sabbath. Abortion actually treats the unborn baby as the moral equivalent of a tumor. Discard "it" as you please, no questions asked. How sad. Feminists of the radical type warn, "Get your hands off my body!" Well, if God has seen fit to grant life to those babies in the womb, shouldn't we get our hands off *their* little bodies? Jesus said of Himself: "The Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it" (John 5:21, NIV). He also declared: "I hold the keys of death" (Rev. 1:18, NIV). The act

of abortion overrides what might be God's will for that baby, giving humans the prerogative of determining life or death. You see, then, that abortion actually makes mere mortals play the role of God. It therefore receives its authority from the one who said "Ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5, KJV). Is it possible that those who defend abortion, well-meaning though they may be, actually promote the work of the devil? Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

Defending choice

I think you will agree that there's quite a powerful case for being pro-life, but what about the other side of the coin? What about human choice—can we be pro-choice as well as pro-life? Certainly, as long as we understand that women make that choice at the time of sexual intercourse. If the woman willingly engages in sex that results in conception, hasn't she already exercised her freedom of choice?

There is no such thing as unlimited freedom of choice. Personal freedom cannot violate another person's rights. In other words, your freedom to swing your fist ends where my nose begins. And a woman's right over her body ends where her baby's body begins. Just because that helpless preborn baby can't defend itself doesn't mean it has no rights.

But what about pregnancies from rape and incest? Such cases deserve special consideration since the mother never had opportunity to exercise her legitimate free choice. Why should she be forced to face the consequences of someone else's crime? Because of this, many who normally oppose abortion approve such an option in cases of forced pregnancy. Since the mother was impregnated without her choice, wouldn't she have the right to defend herself against that intrusion? Why must she reap what she didn't sow?

And what about performing an abortion to save the life of the mother? Such cases are relatively rare, but occasionally doctors find themselves faced with the terrible dilemma of deciding whether mother or child should live. In such situations abortion is the only way to preserve life, which is our object of concern here.

At this point we must venture into an especially delicate area. What if the unborn baby is genetically crippled? Often in such cases the mother's body deals with the crisis by causing a miscarriage.

But suppose God sees fit to let the baby develop—who are we to decide whether its quality of life is worth the trouble of coping with a handicap? Many handicapped people enjoy profoundly fulfilling lives.

I know we are tiptoeing through some delicate and controversial questions here. A strong case can be made that life is so sacred that no human has the right to choose abortion under any circumstances. Some answers don't come easy, but while we debate what to do in cases of rape, incest, genetic disability, and saving the life of the mother, let's do something now about the vast majority of abortions in which a healthy mother rids herself of a healthy baby that exists by her own free choice. We could immediately relieve society of the burden of more than 95 percent of its abortions. Having accomplished that, we could continue to discuss the ethics of abortion in those other situations.

Well, those are my convictions about abortion. I wish you could know how I have agonized over this article. Having been a pastor, I know something of the anguish women suffer when they consider an abortion. They need compassion, not condemnation, whatever they decide to do. And if they do make the courageous choice of preserving that life within them, the crisis isn't over—it has only just begun. They need help in bringing their babies into the world and pulling their own lives back together. The church has a solemn responsibility to stand by their side.

Loving options

An Adventist layperson in California, George Lawson, has launched Loving Options, a ministry for women in crisis pregnancy. Qualified Christian professionals volunteer their time at the clinic, offering counseling and medical services to pregnant women willing to consider other options than abortion for their pregnancy.² I wish Loving Options would have been there 11 years ago to help Jennifer, that troubled teenager in the church I pastored. Along with medical services and other assistance, they would have provided spiritual encouragement. She would have heard from them something like this:

"Jennifer, please understand that God loves you despite your mistakes. He has a special plan for your life—and for the life of that little baby inside you. You

If the woman willingly engages in sex that results in conception, hasn't she already exercised her choice?

might not be able to provide a home for your baby, but many childless couples are praying every night before an empty bassinet. By entrusting your baby to their care, you can turn your own nightmare into the fulfillment of their dreams.

"Perhaps you feel guilty about the abortions you've already had. Just confess your sin to Jesus and claim His gift of forgiveness. Actually, we are all guilty of sin and deserving of death. The Bible says that all of us, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way. But thank God, at the cross He laid upon Jesus the iniquity of us all.

"Yes, Jennifer, Jesus paid the full price of our salvation. Now we can stand clean before God, just as if we had never done anything wrong. Just as if we've always done everything perfectly! And the Lord not only forgives us and counts us perfect; He also gives us a new life free from sinful, hurtful relationships."

I wish I could report that Jennifer came back to Jesus and the church. That would be a nice way to end the story. She didn't quite make her decision, but at least she learned at last that aborting her problems isn't the way to solve them. ■

* Unless otherwise noted, scriptural passages in this article are from the New King James Version.

¹ Defenders of abortion attempt to prove from Exodus 21 that the fetus in the womb is inferior to human life. I believe that an unbiased analysis of the Hebrew text proves otherwise. Evidence for this is in the preceding article by Ron du Preez, "The Fetus in Biblical Law."

If one disagrees with this interpretation of Exodus 21:22-25, the fact remains that we cannot determine personhood by whether or not the death penalty exists for killing that life. Notice a verse immediately preceding our passage (verse 20), in which someone who kills a slave is not put to death but merely punished. Nobody in today's society would deny that a slave is a human being—yet the Bible doesn't enforce the death penalty for killing a slave.

² Loving Options is a nonprofit crisis pregnancy ministry. Their newsletter is available by contacting them at 24769 Redlands Blvd., Suite E, San Bernardino, CA 92408.

Urban ministry: an overlooked mission field?

Angela Elwell Hunt

The gospel has the power to transform the lonely, the aimless, and the dying in the inner cities. Have we given this ministry our support?



*Angela Elwell Hunt, a free-lance writer, lives in Largo, Florida. One of her latest books, *If God Is Real, Where on Earth Is He?* is published by *Here's Life*.*

Estelle took a few hesitant steps toward Scott Reese and decided to reveal what she had done. "I don't want to live," she said slowly, tears streaming down her face. "Last night I took an overdose of drugs, and I wanted so bad to die. I don't know why I'm alive today."

"She honestly thought no one cared," says Reese. "I told her that there was purpose for her life, and that I could introduce her to a Friend who would never leave her."

Today Estelle is a faithful member of Scott Reese's church. Scott is a young White man with, as his members describe it, a "Black heart." By choice he lives in an apartment in the poorest city in America. He has seen destruction and death flash before his eyes, but he continues his work, sharing his small apartment with the homeless or addicts, secure in the knowledge that God is protecting and providing for him.

"The inner city is overlooked by most Bible college graduates," says Scott, "and I felt led to minister here." Scott pastors the New Life Baptist Church. His salary comes from suburban churches that consider him an inner-city missionary. "Just as churches support mission work in foreign countries, they ought to consider helping inner-city work," says Scott. "There's a real need."

Junious Blake pastors the Jackson Memorial Church of God and Christ in San Diego. One night he received a phone call from a young woman in his church.

"I've just got to get away from here," she cried. "How can I get off drugs if I can't get away from this place where everybody is doing them?"

Drug addicts were on the street and in his church, and not many months ago Blake discovered that his own son was a drug user and pusher. But where could Blake send these people for help? His congregation is now struggling to build a drug rehabilitation center to meet the physical needs of the people who surround the church.

In the inner cities of America, where poverty, drug abuse, and crime are as bedrock as the endless rivers of asphalt and cement that connect house to apartment and storefront to bar, there are many needs crying out for answers. Suburban churches are far removed from the realities of urban life, so what can they do to help?

Survey your area

Your church might consider the following: First, take a good look around your locality. If you live in a metropolitan area, investigate what churches exist in the inner city. If you are a rural church consult a phone book or ask other pastors to recommend an inner-city church or ministry. Adopt an inner-city ministry as a sister church, and take the pastor out to lunch. In humility and respect, suggest that you minister to each other.

"If my church were White and in suburbia, we would have a \$5 million budget and about 100 staff members," says E. V. Hill, pastor of the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Los Angeles. "We are at a \$500,000 budget and

have only seven full-time staff members. I hope in five years that our church could be a model for other inner-city churches, but I could cut that five-year goal to two years if I could borrow 10 staff members from suburban churches. I don't have a director of Christian education, youth, visitation, children's work, or evangelism. We have only two and a half secretaries.

"Our hope is that White seminarians will come to the inner city. They'll have to be a peculiar breed, without paternalism and without a patronizing attitude. They'll have to be humble servants. They'll have to have the same attitude they would have if they were going to a foreign country."

Share staff members. If a large suburban church has associate pastors of youth, evangelism, seniors, missions, Christian education, single adults, or visitation, encourage them to donate one day a week in service and duty to an inner-city church. Feature a sign-up table in the suburban church lobby where church members can donate time for visitation, secretarial work, or child care.

Consider taking on an inner-city church as a mission. Give a regular monthly financial gift either to support the pastor's salary or to meet a particular need the church can't afford. Offer to support the salary of another staff member. Encourage your young people and laypersons to volunteer weekends, summers, and holidays as "interim" workers at the sister church.

Dave Scott, a former professional football player who now works for Liberty University, grew up on the streets of Paterson, New Jersey. Once a downtown shoeshine boy, Scott knows how boredom easily leads to trouble. "Urban kids simply need someone who will be there for them," he says. "The local church should provide role models, and teachers need to provide a good example. At my school some of the teachers were pimps. Without sports groups, my pastor, and my church, boredom would have driven me crazy."

Provide creative outlets

Your church can provide an outlet for young people. Most inner-city churches do not have a gymnasium or skating rink or large auditorium, so make your facilities available when needed. Plan joint youth functions for both churches and provide transportation for the young

people of your sister church.

Lem Tucker works with Voice of Calvary Ministries, an organization that combines evangelical faith and social action. In addition to programs in the ministry's hometown of Jackson, Mississippi, VOC operates a national network to assist other churches in improving their communities.

One program at Voice of Calvary combines youth groups from inner-city churches with youth groups from suburban churches. The young people establish friendships and learn from one another. In 1986 two churches from Waco, Texas, worked together in Jackson under the direction of VOC. A youth group from the First United Methodist Church, a White suburban congregation, and the Mount Zion Methodist Church, a Black urban church, traveled to Jackson and participated in a work camp. They worked together in a depressed area, cleaning yards, repairing houses, and doing general handiwork. When the work was done, the kids from both groups remained friends and shared in youth activities.

It is important to reach the youth of the inner city, for often up to 43 percent of the population of an urban city is less than 18 years of age. Tony Evans, who pastors Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship Church in a suburb of Dallas, cites grim statistics: "More than 50 percent of our children will be born to unwed teenagers. Sixty percent of our children are growing up without a father in the home. Eighty-five percent of our children are born to unmarried parents.

"The Black community is only 12 percent of the United States population, yet our prison population is 47 percent Black. Most Black males who die between the ages of 15 and 24 will have been victims of Black-on-Black crime."

Lem Tucker describes inner-city youth as "a crucible of unrest for the future," and warns that if the church doesn't deal with the problem, there will be no hope for the soul of the city.

Above all, caring!

Young people need recreation and a meaningful way to spend their time. Most of all, they need the gospel. Lewis Lampley, pastor of Southside Tabernacle Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, Florida, says, "We've got to take the gospel to their hangouts, where young people gather to participate in their habits. We're going to have to precisely and aggressively

"It is not a question of 'Can I be used?' It is a question of 'What do I have?' Whatever you have, God has given it to you to use."

develop youth rallies and youth retreats, which would be relatively new to the inner city.

"Politicians and the recreation department leaders don't know about that God-shaped vacuum inside every person," Lampley continues. "They try to take care of the physical and emotional needs of the young people, but they are neglecting the spiritual needs."

Your church can establish a job registry. If a Christian employer in your church needs to hire someone, have him ask the inner-city pastor for a recommendation before placing a "help-wanted" ad in the local newspaper. If an applicant's skills aren't up to par, have someone in your church train him or her.

Consider establishing programs similar to the Big Brother programs, food banks, job banks, and tutoring and/or vocational classes. This not only will help members of the inner-city church but will provide an outlet for your members to serve and minister to others.

Encourage Sabbath school classes and youth departments to engage in service activities to fill needs in the inner city. Perhaps your sister church has a member whose house badly needs painting or repair. Perhaps some mother's child is in the hospital and there is not money for a doctor. Perhaps some man's son is in jail and needs a visitor. There may be a young lady who has never eaten in a restaurant.

What can individuals do to help churches in the inner city? You can do more with others' help, so first try to encourage fellow church members to join you in an effort. If you find yourself quite alone, find an inner-city church you can support, and call the pastor. Tell him or her you would like to pray for his or her ministry, and if there are any needs, you would like to know about them. You can be the bridge that brings individuals from

your church together with the needs of the inner-city church.

Can you drive a bus? Play the piano? Repair a car? Paint a sign? Buy sports equipment? Give canned foods? Teach a Bible lesson? Maintain a computer mailing list? Pay a city kid's way to summer camp?

Churches as individuals

Hamon Cross pastors Rosedale Park Baptist Church in Detroit. He feels the most important things are accomplished when suburban churches act as individuals, not corporate bodies. "There is going to come a time when the inner-city body of Christ will need your gifts and abilities. God will provide the opportunity, whether it is to move down there and work or to pray or give money or help us plan. It is not a question of 'Can I be used?' It is a question of 'What do I have?' Whatever you have, God has given it to you to use."

You can consider moving into the inner city and serving as a missionary yourself. John Perkins and his wife settled in one of the worst neighborhoods in Pasadena, California, and established the Harabee Christian Family Center. The center, its name coming from a Swahili cry meaning "Let's get together and push," offers a school of business for children in grades 5 through 12, Bible clubs, boys' and girls' clubs, and tutoring for adults and children. "Education and success help people get out of the ghetto," Perkins says, "but no one is trained to live in the ghetto and change it."

Paul Parr lives and pastors in the inner city of Philadelphia, and he describes the people of the inner city as being young colts, "Getting to their feet is a struggle. As soon as you think they are up, they are down. You have to be forgiving and loving, and you have to be there with outstretched arms. They have been rejected by everyone who has ever loved them, and to tell them that the love of Christ is different demands that we be different."

And Scott Reese chose to live in the poorest city of America. Whatever you do, remember to have an attitude of humility and love. Suburban churches are not necessarily better; they do not somehow have it all together while inner city churches do not. The pastors who live and give their lives downtown deserve our love and respect, and the people who live there cannot be overlooked. ■

When omniscience forgets

Carolyn M. Livingston

This is not divine amnesia, but a divine promise to perpetuate my eternal joy.



Carolyn Livingston teaches Bible at Sonoma Adventist College, Rabaul, Papua New Guinea.

Their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12; cf. Heb. 10:17; Jer. 31:34).

What does this promise mean? If it means that the sin aspect of my present earthly life is to be completely blotted out from the memory of God, myself, and other intelligent beings living in eternity, what then is the significance of my life here?

Let me begin with an imaginative trip to celestial places. I see five men walking and talking together in happy companionship, as though they have known each other for years. One in particular holds himself with regal bearing. The other four seem especially close to one another, even though the first one is obviously a very good friend of them all.

Taking aside the one with the regal look, I ask, "You wouldn't be Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, would you?"

He smiles, a little surprised, but answers quickly, "I am, yes. And over there are my good friends, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah."

"How wonderful!" I exclaim. "I've always wanted to ask you just how you felt that time you threw Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah into the fiery furnace."

To my astonishment, the most puzzled look crosses his face as he exclaims in disbelief, "Me? Throw my friends into fire? Never. But here's Gabriel; maybe he can help you find the one you are looking for."

A tall figure approaches us from a little distance. The look on his face is reassuring as he whispers, "The former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). "Their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17). I am too embarrassed to know what to say now, but he saves me from my predicament by inviting me to listen to the choir on the sea of glass.

What an experience! They are singing about a slain Lamb, about redemption from sin, about salvation, and about just judgments (see especially Rev. 5 and 15). The focus of their adoration is their King, Jesus. I too fall down to worship Him, hardly able to look at Him in His great majesty. But I do notice a special caring look He gives me, as though He perfectly understands all my past life and exactly how I feel about all I have ever known. And those scarred hands. I wonder if others nearby feel the same as I do.

I ask the man nearest to me to tell me how I can explain this song to my friends, and all about the scarred hands. His eyes light up with pleasure as he tells me what a great experience it is to sing the song and how he loves those scarred hands. But a blank look comes into his eyes when I ask him how the scars came about, and what sin is—the experience the song describes redemption from.

Again Gabriel comes to my rescue. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12), he whispers. I have been saved from embarrassment. But somehow I feel unsatisfied.

Joy and the anguish

I had better leave my imaginative trip and return to reality. Maybe Jesus' pre-Calvary description of the disciples' future joy will help me understand. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from

you" (John 16:21, 22). This joy is apparently so great that even a keen awareness of previous anguish diminishes the present experience of that anguish to a "remem-bereth-no-more" status. Yet there is no implication of a complete loss of memory.

Then I look in the Old Testament. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Ex. 17:14). A memorial to remember a nonremembrance!

Again, if David was so pleased that his transgressions had been removed "as far as the east is from the west," why is the remembrance of his fear of God's displeasure and his pleas for mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing perpetuated for us in Psalms 32, 38, and 51; and the background story of his sins available in detail for our perusal in the book of 2 Samuel?

Nathan announced God's forgiveness (2 Sam. 12:13: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin"). David accepted this forgiveness with deep feelings (Ps. 32, especially verse 5: "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin"). If "remembering no more" meant amnesia on God's part, David's part, or the part of contemporary or future witnesses, how come we can read today that Nathan immediately proceeded to warn David about the consequences of his deed in giving "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12:14)?

Sometimes it seems we want to remove the guilt by removing the record. But David shows us that one of the prerequisites for removal of sin is actual presentation of the record to God in confession. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5).

David seems more anxious for deep cleansing from his actual sin (Ps. 51:7) and removal of the guilt connected with the record (verse 14) than for mere removal of the record. He wishes God to "wash [him]," and then he will be "whiter than snow" (verse 51:7).

No haunting past

If God removes my sin (including that pride and self-righteousness that make me anxious to appear good in my

A capacity to be aware of my past will enable me to see greater significance in my eternal salvation and thus increase my future joy.

own goodness), creates a right spirit within me (verse 10), and covers me with the robe of Christ's righteousness, I need not feel anxious about the knowledge of my past haunting me in the future.

My sins will be as good as forgotten in the eyes of the universe as well as in my own eyes. The judicial examination before the unfallen universe of a record of the lives of the saints is significant here. It will be one of the key factors in enabling the unfallen to accept the newcomers by choosing to forget the culpability of their sinful past. They will see that the blood of Jesus has indeed cleansed the sinner and the record of his/her sin, and will put any knowledge of the past in a new perspective involving no guilt, no shame, and no indictment.

The private conscience has long been cleared. Now the public conscience will be free, too. The wider knowledge of the record actually facilitates the more effective blotting out of that same record.

Nevertheless, I believe I will be keenly and intelligently aware of the high cost of sin and my own salvation. I believe a capacity to be aware of my past will enable me to see greater significance in my eternal salvation and thus increase my future joy. Like Moses' record of the defeat of Amalek, my existence in eternity will be God's memorial of having "put out the remembrance of . . . [my sins] from under heaven" (Ex. 17:14)—an eternal memorial of God's special forgetting. ■

Preaching together

Marvin and Corrie Whitney

Attention-keeping is just one benefit of pastor-spouse team sermons.



Marvin Whitney pastors the Harlingen English Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Texas Conference. Corrie Whitney owns and operates Crossroads Communications, an editing/public relations business.

The organ plays softly. You step onto the platform—and the audience emits an almost audible gasp. Your spouse is with you! Members check their bulletins, then settle back with a “so-that’s-what’s-going-on” look on their faces.

As you begin to preach together, you recognize an unusual level of attention. Every face seems upturned; every eye follows you.

The two of us experienced this the first time we preached together. One parishioner of retirement age told us afterward, “This is the first time I’ve listened to every word of a sermon without getting bored. Time went by so fast!”

Of course, we would like to think that our topic compelled such attention. Logic requires, however, that we consider that the change of voices, from masculine to feminine, back and forth, helped rivet the congregation’s concentration.

Attention-keeping is not the only benefit of team sermons. While the two of us don’t have a genuine “team ministry” (Corrie must hold another job), we certainly have a cooperative one. Corrie contributes in many ways to our church program. Many a pastor’s spouse makes a substantial investment while the congregation scarcely realizes it. Team preaching testifies visibly that “we are in this ministry together.”

Another benefit from team sermons is that blending the feminine and masculine thought processes tends to bring more balance to our sermons. Our illustrations come from different perspectives, which elicits a more diverse response than one perspective alone. Together we touch

more lives than either of us could separately.

Team preaching also says something important about our relationship. It boldly states that our togetherness goes more than surface deep, that our marriage stands sound enough to take risks.

Our maiden voyage

With some trepidation we launched our “maiden voyage” into the unknown sea of team preaching. At that time we served a conservative congregation in which the idea of a woman in the pulpit—for any reason—sparked some serious misgivings. We decided to test the waters anyway.

The response exceeded our wildest hopes. The people loved it! We received favorable comments from almost every person present. Even members opposed to women speakers seemed mollified by the fact that we stood there together; Corrie wasn’t in the pulpit alone.

The idea of preaching together didn’t spring up overnight. It started with a sermon at camp meeting years ago by Elder and Mrs. Delmer Holbrook. We looked at each other and thought, *We could do that!*

Getting around to “doing that” wasn’t easy, however. We could never find uninterrupted hours together to develop our sermon. Finally we just decided to take the time. We chose a topic we both had researched thoroughly before. After formulating our outline, we divided it up like this: “You take the introductory story. Then I’ll take this part, and you take that section.” It didn’t take forever to do after all!

While preaching that first sermon, we discovered that some of the shorter sections of the outline weren’t as short

when given verbally. To compensate for this, we made impromptu changes as we went—without anyone knowing the difference.

Our first experience was so exhilarating that we were eager to try again. We have since delivered quite a number of team sermons. Members have requested that we do it once a month! Actually, it happens about once every six weeks. Each experience is nearly as thrilling as our first.

Team preaching adds variety to our services and also contributes to the members' interest. Changes in the old routine make people want to attend every Sabbath.

Team preaching has also added new zest to our marriage. Corrie feels more needed and appreciated, more a part of our ministry, even though she can't be involved full-time. Now she can use her talents in up-front ministry, not just behind the scenes. Marvin is able to share his pulpit without feeling threatened, deriving satisfaction from the joint venture. In tandem our abilities truly complement each other's, without competition. That to us is the essence of team ministry.

Before preaching together

1. Obviously, your spouse must have a genuine desire to participate! (No coercion here!)
2. Be sure your marriage is healthy. Prattling piously together from the pulpit while your congregation knows you are fighting at home is counterproductive. There are stresses involved in both preparation and delivery. There are bound to be differences of opinion on how a facet of the sermon should be presented. And if one of you "goofs up," the other must be able to be supportive, not critical.
3. Choose a topic that interests you both. If you decide on a subject well in advance, you can each gather materials for your preparation sessions.
4. Plan signals for changes that may need to be made while you are speaking. Experience will give you confidence.
5. Vary the length of material you each present. What works well for us is to have quite short sections with one long one for each (toward the middle of the sermon).
6. Team preaching isn't for everyone, but many more pastors and their spouses could do it. Try it! If it works, you have a new tool to enhance your ministry.



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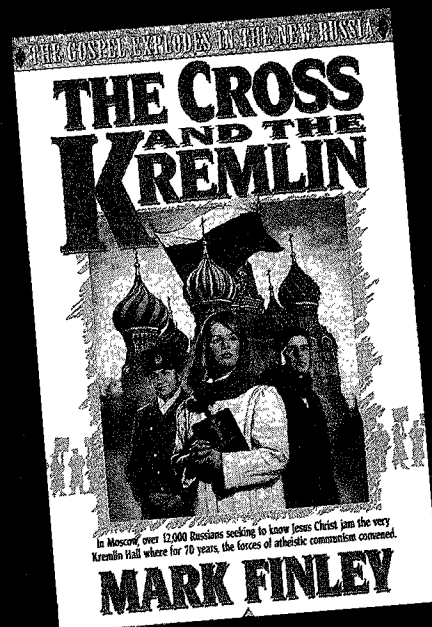


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Protecting your PKs

Larry Pahl

Five suggestions to help pastor's kids survive your ministry

W

hat pastor who is also a parent doesn't dread the PK disease? Its symptoms are pastor's kids who are angels in public and brats in private.

Its causes include frequent moving, an absentee father or mother in the ministry, and burnout from having to "be an example."

How can pastoral parents immunize their children from PK damage? After discussing this with several well-adjusted teenagers of the parsonage, I offer the following suggestions:

1. Involve your children in your ministry. Lisa is a popular senior in academy known for her spiritual leadership. She told me, "For as long as I can remember, my dad loaded my sisters and me into the car to do visitation with him. This happened most often during preschool days, but continues right up to the present." Lisa added, "From the time we were toddlers we knew that making people happy and sharing our home, food, and time was the responsibility of the entire family, not just our parents."

2. Don't regulate behavior on the basis of your ministry. Most children of pastors are turned off when told they cannot do something because their parent is the pastor. One appreciative PK testified, "Until I was 11 I didn't know there was a difference between other kids and me. My parents asked me to behave in the same way they would have wanted me to had my father not been a pastor."

3. Schedule time for your children, just as with others you serve. Judy, a 14-year-old from Alaska, admitted that being a PK was difficult. "But," she said, "my dad helped our relationship by set-

ting certain times to be with me and my brother and doing special things with us." Sanctify these appointments as you would any other ministerial obligation.

Another teenage PK reported, "Dad took family time at least once a week during which he would not answer the phone or make any appointments. We kids weren't allowed to go anywhere either. Family time was protected. I looked forward to it."

4. Become involved in your children's social life. Opening your home helps endear your children to you and also ministers to their friends. Lisa remarked, "Not only did my parents want me to feel part of their ministry, but they wanted to know what was happening in my life. Knowing my friends personally makes my parents trust them more and feel better about allowing me to go places with them."

One girl remarked that her father's participation in sports won the respect of her friends. Here is an added incentive to go on that physical fitness program you've been putting off!

As your children grow so does their need for peer relationships. Young people need healthy places to congregate. Why not the pastor's home?

5. Confide in your children. Sari, 16, from West Virginia, said, "My parents let me know how they were feeling. If they were discouraged in their work, they told me about it. That not only made me feel part of the team, but it bonded us together. I in turn felt comfortable telling them my discouragements."

These five suggestions aren't a cure-all for the PK syndrome. However, when employed with planning, commitment, and love, they can do much in avoiding problems that afflict many children of the parsonage. ■



Larry Pahl teaches at Miracle Meadows School in Salem, West Virginia.



The undershepherd plan

Harold Howard

Local church elders have a vital role in nurturing members.

The Saviour is the shepherd of the church. In local congregations the pastor is His chief undershepherd, and lay elders are individual

undershepherds. Working together, pastor and elders must care for the flock.

At weekly worship services the pastor and elders provide spiritual nourishment, inspiration, and encouragement through Bible study, worship, and fellowship. However, what happens through the week may determine the salvation or loss of many souls—especially those not attending church. Here is where the care of the undershepherds becomes vital.

The undershepherd plan operating in Michigan is one way to coordinate the ministry of lay leadership. Church membership is divided into geographical areas with an elder over each. This “parish” is in turn divided into smaller units of deacons and deaconesses conducting two-by-two visitation. They report to their supervising elder about members who need special attention or encouragement.

The ministry of deacons and deaconesses as unit leaders supplements—but does not substitute for—the visitation of pastor and elders. The pastor continues general visitation as his schedule per-

mits, and local elders visit in the parish they supervise. What makes the difference with the undershepherd plan is that pastor and elders can focus on members who have particular needs, as reported to them by unit leaders.

Duties of local church elders in the undershepherd plan

- See that the undershepherd plan is functioning well—your prime responsibility.
- Plan for quarterly meetings of undershepherds.
- Appoint a records secretary for your unit.
- Make visits in your parish in response to needs identified by unit leaders.
- Keep the pastor and church board informed of the progress of members in crisis.

Duties of unit leaders (deacons and deaconesses)

- Become acquainted with families in the little flock of their unit. Visit each home at least once a quarter, more frequently in caring for unusual physical or spiritual needs.
- Report to the records secretary the names of those physically unable to attend worship services.
- Report at once to the records secretary any situation requiring immediate follow-up, such as serious illness, discouragement, interest in Bible studies, etc. Confidential reports should bypass

the secretary and go directly to the pastor or elder.

■ During home visits encourage faithfulness in family and personal devotions, regularity in church attendance, and active participation in church activities. Arrange for transportation if needed.

■ Take note of those absent from the weekly services and send or deliver personally a church bulletin.

■ Report to the pastor or elder the names of those in your district who would like a Communion service in their home.

■ In case of death, be sure that meals are provided for the family on the day of the funeral.

■ Report to the records secretary any changes of address of members in your unit.

■ Communicate to the church office any newsletter or bulletin items from your flock, such as birthdays, anniversaries, job promotions, graduations, etc.

■ Be alert for prospective members moving into your area. Get acquainted with them and invite them to services.

■ Visit and nurture new members in your unit.

■ Attend the quarterly meeting of the undershepherds. At that time return the visitation report form (one for each family) to your supervising elder. Confidential information should be conveyed in a sealed envelope.

■ Make suggestions for improving local implementation of the undershepherd plan. ■

Harold Howard is director of stewardship for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Truth in Religion

Mortimer J. Adler, Collier Books, New York, 1992, 162 pages, paper. Reviewed by Kenneth R. Wade, ministerial secretary, South-east Asia Union Mission, Singapore.

In a global village whose dimensions shrink daily as a result of cross-cultural interchanges, the question of the validity of various religions' claims to truth has profound significance. Historically such questions often have been settled by an appeal to the sword. Today the threat of nuclear proliferation, combined with fundamentalist revivals among various religious groups and increasing calls for a global government, multiplies the peril of resorting to old-style tactics for solving religious disputes.

But this is not Dr. Adler's main motivation for writing this essay. He is a philosopher and student of philosophy, and he believes that truth should be pursued for its own sake. He sees logic as the main road that can guide us to the truth. His thesis here is that religious truth should be demonstrable by appeal to logic.

He is not naive enough to think that logic can conclusively settle such issues as the existence or nonexistence of God and angels. On that issue he simply points out that pragmatic (as opposed to idealistic) logic cannot disprove their existence, and to point out that the conclusions of theological philosophy affirm the existence of God to be beyond reasonable doubt. From there he goes on to draw conclusions about the validity of the two major types of religion in the world.

He argues that since Eastern religions do not accept the rules of logic in dealing with reality, these religions cannot be tested by logic, and hence cannot be candidates in the search for a religion that teaches truth. In other words, because Eastern religions teach that two incompatible theses can both be true, there is no chance that these religions can point us to ultimate truth. Adler sees an additional flaw in the fact that Eastern religions deny philosophical theology's proofs of God's existence.

The three major Western religions, on the other hand, all claim to have "the truth." And all three claim that this truth has been granted them through supernatural revelation. The truths that they hold are exclusionary, and hence testable by logic, human experience, and comparison to one another.

Adler's is the philosopher's search for truth, and as such he hopes that religious truth can undergo the same logical tests as

scientific and mathematical truth in order to establish a transcultural truth of religion just as science and math have truth that is transcultural. He appeals to Eastern thinkers to demand the same veracity of their religious beliefs as they demand of the scientific principles on which they base their technology. He also takes to task Western thinkers such as Harvey Cox and Hans Kung for their pluralistic attempts to harmonize all the world's religions by ignoring the principles of logic.

Adler concludes that the three major Western religions all hold some truth, and suggests criteria by which their truths may be tested. His closing appeal for a dispassionate, logical disputation among the theologians of these religions is an invitation that ought to be answered. But in the final analysis one wonders how much difference it all would make. The majority of the world's people choose their religion on the basis of where and when they were born, not on the basis of carefully reasoned and thoroughly tested logical arguments.

This is not a book to read on a somnolent summer afternoon at the seashore, but it is well worth reading through a couple of times if you are a seeker after truth.

Racing Toward 2001

Russell Chandler, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992, 367 pages, \$17.99 (Cdn. \$24.50), hardcover. Also available on tape, \$12.99 (two 60-minute tapes). Reviewed by Jerry Lastine, director of planned giving, Columbia Union Conference, Columbia, Maryland.

Russell Chandler writes with discernment about powerful forces that affect society. His 18 years' experience as a religion specialist for the Los Angeles *Times* enables him to open the curtains to let us view events shaping our future. But he does not want us to be mere spectators.

Chandler deals with the wallet woes of churches and the nontraditional thought patterns of the baby boomer generation.

In a chapter on "clashing cosmologies" he takes us through the supermarket of competing beliefs: naturalistic humanism; New Age mysticism; and the Judeo-Christian biblical worldview of theism and supernaturalism. He challenges readers to follow the timeless wisdom of the supernatural God.

I found the book exciting reading and packed with sermon material. Chandler closes with Paul's final words to the

Since Eastern religions teach that two incompatible theses can both be true, there is no chance that these religions can point us to ultimate truth.

Ephesians as words for Christians on the edge of a new era: "Find your strength in the Lord, in his mighty power. Put on all the armour which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm" (Eph. 6:10, 11, NEB).

So You're Looking for a New Preacher
Elizabeth Achtemeier, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991, 62 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Danny R. Chandler, pastoral assistant, Columbus, Mississippi, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Recent research indicates that Americans are returning to church in record numbers. Some hope this resurgence of interest in religion will help solve social ills. Consequently, this expectation places church leaders, particularly pastors, in a pivotal position. Choosing a pastor could be on par with electing a United States president.

Elizabeth Achtemeier writes like an educator. Her language and format are clear and logical. The book's purpose does not get lost in the prose. She provides excellent dialogue between writer and reader.

Looking gives a paradigm that any pulpit nominating committee can use. It gives step-by-step instructions for finding a preacher that best matches the congregation. From beginning the search, to trimming the list of candidates, to the final vote, *Looking* is a prototype manual on the subject.

Achtemeier writes as one who knows her topic. But I question the book's premise that preaching is the pastor's most important service.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus indicate that He ministered more than He preached. After sermons are forgotten, unmet needs

linger. Therefore, I find a pastor's human relationship skills as important as preaching.

Despite minor criticisms, I enjoyed the book and will refer to it many times. For years I have espoused the importance of making the "best match" between pastor and congregation. I call it preacher-church ergonomics. As one who sits in a position of placing preachers with congregations, I have urged my colleagues to apply this principle.

Looking appeals to connoisseurs and

novices. Its arguments are solid. For those making decisions on choosing a pastor, the book compels greater responsibility; for the pastor, it encourages self-examination.

Lay Counseling: Equipping Christians for a Helping Ministry

Siang-Yang Tan, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991, 256 pages, \$12.95 (Cdn. \$16.95), paper. Reviewed by Andreas Bochmann, pastor and doctoral student in pastoral counseling, Columbia, Maryland.

Lay counseling needs tactful yet thorough discussion. Too often we hear stories of how a well-meaning parishioner gives advice to another member, and it turns into disaster for everybody involved. Situations have often gone bad for those who think that all you need to do is follow the "Bible method" to be a competent counselor. Yet the need for lay counselors increases with the rising number of emotional problems today both in and out of the church.

Siang-Yang Tan approaches the task with excellent professional and conservative Christian credentials. He refers to studies showing that lay counselors are as effective as their professional counterparts. Such a conclusion may be humbling to those who pride themselves in their professional counseling skills. However, we soon discover that Tan is not talking about untrained lay counselors, but trained paraprofessionals, working under the supervision of experienced mental health professionals. Tan makes it clear that a simplistic biblical approach is not adequate for severe emotional problems. Neither is an approach that leaves out biblical spiritual values.

The book discusses the selection and training of lay counselors, and introduces various models. He notes the importance of supervision and evaluation, and points out the dangers and limitations of lay counseling. Throughout his writing, the author integrates biblical and psychological concerns.

Tan writes in a scholarly but readable style. He has researched his work well, giving case studies and resources for further study. Despite practical hints, the book is not a replacement for quality training.

Help Yourself

Joel C. Robertson, Oliver-Nelson Books, Nashville, 1992, 320 pages, \$17.95, hard-cover, \$12.95 audio. Available in Canada through Lawson Falls Ltd., Cambridge, Ontario, \$22.50 and \$16.50 audio. Reviewed by Andre Bustanoby, a marriage and family counselor and author of many books on counseling. He lives in Lancaster, Virginia.

Help Yourself promises to free addictive people from the high cost of hospitalization or endless counseling sessions by giving a self-help strategy for recovery.

In the opening pages of the book, Robertson tries to relieve readers of a technical rationale for his strategy by avoiding a theoretical discussion of his theory. Readers will not understand some of his terminology, such as "the neurochemical personality" and "baseline neurotransmission

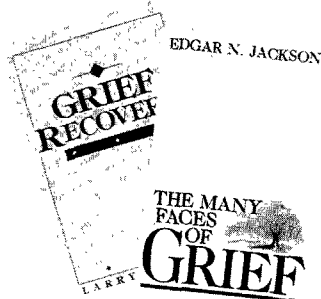
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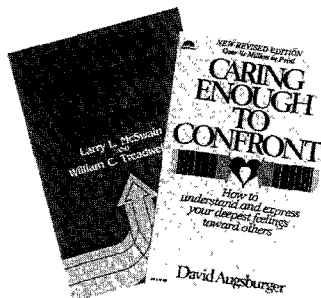
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levels" unless they first refer to Appendix B, and the "Robertson Model of Behavior."

This interesting book offers an extensive list of professional articles and lectures by the author. I would feel more comfortable with his claim of an 85 percent success rate if the book gave more information about the writer's professional qualifications and clinical experience.

Robertson uses a simple theory: behavior governs brain chemistry and brain chemistry governs behavior. If we understand and change our behavior, we can change our brain chemistry and rid ourselves of our addictions.

Robertson's method, however, raises the same criticism behaviorist B. F. Skinner raised 40 years ago. Even if we were able to know the reasons people behave as they do, we wouldn't have absolute control over their circumstances; neither would we be certain what alterations in those circumstances might produce healing.

Robertson follows the current popular trend of calling compulsive behavior addictive. But a compulsive handwasher and a crack addict are two different breeds. Effective intervention with substance use disorders and mood or affective disorders requires the understanding of people beyond the ken of this book.

The Devil Hides Out (New Age and the Occult: A Christian Perspective)

David Marshall, Stanborough Press, Grantham, England, 1991, available in U.S. through Review and Herald Publishing Assn., Hagerstown, Maryland, 141 pages, \$6.95 (Cdn. \$8.70), paper. Reviewed by Brian Jones, Bible instructor, Auburn, Washington.

David Marshall's book makes a useful contribution to the growing body of Christian literature devoted to exposing New Age deceptions. The author focuses his writing scripturally and yet tactfully designs the book to appeal to non-Christian readers.

Marshall employs wit, gripping narrative, and tight logic, giving the book evangelistic momentum. Without being doctrinaire, he moves readers to recognize and decide how they will handle their own confrontations with the forces of good and evil.

With New Age activity spreading even into some Christian churches, we need a book like Marshall's to show us the source and effects of contemporary occult disciplines. Marshall interweaves theological explanations with case studies, showing why he believes satanic machinations underlie many New Age experiences. He shows

the similarities in such diverse practices as astrology, Ouija-board use, séances, channeling, futuristic cinema, human sacrifices, hedonistic drug use, parapsychology, faith healing, automatic writing, human potential training, Scientology, and open satanism.

Using the Bible, but not belaboring it, Marshall shows that New Age occult activities represent the last stages of the great controversy between good and evil. He believes this controversy will soon conclude with the triumphant return of Jesus.

The author sees a connection between the manifestation of the antichrist prior to Christ's return and the practice of occult arts.

The author's treatment of several aspects of Bible doctrine on which many Christians are hazy enhances the book's value. Widespread confusion on such biblical teachings as the nature of death, the antichrist, eternal punishment, and the manner of Christ's return makes Christians vulnerable to New Age apocalyptic ideas and its counterfeit gospel.

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Who am I?

From page 5

abandonment of self to the Man of the cross that leads to true self-discovery. Did not Jesus Himself model such abandonment? His relationship with the Father was such that the battle of Gethsemane and the fury of the cross could be turned into moments of affirming His Father's will.

The cross helps me to realize that as I come to Christ in total abandonment, I pass from death to life, from nothingness to certainty. I know whose I am. I am a child of God. From now on I don't belong to myself. I can't deal with my body or spirit, my possession or my achievement, my origin or destiny as I please. I am accountable to Jesus: He is my priority, my purpose, and my meaning.

* All Scripture passages are from the Revised Standard Version.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 100.

² William Temple, *Citizen and Churchman*, p. 74. Quoted in John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1990), p. 282.

Letters

From page 2

■ Fredericks' thorough exposé of the moral influence theory of the atonement was surely a thought-provoker. However, I am left wondering why he made no mention of the theory that a third- or fourth-century C. H. Dodd-type copier and a very early precursor of *Today's English Version* successfully edited out the second word of the Lord's Prayer. The theory, much loved by "wrath" advocates, holds that the original manuscript had "Our Judge" rather than "Our Father" as our descriptive salutation to God. Perhaps if the original form of this well-known and memorized prayer could be restored, the unnecessary confusion of so many centuries could be put to an end. We could all stop being attracted to a Father and instead start fearing the Judge.

Thank you for the "outstretched hand" of *Ministry*.—George A. Hodgkins, Carver, Massachusetts.

■ Kudos for the two articles by Richard

Fredericks and Martin Weber (March 1992) uncovering two subtle deceptions plaguing the church today: moral influence and passive righteousness. The first says "my faith" is a requirement I fulfill enabling God to justify me. The second says "my faith alone" enables Christ to create saving righteousness in me. But faith is not a requirement I fulfill to convince God to justify me, the godly; rather, it is a gift from God convincing me that He justifies me, the ungodly.

Human "dignity" is offended at a salvation that lays its glory in the dust while God does all the saving. But nothing meriting salvation can ever come from Adam's corrupt stock; saving goodness is found only in our Substitute. We are saved by what God did in Christ, not by something happening in us.

The lust for creature merit is the common denominator of every false religion and every false gospel. The "attraction" of the moral influence theory may provide a corrective to legalism, but it should be regarded as a threat to the full gospel because its minimizing of God's wrath makes mercy of no great consequence and the cross of Christ no longer central to the gospel.—Norman L. Meager, Sonora, California.

■ I would like to address the most blatant error presented in this article (other than the thesis itself): the idea that those ascribing to a "larger view" are soft on sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. Of the individuals I have personally met who profess an understanding of this position, none could be categorized as taking sin lightly. In fact, they see sin as the main problem, not an offended God. They see sin as so heinous as to render those enslaved to its power as being unsavable, being unable to stand in the consuming, glorious presence of God, unprotected by His mercy and the heavenly resurrected body.

If Fredericks' definition of murder is true, then God must fit the bill, for He killed His "innocent" Son. This injustice was performed so He could "legally" save us. Substitution and legal salvation are rippled with just as many problems as Fredericks thinks the larger view contains.—Alan Williams, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

■ Fredericks has offered well-researched material that is consistently faithful to the Scripture. The reader comes away with a real sense of the dreadfulness of sin and the enormity of God's provision to eradicate the sin canker.

I am thankful to see the subject of Christ's atonement given such quality treatment and expression. Not since the able and timely ministry of Edward Heppenstall has the issue of the objective atonement been presented among Adventists in such a positive way. My only fear is that little more will be said about this crucial subject.

This article appears in a rather hostile battlefield and will probably set off some mine fields in some Adventist "war zones." Several who have been injured and scarred by previous legalistic approaches to the atonement have unfortunately become antagonistic to the objective elements of Christ's sacrifice. We face a formidable challenge to nurse the wounded and restore confidence in God's true character. Let's dare to be faithful to God's Word!—Ivan C. Blake, Battle Creek, Michigan.

The gospel and Global Mission

Charles Scriven's article on the totality of the gospel message (May 1992) was timely. As I watched the turmoil in Los Angeles following the Rodney King verdict, the concepts of the article were driven home. The gospel should affect "not just the way we live alone but also the way we live together." The church's evangelistic thrust cannot be diminished, but it seems our content could focus in on issues that people are concerned about, namely justice and peace, which Scriven highlights for us. Clearly, the gospel does address these issues.

I felt the timeliness of the article even as I was conducting a public evangelistic series here in my district. I was using a format that was essentially developed by J. N. Loughborough years ago. Try as I might, I just couldn't seem to address issues of social justice and the peace of the gospel under that format and content.

I long for the day when an Adventist evangelist will develop a "full message" series that addresses the beauty of the gospel as well as prophecy—one that can be put to use on a local level by pastors and laypersons. Scriven nudges us in that direction.—Mark F. Carr, Wasilla, Alaska.

Answering machine ministry

With the proliferation of answering machines, pastors have a new tool. When my members come home from work they might have from me a word of encouragement and a Bible verse recorded on their machines. Many have told me it is a bright spot in their day. This is easier for me than mailing a postcard and also less expensive.—Jeff Scragg, Seminole, Florida.

Your out-of-town college students

One of my more successful communication ideas is our "Apart but Still a Part" newsletter, which I send bi-weekly to all our college students. I include some people news, event news, and a little spiritual exhortation. Sometimes I'll add a cartoon or two. All this plus the latest church bulletin. And once a semester I enclose a stamped postcard for them to send back some news of their own and a prayer request.

Over the years I've received many expressions of gratitude from students who feel loved and remembered. Many return to the church following graduation still feeling a part of our fellowship.—Don Crook, Des Moines, Washington.

Family Service

Church leaders agonize over how to minister to children during the worship hour. Here's what we've found successful. Beyond the typical weekly children's story, once a month we have a family service geared especially to young people. We sing choruses they like and invite them to participate in readings and prayers. I illustrate my sermons with visual aids that children can relate to.

Even adults enjoy our fam-

ily service—especially the seniors. One elderly woman remarked on her way out the door, "Now that was on my level." Usually when we aim at the children, we hit the adults, too.—Larry J. Michael, Vevay, Indiana.

Miniature prayer chapel

Our members write down their prayer requests and stuff them inside a miniature model of our church. Several times a year we devote a service just for celebrating answers to prayer. I walk among the congregation and invite them to stand and share their stories. It's a thrilling service that leaves everyone with a little more confidence to give God a chance to work for him or her.

—Stan Caylor, Healdsburg, California.

Reaching new parents

We watch the newspaper for birth notices and then send congratulations to the family, wishing them God's blessing. We enclose a card for them to return to us if they would like to receive the gift of a children's Bible. Many respond. I phone them back and make an appointment to drop by and have prayer for the family and their little one.—Jim Grown, Canyonville, Oregon.

What was your name again?

Here are three tips for improving your ability to remember names. You have probably already heard something like this before, but it bears repeating:

1. after the introduction, use the name in ensuing conversation;
2. upon parting, repeat the name to yourself over and over;
3. write down the name with appropriate comments. Now that you have spoken

that person's name, repeated it to yourself, and written it down, the chances are much greater that you will remember it the next time you meet.—Dick Grenell, Barrett, Minnesota.

What do you mean by "dinner"?

During our 44 years of marriage my late husband and I were invited many times to "dinner." Often we weren't sure whether the hosts meant the noon or the evening meal. The confusion was cleared up when we asked, "What time do you want us to come?"—Dorothy Wyatt, Athens, Tennessee.

Understanding philanthropy

The Makings of a Philanthropic Fundraiser is a new book about the life of Milton Murray and how he has raised millions for church institutions. Some chapters highlight qualities and techniques that sparked his success: leadership, creativity, anonymity, mentoring, patient persistence, loyalty, common touch, and commitment. Robert Folkenberg, world leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, describes the book as inspiring "for enterprising American youth who want their lives to make a difference for good." Pastors struggling to balance the church budget might also profit by reading it. Available for US\$21.55 (plus \$2.50 for U.S. postage/handling) from the Potomac Adventist Book Center, 8400 Carrol Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912. Phone orders: 1/800/325-8492.

Flags of faith

Your church can present the community with a fresh statement of faith during holiday seasons with various "faith flags" on your flagpole. During Thanksgiving, for example, the colorful flag proclaims, "Thank You, God." Other flags currently available are for Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. There's even one for Valentine's Day saying: "Fill the world with LOVE," showing a number of hearts floating down and entering a globe.

The silk-screened flags are professionally made of highly durable nylon. For more information, call (816) 763-9401, or write Flags of the Faith, Box 11394, Kansas City, Missouri 64112.

Youth and Children's Ministry Care Cards

Group has found a way to help church youth and children feel appreciated. They have in print six sets of "Care Cards." In the youth visitor set, each card includes a witty message and cartoon and allows room for a personal note.

The esteem-builders set gives colorful reminders of coming events or serves as a way to keep in touch. Other youth sets are birthday greetings and affirmations.

The three children's sets are for birthdays, affirmation, and letting children know the church family misses them when they don't attend.

Cards are available from Group Publishing, Inc., Colorado Springs, CO. The cost of each 30 card set is \$4.50.

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Two Special Opportunities to Allow The Holy Spirit to Sharpen Your Ministry Skills.

Cohutta Springs, Georgia
Oct. 25-28, 1992

Across North America and overseas many pastoral families, lay leaders, denominational leaders and churches are experiencing an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Miracles of grace are taking place. The first two International Adventist Prayer Conferences have resulted in ministries and congregations revitalized in a remarkable way.

You Are Now Invited to the Third

International Adventist Prayer Conference

This Extraordinary Prayer Summit Will Emphasize The
Mighty Power of the Holy Spirit



Can you say "yes" to these questions?

- Are you thirsty for God's power?
- Do you want daily victory in Jesus and true revival?
- Would you like to begin a prayer ministry?
- Do you desire the experience of Pentecost for yourself, your church?

If you can answer "yes" then come to this "Upper Room" prayer conference.

Speakers and Group Leaders will include:

- **Robert Dale**
Vice President, North American Division
- **Don Jacobsen**
President, Oregon Conference
- **Malcolm Gordon**
President, Southern Union Conference
- **Janet Rowe, M.D.**
Pediatric nephrologist, Ft. Lewis, Washington
- **Chad and Debi McComas**
Pastoral Couple, Medford, Oregon
- **Jerry and Janet Page**
President and Coordinator of Women's Ministries, Pennsylvania Conference
- **Kevin Wilfley**
Pastor and author of "Studies on the Holy Spirit"

Sunday, October 25 — 7 p.m. to Wednesday noon, Oct. 28
Cohutta Springs Adventist Center, Crandall, Georgia

International Adventist Prayer Conference (IAPC)

Registration Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone (____) _____

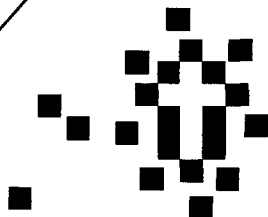
Each registration includes \$15 non-refundable deposit. Registration also includes one vegetarian noon meal per day plus study materials.

- ☐ Enclosed is \$90 Early Registration (before Oct. 10)
- ☐ Enclosed is \$105 Regular Registration (after Oct. 10)
- ☐ Enclosed is \$85 for each person in group of three or more.

Make checks payable to **IAPC, Georgia Cumberland Conference of SDA**
P.O. Box 12000, Calhoun, GA 30703

Register now for this life-changing experience!

Cohutta Springs, Georgia
Oct. 28-31, 1992



The Fifth International Adventist Conference on Building the Local Church Through Dynamic Small Groups



Cohutta Springs Adventist Center, Crandall, Georgia
5:30 p.m. • Oct. 28 to 6:30 p.m., Oct. 31

Elder Mike and Dottie Cauley, host pastoral couple, Cleveland, Tennessee SDA Church. You will hear from the pastors and lay leaders inspiring stories of the Holy Spirit's working in the many small group ministries in this church. You will also meet and learn from such successful small group leaders as **Dr. Craig Dossman** who grew the Ephesus Los Angeles Church from 85 to 850 and is now pastor of the Brooklyn Temple; **Dr. Roy Naden**, Professor of Religious Education, Andrews University. His material on spiritual gifts is invaluable for small group ministries, and **Virgil Covil** a student leader who organized dozens of small groups on the campus of Southern College.

Plenary Speakers and Workshop
Presenters Will Include:

- **Larry Evans** — Certified Church consultant, special assistant to Oregon Conference president. "Revelation Leader's Guide" author.
- **Don and Ruthie Jacobsen** — President and Women's Ministry director of Oregon Conference. Authors of "Windows to John's Gospel."
- **Kurt Johnson** — Church Ministries Director Oregon Conference, author of Small Group Evangelism Guide.
- **Kay Kuzma** — President, Family Matters Ministry.
- **Tom Baez** — Adult Ministries Director, Georgia-Cumberland Conference.
- **Gordon and Cheryl Retzer** — President, Rocky Mountain Conference.
- **Monte Sahlin** — North American Division associate Church Ministries Director.
- **Clarence Schilt** — Loma Linda associate professor, author of Handbook for Small Groups.

Plan now to bring your team

The first four conferences have revitalized churches and ministries in North America and overseas. Lay leaders and associate pastors as well as senior and district pastors will catch a new vision of fruitful team ministry.

Join more than 1,200 lay leaders and pastors from around North America and overseas who are alumni of the first four conferences.

As well as the opportunity to learn in ten inspirational plenary sessions you will have a choice of four practical workshops from a menu of more than 30.

International Adventist Small Group Conference (INASGCON)

Registration Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone (____) _____

Each registration includes \$15 non-refundable deposit. Registration also includes one vegetarian noon meal per day plus study materials.

- ☐ Enclosed is \$90 Early Registration (before Oct. 10)
- ☐ Enclosed is \$105 Regular Registration (after Oct. 10)
- ☐ Enclosed is \$85 for each person in group of three or more

Make checks payable to **INASGCON, Georgia Cumberland Conf. of SDA**
P.O. Box 12000, Calhoun, GA 30703

Sponsored by the Oregon and Georgia-Cumberland Conferences in cooperation with the North American Division Church Ministries Department

For accommodations and meal information
call Cohutta Springs (706) 695-9093.

For travel discounts call
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Questions Concerning These Two Conferences?

Call Kurt Johnson, (503) 652-2225 or Tom Baez (706) 629-7951 or
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