

Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

March 1994



The Puritan Legacy *of*
Sabbatarianism

Lurking legalism and liberalism

Martin Weber's "Lurking Legalism and Liberalism" (May 1993) caught me by surprise and made me think. I consider myself a liberal, but certainly not a libertine. I would rather say that liberals maximize grace and interpret law through it. They see the new covenant (grace) as the fulfillment of the old (law). I realize this is a very simplified response.

To follow Exodus 20:8-11 is next to impossible today. Who would be the equivalent of a manservant? Wouldn't it be anyone that you pay for a product or service rendered on that day? Does that mean that our places of worship should not be heated, cooled or illuminated on the Sabbath? We may not pay our utility bills on the Sabbath, but we utilize services that require people to work on the Sabbath. Or, if we have a serious injury or illness on the Sabbath, won't we seek assistance? The list of people we pay to work for us on the Sabbath could be quite long, even to the foreigner who makes the cloth for our clothing on the Sabbath. And, let us not be wobble-headed in our thinking that the worship leader doesn't work.

Is it possible to keep God's law in our world today? Do we become legalists if we try or liberals if we don't? If we look upon grace as the fulfillment of the law, we know that every day is the Lord's day and worship God in it. That doesn't answer the question of working on the Lord's day. It doesn't answer the question of what happens if we labor or cause someone to labor on the Lord's day. But it may point in the direction of keeping each day holy. And if I try my best to keep it holy, I will let God sort out all the other things.

No wonder we are tempted with legalism. Our lives would be much simpler. We wouldn't have to trust God or think.

I enjoy your magazine and read it regularly.—Paul S. Powell, United Methodist Church, Bismarck, Missouri.

Sabbath in Colossians

Isn't it time we look at Colossians 2:16 again? To argue that it supports seventh-day Sabbath observance, or negates it, is to miss the point of the passage in its large context. Kevin L. Morgan ("Crucifixion Nails Through the Sabbath?", March 1993) rightly notes that "feasts, new moons, and sabbaths" is a common triplet in the Old Testament. One wonders, however, if this triplet is not meant to indicate a pattern of year, month, week? In this case the apostle is treating Sabbath as the weekly Sabbath! At the same time, in this verse he is not negating the weekly Sabbath per se; rather, he is attacking a heresy (incipient Gnosticism is the technical category) as a whole. Included in this heresy were dietary laws, angel worship, visionary requirement, special knowledge, and Jewish festivals (yearly, monthly, and weekly) that lacked a Christocentric focus and undergirding. The heresy was a syncretistic potpourri of mystery religions, Judaism, Christianity, etc.

The text is not focusing on any single part, especially the later Christian concern of Sabbath. I don't think we need to make "Sabbath" in this passage an annual Sabbath in order to prop up the seventh-day Sabbath doctrine. There are enough other New Testament passages that allow it to stand tall without this one wrongly exegeted. Let us read each passage

of Scripture through contextual lenses, and not with preconceived doctrinal or ideological glasses on.—Pedrito Maynard-Reid, professor of biblical studies, Walla Walla College, Walla Walla, Washington.

Year of the pastor's wife, too

I disagree with Sharon Cress's editorial (May 1993) on the point that pastor-husbands should expound their wives' virtues from the pulpit just for the sake of boosting their self-esteem! I have been a minister's wife for more than 25 years, and not once have I asked or expected him to tell from the pulpit that I am his helper. I was there by his side and as such did all I could to ease any burdens or assist in any way I could. He appreciated it, and I never needed reassurance from the pulpit.

Just be yourself. Be friendly. Have a smile for everyone. And you will have all the self-esteem you need. Our reward will come from the Lord knowing that we are doing what He has in His plan for us.—Una H. Turner.

Ministry appreciated

I am a United Methodist clergy who has had the privilege of receiving *Ministry* (Preach edition) for the past several years free of charge. I have found the articles helpful in many ways. I was especially impressed with the May 1993 edition, particularly the article by Roland R. Hegstad, "To Heal the Walking Wounded"; Martin Weber's "Lurking Legalism and Liberalism"; and "Statement I—Guidelines on Abortion."

I have been retired for nearly four years but have been serving a small-town, small-membership

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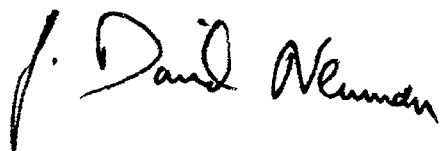
If you're receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in 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.

Working with youth has always been a challenge. Youth is the time for independence, establishing and owning values, deciding how to relate to the power brokers in the church, seeking to make their own contribution to church life. Sandra Doran contributes 10 principles for "Youth Ministry in the Nineties" (p. 6).

We continue our series on expository preaching with a gem of an article by Leslie Pollard: "Preach With Power" (p. 8). Edward Allen discusses how Protestants developed their own Jewish version of Sabbath-keeping in "The Puritan's Legacy of Sabbatarianism" (p. 12).

Church discipline has always been a thorny issue, but Pastor Robert Bretsch treads carefully in his "'Soft Touch' Church Discipline" (p. 15). Our other articles and department features offer additional resources for ministry.

The editors of *Ministry* pray that you will continue to preach Jesus Christ as the only solution for the troubles of this world. The cross holds as much power today as it did two thousand years ago when it turned eleven cowardly men into indomitable preachers of the gospel.



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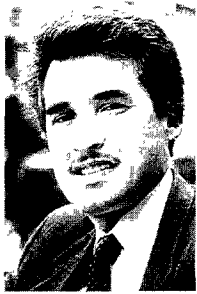
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Flee from Jerusalem

Martin Weber

Immediately after signing the Arab-Israeli peace accord, Yasir Arafat almost killed me. Nothing personal, you understand. I just happened to be stepping onto Pennsylvania Avenue when his black limousine sped out of the White House driveway. I'm thankful for having survived the opportunity of becoming the first casualty of the peace accord.

Several of Arafat's top aides weren't as fortunate, being the victims of angry assassins pledged to overthrow the historic treaty. Among 10 radical Islamic groups are the deadly duo of Hizballah and Hamas. On the opposite extreme are right-wing Jewish groups equally determined to sabotage peace. They elected a new mayor in Jerusalem to promote their agenda, while radical Arabs remain determined to secure the city for themselves.

Jerusalem's Temple mount has special significance for three world religions. Muslims, Jews, and millions of Christians all claim rights to that patch of real estate. No place on earth is potentially more explosive, politically and prophetically.

To Jews, the Temple mount is supremely sacred because their ancestors worshiped there before the Temple was destroyed and its services halted. Following a hiatus of 19 centuries, many Israelis believe God gave Jerusalem back to them so they can rebuild the Temple. After services resume, they expect the Messiah to set up His glorious kingdom and fulfill the dreams of Jewish people.

Also, many Christians anticipate a

new Jewish temple in Jerusalem to set the stage for Christ to rule the world. There's just one obstacle, and it's a big one. The Temple mount is under Muslim control, with the Dome of the Rock being one of Islam's holiest shrines. Muslims everywhere would spill their last drop of blood to prevent the Israelis from erecting a temple there. Jews in turn regard Muslim possession of their ancient Holy of Holies an unspeakable outrage and an intolerable abomination.

It's a no-win situation. Both Jews and Muslims claim divine rights to the Temple mount. Somebody gets desecrated no matter what happens there.

Well, what will happen in Jerusalem? Charles Colson, formerly of Nixon's White House and now a Christian leader, has written a compelling book, *Kingdoms in Conflict*. He proposes a possible chain of events in which Jewish zealots seize Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and blow up the Muslim mosque, intending to rebuild their Temple. American Christians shout "Glory, hallelujah!" as the international crisis threatens to become earth's final war.

Colson's book is fascinating reading. He's not saying all of the above will necessarily happen, but his spine-tingling scenario certainly is plausible. Would it fulfill Bible prophecy regarding the covenant? Or is all the speculation about rebuilding the Jerusalem temple merely a smoke screen?

Recycling false prophecy

Much of today's prophetic excite-

ment actually reflects what false prophets taught in Old Testament times. Six centuries before Christ, Jeremiah warned that continued apostasy would forfeit divine favor (see Jer. 18:7-10; cf. Duet. 28:15-65). Hananiah, a popular religious teacher, opposed Heaven's warning of doom and assured the rebellious Jews that nothing could change their status as God's chosen people (see Jer. 28).

Such fallacies were recycled early in the first century A.D. Jesus warned unrepentant Israel: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matt. 21:43, NKJV). After His death, the blessings of the covenant passed from those who had rejected the blood of the covenant to those who had accepted salvation in Christ (see Gal. 3:9, 29).

Nevertheless, false prophets arose again in A.D. 70, promising the unbelieving nation deliverance from enemy attacks. Josephus reported how presumptuous patriotism prevailed even after the Romans stormed Jerusalem. Unrepentant patriots perished with their false prophets.

Jesus had warned His people to flee from the doomed city of Jerusalem. We would do well to take our Lord's advice today—flee from false prophecies about Jerusalem. False faith in that city brought ruin in 586 B.C. and then again in A.D. 70. Could it happen again now?

Competing with Calvary

In his best-seller *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Hal Lindsey predicts:

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Can pastors keep the Sabbath?

J. David Newman

This editorial will raise more questions than it answers. I want you to help me with the answers.

The fourth commandment says: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work" (Ex. 20:8-10, NKJV). How does this commandment apply to pastors? Sabbath is often the busiest day of the week for ministers. I remember many Sabbaths when, after preaching three times, traveling among churches, teaching a Sabbath school lesson, counseling with any number of people, I collapsed exhausted at the end of the day. Was I keeping the Sabbath?

What did Jesus mean when He inquired: "Have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests, in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?" (Matt. 12:5 RSV). How does the work of pastors during the week differ from their work on Sabbath? How is Sabbath a rest day for them? Are ministers unique because their work is spiritual work and therefore there is no substantive difference between what they do during the week and what they do on the Sabbath?

If pastors are unique and they do "profane" the Sabbath every week, when do they take time to rest? Should they take some other day of the week for their "sabbath"? Much has been written on how to keep the Sabbath, but not as it relates to the minister.

Eugene Peterson, pastor of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland, wrote: "I started by

keeping a sabbath myself. Sunday is a workday for me, and so unavailable for a sabbath. I decided to keep a Monday sabbath. My wife joined me in the observance. We agreed that it would be a true *sabbath*, and not a 'day off.' We didn't have much to follow in the way of precedents since few of the Christians and none of the pastors of our acquaintance kept a sabbath."¹

Is Peterson correct? Is it impossible for the pastor to keep the Sabbath? When God blessed the seventh-day in particular and sanctified it, did He bless it for everyone but pastors? Or should we as pastors rethink our whole concept of what the Sabbath is for?

Meaning of the Sabbath

The Hebrew *shabbath* means "rest [day], a cessation." After God had finished creating the earth, "he rested on the seventh day from all his work" (Gen. 2:1, 2 RSV). This rest was not because of weariness or fatigue (see Isa. 40:28), but because the task was complete and the world perfect. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Many people have misunderstood the meaning of the word *rest*. They believe that the Sabbath is a time for relaxing and making up for the excesses of the week. To put it colloquially, it is a time to "crash."

When the commandment says "In it you shall not do any work" (Ex. 20:10, RSV), it cannot mean all work, but only a certain type of work. Jesus made it clear that "it is lawful to do good on the sabbath" (Matt. 12:12,

RSV). The sick still need to be cared for, the animals must be fed, and worship services must be planned and carried out. Crime and suffering do not holiday on the Sabbath; fire, ambulance, and police are 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operations.

So what work is excluded on the Sabbath? Isaiah gives us a hint: "If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; . . . then you shall take delight in the Lord" (Isa. 58:13, 14, RSV). What is the meaning of the word *pleasure*?

"Recent lexicographers have suggested that the best rendering of the term *hepes* [pleasure] in our text is 'business, affair,' which has found support in word studies. Man is not to engage in his own pleasure in the sense that he seeks his own business or affair on the Sabbath."²

Several modern translations give this meaning: "If you refrain from sabbath journeys and from doing business on my holy day" (REB); "If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, and doing business on the holy day" (Jerusalem); "If you do not tramp upon the Sabbath by doing your business on My holy day" (MLB).

Everyone works at some trade in order to survive. God says, "I give you six days each week to conduct your business affairs; one day each week you are to give to Me. You are to trust Me on that day for your daily bread." In ancient Israel God not only told the Israelites to refrain from eco-

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Youth ministry in the nineties

Sandra Doran

Ten principles that can energize youth ministry in your church



Sandra Doran is an author and a pastor's wife. Her latest book is Every Time I Say Grace We Fight, slated for married couples who do not share the same religious convictions. She writes from Lincoln, Rhode Island.

It used to be that church youth meetings meant sitting in a hard pew, singing three verses of "Throw Out the Life Line," and listening to 45 minutes of thinly disguised moralizing. Not anymore.

The youth emphasis of the nineties is on relationships, listening, caring, sharing. Says Rod Robertson, youth pastor of the 1,100 member Black Rock Congregational Church in Fairfield, Connecticut: "Peer influence is the largest factor shaping our kids' lives today. Every teenager is desperately looking for a group to fit into. A kid can't survive in the 1990s as a single individual. The role of the church is to provide a positive group influence—friends for our youth to identify with in the context of Christianity."

And such a perspective is right on target. According to Robert Stefferson, Counselor of At Risk Children for the state of New York, "all kids today want to be part of some group, even if their group is the 'loner' group." Stefferson, who conducted a summer research project to determine the influence of groups on teenagers in high schools, found eight distinct groups prevalent among teens today.

Lauren Cass, curriculum and staff development specialist for the state of Connecticut, working on "prejudice reduction" in the classroom, sees the need to identify with a group as primary in the minds of our young people today. "I've seen girls come into class looking nondescript one day and like streetwalkers the next. These kids are fishing around, trying to find a group they can fit into."

With such pressure on our teenagers today, an effective youth ministry program is more than just a "nice service"—it is crucial to the spiritual sur-

vival of our children. By establishing a group our teenagers can fit into, we can give our young people a positive, wholesome identity.

Thinking of starting a youth group in your church—or sprucing up the program you already have? Wondering what works and what doesn't? Here's some advice from pastors and lay leaders involved in active youth ministry programs.

1. Involve the youth in the planning process. No matter how exciting an agenda may appear to you, if the kids don't see it as their own, they won't buy it. Willie Boyd, leader of the fledgling Brooklawn (Bridgeport, Connecticut) Seventh-day Adventist Youth Group, says that a number of programs were attempted to appeal to the youth in his congregation of 150, but none seemed to attract much interest. It was not until Boyd called a planning meeting for the youth, involved them in brainstorming, and solicited their help in implementing their own ideas that something began happening.

2. Build supportive relationships before expecting a lot from your group. "When you're first starting out, you may have to sit around and eat a lot of pizza before becoming involved in any kind of a spiritual discussion," says LaLa Abbott, leader of the 20-member youth group of St. Steven's Episcopal Church of Ridgefield, Connecticut. "The most important thing is to build trust in a group," she says. "Once you get the dynamics going, you have a good basis for growth."

3. Plan some projects that will get the kids "outside of themselves."

LaLa Abbott sees this as one of the real keys to cementing a group together and building members' maturity. Her young people are currently involved in "Habitat," an international volunteer effort that builds and renovates houses for those who can't afford to purchase homes. "While our teens are painting, puttying, and wiring, they are learning a lot about one another and about themselves," she says. "A shared experience builds community and positive experiences for the group."

4. Work on uncovering and meeting the needs evident within your group. Gary Richardson, in an article published in *Group* magazine,¹ lists 13 basic needs that all youth share in common. They are the need to: belong, feel safe, have caring relationships, be loved, develop emotional stability, be challenged, be active, know the Bible, achieve new relations with peers, achieve a masculine or feminine role, accept their physical appearance, prepare for a vocation, and achieve socially responsible behavior. Richardson suggests translating those basic needs into strategies for youth planning, by holding an introductory session with your youth group, and asking questions that can help identify the priorities of those involved. Sample questions might be "List the three things most important to you" or "What bothers you most about life?"

To make this session less threatening, break up into small groups and let the youth discuss their ideas and bring them back to the larger group.

5. Set limits for your group in a positive manner. Dr. Larry Keefauver, senior pastor at Central Christian Church in Waco, Texas, sees respecting young people as individuals as crucial to setting up livable guidelines for a youth group. "Rules should never be the focal point of a youth group or youth event," he says. "Good rules remain in the background to provide structure and reasonable limits so members of the group can live positively together in a Christian atmosphere."² Keefauver further says that rules should be set with a "positive attitude" that "expects the best of youth and adults."

6. Do some "wild and crazy" things. I am not saying that you go against your church principles and standards. But providing a daring experience in a Christian context once in a while allows kids to satisfy their need for adventure. Recently I suggested a radical idea to my group that they embraced wholeheartedly. One Saturday night we rented a gorilla suit, drove a vanload of kids to the homes of some friends who did not attend our youth meetings, and "captured" them. (All this, of course, was done with prior consent and cooperation of the parents of our would-be victims.) We ended up at the church for a grand party—games and food.

7. When discussing Christianity and its applications, offer firsthand experiences. Donna Santos, lay leader with 20 years of experience with youth, suggests that nothing hits a point home more to kids than encountering a flesh-and-blood individual who has grappled with the issue. Offer yourself as a real person, she says, with all your vulnerabilities, and you will be respected all the more.

Santos also suggests calling upon others to share with the group in a personal way. For example, if discussing the issue of abortion, ask someone who has had an abortion to take part in a group session.

"You can read your kids all the biblical admonitions in the world," says Santos. "But they are going to be much more willing to listen when a person just like themselves is sharing from the heart."

8. When planning Bible study sessions, make sure that the youth have some type of interaction with the topic. Work sheets, small groups, discussion—all involve the kids and make the topic relevant to their lives. Kids today are not prepared to sit back passively, imbibing all the wonderful facts imparted by a youth leader. They need to know that their opinions count, their perspective is valued. The way to "instruct" them is to allow for ways in which they can make the topic their own.

"Lecturing does *not* work," says Santos. "The kids are turned off by wise old leaders filled with clichés and

truisms. They need to be involved in the learning process, discovering truths for themselves under gentle guidance."

9. Recognize that kids are coming to you at different levels of interest and strive to take each one to a higher level. Rod Robertson sees four distinct categories of young people who attend youth meetings: (1) the noninterested, who are forced to attend by parents or others; (2) the socially interested, who come to spend time with friends and develop relationships; (3) the spiritually interested, who genuinely want to grow in their Christian walk; and (4) the servant-oriented, who want to reach out to others with the witness of their own faith.

Robertson calls for activities that would spark the interest of each of these levels. Currently his youth group of about 80 kids is on a three-week cycle: the first week a Bible study; the next week small group interaction and application; and the third week a social, with refreshments and time for "just talking."

In addition to these weekly meetings, Robertson plans social activities at members' homes, Christian concerts, spiritual retreats . . . "The teenage years are so very difficult," he says. "Your goal is to get them through a potentially turbulent time. Whatever you can do from a positive perspective is a great thing."

10. The bottom line is love the kids. After being in youth ministry for 14 years, Rod Robertson can see no greater key to success in working with young people than simply to love them from the heart. "It may sound simplistic," he says, "but I really believe that communicating love is the best thing you can do for your group. It doesn't matter what programs you have, or how large your budget is—if the kids can sense a love from the leaders and can develop a genuine caring and respect for one another, your group will be a success." ■

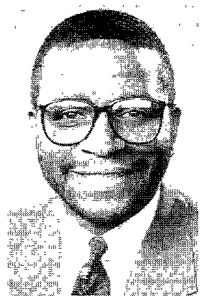
¹ Gary Richardson, "Uncovering and Meeting Needs," *Group*, October 1982, p. 24(22).

² Larry Keefauver, "Those Youth Group Rules," *Group*, March/April 1982, p. 30(1).

Preach with power

Leslie N. Pollard

How to increase the persuasive power of your preaching



Leslie N. Pollard, D.Min., conducts workshops on preaching and worship while completing a Ph.D. in New Testament at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

How can you unleash more impact, more punch, more potency in your preaching? I invite you to consider three questions: 1. What is persuasive preaching? 2. What is a sermon? 3. How can I make my preaching a persuasive force in my church?

Perhaps you already know the answers. But do not draw conclusions too quickly. The success of your next sermon could be at stake.

What is persuasive preaching?

Preaching, whether evangelistic or pastoral, by its essential nature is persuasive communication. Persuasive preaching is not propaganda; its inherent concern is with truth (see John 16:13; 8:32; 17:17). It is not a lecture burdened with factor overload, though it embraces and utilizes academic research. It is not a personal reminiscence, through it embraces the speaker's history. It is not the dispensing of good advice, though it is aware of the great issues of our being. It is not entertainment, though it must be interesting and attractive. It is not simply information sharing, though a well-researched sermon always includes pertinent information.

Persuasive preaching aims to convince and move the hearer to act upon God's revelation in Scripture and history. It attempts to break down resistance to or indifference toward the kingdom of God and the lordship of Christ. It is biblical preaching that intends to win a decision from the listener. In the New Testament this preaching model is evident in the many

uses of the verb *peitho* which means "to persuade" or "to convince." Observe how this verb reveals the intent of apostolic preaching and teaching:

Acts 13:43: Paul and Barnabas "urged them to continue in the grace of God." *

Acts 18:4: Paul reasoned, "trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."

Acts 19:8: Paul argued "*persuasively* about the kingdom of God."

Acts 26:28: Agrippa asked Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me?"

Acts 28:23: Paul declared the gospel, trying "to convince them about Jesus."

Persuasive preaching includes subjective elements as well as objective facts. As wholistic communication, it acknowledges both rational and emotive processes within the listener; it combines both logical analysis and affective fervor.

Persuasive preaching does more than inform the listener—it arrests and convicts the hearer. Academicians (who make a great contribution to the ministry of preaching by their research and writing) rarely carry this burden as does the pastor who steps into the pulpit from week to week. Consider the reflections of those who have devoted their lives to preaching:

Charles W. Koller: "Preaching is that unique procedure by which God, through His chosen messenger, reaches down into the human family and brings persons face to face with Himself."¹

H.M.S. Richards: "Preaching is not primarily arguing about something,

commenting about something, philosophizing about something, or weaving speech into a beautiful tapestry of sound. Preaching is bearing witness, telling something that we know to people who want to know or who ought to know, or both."²

Carlyle B. Haynes: "Preaching is the divinely ordained power of personal testimony; it is Christ speaking through a called, chosen, cleansed, and commissioned messenger."³

Henry Ward Beecher: Preaching is "the art of moving men from a lower to a higher life."⁴

Phillips Brooks: "Preaching is the spoken communication of truth by man to men." "Preaching is the bringing of truth through personality."⁵

A. W. Blackwood: "Preaching is divine truth voiced by a chosen personality to meet human need."⁶

Richard Carl Hoefler: "Preaching is the proclamation of the gospel—telling the good news of what God has done, is doing, and will do. It is not talking about God, but it is the means, in each generation, by which God speaks to the people. Preaching is not a person revealing God and truths about Him. It is God disclosing Himself and speaking of Himself through a chosen witness."⁷

David Buttrick: "Our preaching, commissioned by the Resurrection, is a continuation of the preaching of Jesus Christ." Preaching is "a spiritual discipline in which we offer our best words to Christ."⁸

In summary, persuasive preaching is the proclamation of what God has accomplished through Christ at Calvary. It is God's message, not ours. It announces what God did in Jesus Christ, what God does through Jesus Christ, and what God will do in those who love Jesus Christ. It aims for a decision for discipleship!

Didache, kerygma, God's story

The New Testament presents two types of preaching: didactic (pastoral preaching) and kerygmatic (missionary preaching). C. H. Dodd advanced a stiff division between the two by

arguing that the former was directed to the saved, while the latter was directed to the unbelieving.⁹ However, Robert Worley has shown that such a distinction is both artificial and unnecessary.¹⁰ Didactic and kerygmatic preaching actually complement each other. *Kerygma* is the fundamental proclamation of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and as such, it forms the foundation upon which *didache* rests. *Didache* is the explanation in detail of applied truth that is the outgrowth of *kerygma*. As preachers, we need not emphasize one at the expense of the other. Donald Demaray shares a helpful insight about these two aspects of preaching ministry:

"Preaching that attends to both—didactic-kerygmatic preaching—brings healing and wholeness. Preaching overweighed on the kerygmatic

the persuasive power of the preacher to the fear of God (2 Cor. 5:11). Obviously Paul saw the purpose of preaching not simply as presenting or illuminating doctrine, but as convicting the hearer. He preached for a decision! John Broadus says that "it is not enough to convince men of truth, nor enough to make them see how it applies to themselves, and how it might be practicable for them to act it out—but we must 'persuade men.'"¹² Richard R. Caemmerer adds that persuasive preaching must make "a difference in people."¹³

Today some homileticians are proposing a shift in homiletic paradigms. They suggest that we redefine preaching as the sharing of "my story." In this homiletic expression, the core of the message lies in the sharing of the preacher's personal history, experience, religious search, etc., in the

belief that from this personal sharing, the hearer will discover the message of the gospel and come to faith. Though I respect the intent of this effort, such a direction is problematic. The problem is that this subjectivist approach robs preaching of its authority base. Preaching becomes a personal discourse that ultimately holds no more authority than the preacher's personal experience. Such is not New Testament preaching. New Testament preaching is telling God's story—not my story! And in the Bible, God's story has not only meaning and form but his-

New Testament preaching is telling God's story—not my story!

toricity as well. When we preach, therefore, we rise to relive God's story as acted out in history. Isn't this what the apostle Paul did when he proclaimed that God "appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16)?

side, emphasizing conversion and minimizing nurture, retards mental and spiritual maturity in Christian discipleship. Preaching overweighed on the didactic side may focus on the theological or on the social implications of the gospel. In either extreme, the result is deformed Christians lacking Christ-centered faith and joy. The New Testament preacher keeps the two in balance."¹¹

Consider the function of preaching in the New Testament. The primary motive of New Testament preaching was to win men and women to Christ and to inspire a closer relationship with Him. Paul connected

only meaning and form but historicity as well. When we preach, therefore, we rise to relive God's story as acted out in history. Isn't this what the apostle Paul did when he proclaimed that God "appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16)?

In this reliving of God's story, a significant point needs to be kept in mind. The seminary graduate must not import an academic style into the local church pulpit and expect to be effective. The primary work of the academician and that of the homiletician are driven by different

purposes. The academician refines, traces, and distills truth from Scripture. After the message of the text is clarified (notwithstanding however laborious that process may have been), the work of the academician is completed. Read any scholarly theological journal and this fact is self-evident. However, the pastor-preacher-homiletician's work has just begun when the message of the text is discovered. The pastor moves to the necessary second step of adorning, expanding, and contemporizing truth for the nurture of modern disciples. This critical second step is necessary because your listeners bear not an ancient but a modern consciousness. They live in today's world, not a world of 2,000 years ago! Preaching is not public exegesis. The message of the text must be transported through a valley centuries wide and applied for today. Approaching the pulpit with any other mind-set does a disservice to preaching. Failure to understand this essential nature of preaching affects the function of the sermon. This leads me to the second question.

What is a sermon?

What is a sermon? Is it "an act of worship"?¹⁴ Is it "an often long-winded lecture on duty or behavior"?¹⁵ Is it an annoying harangue? Is it something a pastor "delivers" at the "11:00 hour"? Is it client-centered counsel?

Many definitions have been offered. William Thompson gave a simple definition of *sermon* as "a word from the Lord for you."¹⁶ A more complex definition says that the sermon "is the Word of God [Jesus Christ], who has been revealed in the pages of the Written Word [the Bible], coming to the hearing of people by the proclamation of the Word [preaching]."¹⁷

I would put it this way: Just as the scalpel is the tool of the surgeon, just as the hammer is the tool of the carpenter, just as the brush is the tool of the artist, so is the sermon the tool of the Holy Spirit in the hands of the preacher. The sermon is not the ob-

ject of preaching, but its servant. When we preach, we are attempting, not to produce volumes worthy of adulation, but to share a message that touches listeners' hearts and minds.

One of my favorite definitions of *sermon* is given by David Brown: the sermon is "a call to action on some point of the biblical message."¹⁸ Brown asserts further: "There are two considerations in this definition. The first is that a sermon finds its foundation in the biblical story—either a very select passage or verse, or some broad thematic type of study. The framework for any sermon is to bring its hearer some further understanding of God through Jesus Christ, of hu-

The sermon is "a call to action on some point of the biblical message."

man nature, or of any other theme which is firmly rooted in the biblical message.

"Second, a sermon is a call to action. A sermon goes beyond the mere teaching ministry of the pulpit (though any sermon should include teaching). The goal of preaching is not the mere impartation of factual data (however valuable that material may be). A sermon is not solely concerned with broadening one's knowledge. *It is aimed at bringing people to a point of decision.* It is to move them to do something about the teaching material they have received. Preaching must in some way compel people to take action on what they have heard."¹⁹

There we have it. The sermon is a call to action. Clearly this is the way

the sermon functioned in the New Testament. Consider Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2), Paul's sermon at Mars Hill (Acts 17), or Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matt. 5-7). These inspired preachers in Scripture did not seek to entertain, but sought to call people to committed action before God.

Further, not only is the sermon a call to action, but it is also the *tool of preaching*. It is the *servant of preaching*. No Spirit-filled sermon is an end in itself. The sermon is an expression of God's truth through humans as authoritative witnesses. Prior to His ascension, Jesus left the word of proclamation to the church (Matt. 28:19, 20). This proclamation was to be the saving announcement of the good news of God's favor toward the world. It was to be carried out through the ministries of word (*kerygma*), service (*diakonia*), and fellowship (*koinonia*). The sermon, therefore, is but one aspect of the ministry of the church. It is not the only ministry of the church, but it functions within the ministry of the total church. As does every other gift, the Spirit-filled sermon never center stages the preacher, but calls attention to the Lord of the preacher!

Increasing the persuasive impact

Finally, we come to the last question of this article: How can we make preaching a persuasive force in the local church? I suggest three ways.

First, persuasive power in preaching increases when you can communicate commitment. Persuasive power is directly tied to the depth of one's commitment to Christ. From this center all persuasive power emanates. The connection with Christ is the secret of power. Some lack power in their preaching because they lack this commitment! Paul Sangster wrote of his father, W. E. Sangster, that he struggled with the temptation to let other things steal God's place. The senior Sangster wrote in his journal, "I wanted degrees more than knowledge, and praise rather than equip-

ment for service.”²⁰

The key to persuasive power is commitment, and the path to commitment is surrender. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that “when Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”²¹ Anointing in the Spirit is the key to power.

Second, persuasive power in preaching increases when you can communicate character. Your persuasive power is closely tied to what the Greeks called *ethos*. Your effectiveness in the pulpit is directly tied to it. The idea of *ethos* comes from classical Greek rhetorical theory and refers to the *perceived* credibility the speaker enjoys with his listeners.²² Donald Sunukjian points out that “a preacher’s *ethos* is the opinion that his listeners have of him as a person. If their opinion of him is high, he will have high *ethos*, or great credibility, with them. This means they will be inclined to believe whatever he says. On the other hand, if their opinion of him is low, his *ethos*, or credibility, will be poor, and they will ‘turn him off’ even before he speaks.”²³

What builds a preacher’s credibility? We have already mentioned commitment. To this we can add three more elements. 1. Faithfulness to one’s word. Keeping one’s word is an important building block of credibility. To promise only what is in one’s power to deliver and then to deliver it is critical to enhancing personal credibility.

2. Family life as a demonstration of one’s capacity to love others. So much of the New Testament is devoted to family life issues because the management of the family is the training ground for credible leadership in the work of the church. Preachers who treat their spouse in *any* way contrary to the gospel jeopardize their credibility.

3. Fairness in dealing with people. The preacher cannot afford to belong to any faction in the local church. To show preferential treatment to special interest groups in the local church while showing severity toward others is the quickest way to lose leadership credibility.

Third, persuasive power in preaching increases when you can communi-

cate competence. Sunukjian shows that speakers may communicate competency “by means of an attractive appearance, a fluent delivery, an organized message, and an evident awareness of human events.”²⁴

Personal appearance is an indicator of professional seriousness. However, preachers often allow other things to project a negative image. How does your church bulletin look? How does your newsletter look? Your people won’t be excited about evangelism if your advertisement is an embarrassment.

Delivery and organization also express your competency. Is your delivery confident? Passionate? Earnest? Are you clear and organized in your presentation? Being easy to follow is critical in influencing one’s parishioners for God. Are your sermons clearly and carefully designed? Or are they amoebic, free-form, gelatinous? Good, sturdy structure is a tremendous aid to creating a listener-friendly message.

Relevance is also critical to the effectiveness of preachers. Preachers

bridge two worlds every time they effectively present the Word of God. One’s persuasiveness is greatly increased when the listener firmly believes that the preacher is connected to today’s world, but also is in touch with the world beyond. Relevance can be enhanced by utilizing the local vocabulary of the people you preach to from week to week. Frankly, there is nothing inherently sacred about thee or thou. Wise is the preacher who utilizes the words, images, and parlance of his/her listeners. What words or phrases are familiar to the people that you minister to? The technical jargon of theology may be appropriate to the classroom but should not be the standard fare of the pulpit.

By communicating commitment, character, and competency in your pulpit ministry, you will increase the persuasive impact of your preaching. ■

* All Scripture passages in this article are from the New International Version.

¹ Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book
(Continued on page 30)

Analyzing your sermon for its persuasive potential: an exercise

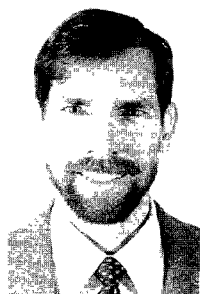
Review the manuscript of your next scheduled sermon and ask the following questions.

1. Is this sermon based on the clear message of the text? Does this sermon develop one of the implications of the text? Is the text cited here a mere pretext for what I really want to say?
2. What is the objective of this sermon? What is the form for the accomplishment of that objective—narrative, didactic, kerygmatic, polemic, apologetic?
3. Is this sermon “a call to action”? What do I invite the listener to do? Is that invitation based on the theme developed in this sermon?
4. How many examples of the local vocabulary can I identify in this sermon?
5. What is the strong first sentence of this sermon? What is the strong final sentence of this sermon?
6. Does this sermon reveal an awareness of life in today’s world?
7. Are the images concrete or nebulous? Are the verbs active or passive? Are the sentence combinations varied—long for narrating, short for impact?

The Puritan legacy of Sabbatarianism

Edward Allen

The day may be different, but the standards remain.



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What are the roots of modern Sabbath observance? Why do differences exist across cultures? Have Sabbath standards changed over time?

The manner of Sabbath observance familiar to American Seventh-day Adventists had its origins in the late 1500s during England's Puritan reform movement. Pious pastors, seeking to guide parishioners from a merely formal religion into a heart experience, proclaimed the importance of personal godliness. The Ten Commandments became a touchstone for reforming morality. Out of this blossomed a movement to raise respect for Sunday as the Sabbath.

Bownde for 24 hours

Nicholas Bownde (also spelled Bound), pastor of a Suffolk County church, preached a series of sermons on the Sabbath. His congregation urged him to publish them. The resulting book, *The Doctrine of the Sabbath*, became quite popular. Many readers resolved for the first time to set aside a span of 24 hours for seeking God.

Sabbath prohibitions were not a major concern of Bownde. Rather, he sought to fill the day with spiritual exercises that would enhance sanctification. The prohibitions were merely a way of making time for spiritual activities. Bownde attacked public recreation and amusements on Sun-

day because they detracted from church services (often three of them). In their place he urged men and women to get up early on the Sunday Sabbath for prayer to prepare themselves for the proclamation of God's Word. Bownde taught that Sunday hours outside of services should be spent in personal and small group Bible study, ministry to the poor, and personal witnessing.

Bownde's book gained influence throughout England. The laws of the land already included strictures against many Sunday activities, and the Puritan crusade inspired local sheriffs to enforce the restraints more strictly. Opposition arose in high places. King James in 1617 published a four-page pamphlet, called "The Book of Sports," that decreed that recreation indeed was permissible on Sunday afternoons. When King Charles reissued "The Book of Sports" in 1637, the archbishop ordered that it be read out loud in all the churches. Many Puritan pastors refused to read the book and lost their parishes.

Burton's burden

Not only did Pastor Henry Burton refuse to read "The Book of Sports" but he preached two sermons against it. From his perspective, the monarch's decree contradicted the fourth commandment. The archbishop had the sheriff knock Burton's door down, arrest him, and ransack his study. He

was tried without benefit of counsel and condemned. After that the authorities pilloried him, cut off his ears, and sentenced him to life imprisonment in the dungeon of Lincoln Castle. On his way there, 100,000 people rallied in his support.

When Puritan forces gained the upper hand in England, Burton was released, and Parliament went about reforming the church.¹ The Sunday Sabbath won a special place in the Westminster Confession, which declares that God appointed one day in seven to be kept holy unto Him. The words of the Confession are clear and unequivocal:

"This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy."²

That concept of Sabbath observance in the Westminster Confession became the ideal of English-speaking Protestants and later, Seventh-day Adventists.

American Sabbathkeeping

The Puritans, who raised the standards of Sabbath observance in England, imported even more rigorous practices to America. All the colonies eventually passed Sunday rest legislation, even the religiously tolerant Rhode Island.

The case of Pennsylvania is unique. The Quakers, who founded the colony, theologically repudiated Sabbath observance. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers), considered all days equally holy. Nonetheless, the Quakers themselves were typically Sabbatarian in practice. They felt it necessary to set aside time for rest and worship and chose the "First day" for this activity.

Laws in Massachusetts and Connecticut were especially inflexible.

In Massachusetts it was illegal to walk the streets or fields except to attend church services. There was also a penalty for children playing on the Sabbath. In both colonies, attendance was mandated for Congregational worship. A quiescent Sabbath was enforced with a fair degree of rigor. Nathaniel Mather confessed that as a young child he had committed a great sin by whistling on the Sabbath day. Others were fined for trimming hair, carrying wood, and journeying unnecessarily.

The stringency of the New England Sabbath was so great that apocryphal stories sprouted about its severity. One relates how Thomas Kemble was put in the stocks for kissing his wife on the Lord's day after returning from a three-year voy-

a dry and boring day. He says, "It is a day of rejoicing; God made it to be a joyful day to the church. . . . The Christian Sabbath is one of the most precious enjoyments of the visible church." Yet keeping the Sabbath is something God "will surely require . . . of you, if you do not strictly and conscientiously observe it. And if you thus observe it, you may have this comfort . . . that in so doing you are in the way of God's acceptance and reward." It is clear that for Edwards the Sabbath is something God demands from His people. Edwards promises his hearers, in terms reminiscent of the Jewish rabbis, that if they observe the Sabbath more strictly and perform their Sabbath duties more solemnly, they will have a greater manifestation among them of respect for God. This is almost a prescription for a detailed set of restrictions, the kind that would even forbid whistling.⁴

Wesley and the Sabbath

John Wesley had a similarly strict view of the Sabbath. In a three-page piece entitled "A Word to a Sabbathbreaker," Wesley emphasizes that the Sabbath is not any person's day but God's day. God lays claim to it, not for His own sake but for the sake of the person who serves Him. Wesley says to his reader, "For thy own sake He demands a part of thy time to be restored to Him that gave thee all." If people do not observe it, they are their own enemy, for it is a day of special grace. "The King of heaven now sits upon His mercy seat, in a more gracious manner than on other days, to bestow blessings on those who observe it. . . . Awake, arise, let God give thee His blessing! Receive a token of His love!" The blessings include peace, joy, love, and "rest from doubt and fear and sorrow of heart." Attention to worldly business and idle diversions disappoint the design of God's love. Attendance at services in the house of God is expected both in the morning and afternoon.

Wesley encourages his reader to "spend as much as you can of the rest

It was illegal to walk the streets or fields except to attend church services.

age. Probably this story was invented by an Anglican polemicist who falsely reported that such actions were against the law. Another story ridicules Connecticut authorities for arresting John Lewis and Sarah Chapman for sitting together under an apple tree on the Lord's day. What is left untold is the general concern of Sarah's parents and the authorities about the impropriety of the relationship.³

One example of later Puritan teaching on the Sabbath comes from Jonathan Edwards. In his sermon "The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath," Edwards does not rest content to cover only the announced subject of his sermon. He concludes it with a lengthy exhortation of proper Sabbath observance. He does not see it as

of the day, either in repeating what you have heard, or in reading the Scripture, or in private prayer, or talking of the things of God." If one spends what remains of the day in the fields, in a public house, or in a little diversion, talents are wasted and bare faced contempt is shown toward God and His authority. Wesley reminds his reader of God's judgments, even upon earth, against those who profane the Sabbath, and he contends that they are but drops of the storm of God's fiery indignation that will in the end consume His adversaries. Wesley concludes with the morbid thought that "your day of life and of grace is far spent. The night of death is at hand. Make haste to use the time you have; improve the last hours of your day."⁵

The impression left by this short piece is far different from the impression left by the early Puritans. They had discovered in Sabbath observance a personal blessing they were eager to share. Wesley reveals a consciousness of that blessing, but for him the Sabbath is not something to be discovered but something to be enforced. It is something God demands, and the proper human response is to buckle under to divine authority lest one come under judgment and lose everlasting life.

Legalism?

Was Wesley a legalist? His experience with God was deep and profound, yet his conception of the Sabbath, like that of Jonathan Edwards, tended to be legalistic. Both saw the Sabbath more as a demand than a means to freedom. In this they appear to be reflecting the cultural mind-set of their era.

One of Jonathan Edwards's resolutions reportedly was "never to utter anything that is sportive or matter of laughter, on a Lord's day." This attitude prompted some to sneer that others read the commandment to say "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it gloomy." One author felt that the Puritans had turned the glad day of rest into a gloomy day of "inanition,"

teaching that it was a sin to take a walk or pick a flower.

Modern Sabbatarianism

In the early nineteenth century, along with the Second Great Awakening in America, came a revival of interest in Sabbath observance. A concern arose about laxity in "proper" Sabbath observance, brought on by two factors. First, massive immigration primarily from Europe. New immigrants observed the "continental Sunday," which was considerably more lax than the established view of the Sunday Sabbath. Traditional American Christians feared that lax observance would become the norm. Second, there were incredible ad-

spirit of the heart and life which consecrates all things to God and humanity." A Mr. Browne justified his infidelity to Sunday observance as faith in an inward religion.⁶

The religious individualism evident here eventually brought about, not merely the repeal of most Sunday laws, but a neglect of the institution itself over the next 100 years.

Joys and sorrows of the Sabbath

On the practical level of observance, many church people remained very strict about what was forbidden on the day. Laura Ingalls Wilder tells how her great-grandfather was brought home from church and expected to read the catechism Sunday afternoon.

Once when he and his brothers sneaked out and rode their new sled, they were discovered when the sledful of boys hit a wandering pig. Their father did not punish them for breaking the Sabbath until the Sabbath was over, but when their punishment came, it was certainly severe.⁷

Protestant literature of the time reveals significant disagreement over whether children should be allowed to play on the Sabbath. Some felt that special Sabbath toys were acceptable, but others forbade playing altogether. While there were strongly worded attacks

against a puritanical Sabbath Sunday, a general respect for the puritan manner of observance remained.

Many poems extolled the glories and blessings of the Sabbath. For example, the hymns "Safely Through Another Week" and "O Day of Rest and Gladness" were written about Sunday to celebrate the joys of Sabbathkeeping. Another fascinating poem about the Sabbath experience comes with its authorship simply listed as Bickersteth:

What true heart
Loves not the Sabbath? that dear
pledge of home;
That trysting place of God and
man; that link
Betwixt a near eternity and time;
That almost lonely rivulet, which
flows

Traditional American Christians feared that lax observance would become the norm.

vances in industry, technology, and transportation. Both in England and in America major debate focused on the propriety of public transportation on Sunday. Voices advocated the Sunday closure of even steel mills. Conservative church leaders strenuously opposed the opening of museums on the Sabbath. Many abhorred the publishing of newspapers on Sunday.

As early as 1848, there was strong opposition to a legislated Sunday. In that year an Anti-Sabbath Convention was held in Boston. Those present felt they had been taught to keep Sunday not for itself but as a duty, not from love but from fear. They rejected the day as stern, dark, and disagreeable. William Lloyd Garrison said, "It is not outward observances which are required, but that

From Eden through the world's
wide wastes of sand
Uncheck'd, and though not
unalloy'd with earth,
Its healing waters all impregn'd
with life,
The life of their first blessing; to
pure lips
The memory of a bygone Paradise,
The earnest of a Paradise to come.
Who know the best love best, thou
pearl of days,
And guard thee with most jealous
care from morn
Till dewy evening, when the cease-
less play
Hour after hour of thy sweet influ-
ences
Has tuned the hearts of pilgrims to
the songs and music of their
heavenly fatherland.⁸

Out of this milieu, the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath observance developed. It is clear from the literature that early Adventists transferred from Sunday to Saturday the standards common to the conservative Protestant world. Adventists also inherited the struggle to maintain the holiness of the day without falling into legalism. At first legalism was the chief danger. Today it is possible that laxness could rob us of the peace and rest that come from spending time in the "trysting place of God and man." ■

¹ Kenneth Parker, *The English Sabbath* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1988), pp. 178-219; Winton U. Solberg, *Redeem the Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 77-80, 157-159.

² The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXI:vii, viii.

³ Solberg, pp. 193, 195, 229-231, 251, 252, 263, 265-268, 169, 170, 276, 269.

⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards* (New York: Leavitt and Allen, 1852), Vol. IV, pp. 632, 633.

⁵ *The Works of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), Vol. XI, pp. 164-166.

⁶ *Proceedings of the Anti-Sabbath Convention*, pp. 47, 29, 33.

⁷ Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House in the Big Woods* (New York: Harper and Row, 1932; rpr. 1971), pp. 83-96.

⁸ Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885), p. 412.

"Soft touch" church discipline

Robert Bretsch

**True discipline
involves discipling.**

While I was growing up I thought I understood the fine art of discipline. It always meant punishment and sometimes involved pain. During my tumultuous eighth-grade year, however, I saw a new dimension in discipline: discipling.

I was busy defying the teacher and creating a climate less conducive for learning than the two-room mission school wanted when the school board chairman took time for a talk with me. He sat in front of me and in 15 minutes changed my concept of myself, my life, and my relationships. What he shared has stayed with me since. He trusted me. He liked me. He told me he valued me and my opinions. He said he was going to protect me by not telling my parents. I responded with a resolve never to do anything that would lessen this man's opinion of me. From the perspective of time and maturity, this experience convinced me that discipline is primarily discipling.

I had experienced grace. Grace reveals God's attitude toward us. Not only does He love us—He likes us. He enjoys spending time with us. The first picture of God we see in Scripture is a Creator smiling at His creation. Each day we hear Him say, "This is good. This is good!" Then after creating humanity He exclaims, "This is very good!" Above all, He enjoyed His human craftsmanship.



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Taking pleasure in His people

When Jesus began His ministry, God showed the pleasure He feels toward humankind. As our representative Jesus received His Father's affirmation: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17).^{*} Up to that point Jesus had not preached a sermon, healed a leper, or given sight to the blind. He had not "done" anything in His ministry, yet His Father was pleased with Him because of who He was. Value was given not on the basis of performance but personhood.

God also is well pleased with us, as we relate to Him in Christ. He is pleased not because of our performance, but because He enjoys our uniqueness. Jesus spent time with sinners, even though their lifestyle grieved Him, because the craving to be close to His people was greater than the pain caused by their sinfulness.

Brennan Manning describes such grace this way: "Here is revelation bright as the evening star: Jesus comes for sinners, for those as outcast as tax collectors and for those caught up in squalid choices and failed dreams. He comes for corporate executives, street people, superstars, farmers, hookers, addicts, Internal Revenue Service agents, AIDS victims, and even used-car salespersons. Jesus not only talks with these people but dines with them—fully aware that His table fellowship with sinners will raise the eyebrows of religious bureaucrats who hold up the robes and insignia of their authority to justify their condemnation of the truth and their rejection of the gospel of grace."¹ More succinctly, Ellen White declares, "He came . . . to give to men the cup of blessing, by His benediction to hallow the relations of human life."²

God's perspective must be ours

To fulfill its sacred calling of living out Christ's example, the church must accept God's perspective toward humanity. First, God loves and values us for who we are and not for what we do. Second, He enjoys us and wants to

spend time with us. Third, Christ's church is filled with sinners, people who have made wrong choices and are looking for better answers. The church is not a showcase for the rich, famous, and beautiful. It is filled with members who are broken and bleeding by the give-and-take of life.

Richard John Neuhaus describes the true church of God as being the visible church, not an ethereal, invis-

The craving to be close to His people was greater than the pain caused by their sinfulness.

ible church. "It is this church—in all its sweaty, smelly concreteness. . . . The true church is the church truly seen."³ Such a church should act toward its community with the same attitude God has. Then people will find church to be a safe haven from the hardships of life. Church will be a place where sinners are loved, valued, and appreciated for their specialness. The church's witness is not that its people are perfect, but that it loves perfectly "as [does] your heavenly Father" (Matt. 5:48).

When the lawyer asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" he wanted permission to draw barriers. If Jesus defined a neighbor for him, he would then know who wasn't his neighbor. Jesus refused to do this. Instead, He told the story of the good Samaritan. In doing so, Jesus took the calling of love beyond theory into the arena of action. A neighbor is anyone needing our love and assistance. The church needs to recognize this.

True discipline, then, is discipling the church into a loving environment where compassion, fellowship, and

worship create such a radical difference from the world that nonChristians will want to belong to such a group. The goal of the church is to make us "one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (John 17:21). Any attempt to see discipline as punishment or exclusion is to deny the intent of the gospel. God wants us to "increase and abound in love for one another" (1 Thess. 3:12). This love is intended not just for the nice people in church, but also is directed toward the bad sinners of the flock. Sinners have an uncanny ability to do what sinners do best—namely, sin. The church is commanded to love and to "do so more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1, RSV).

Acceptance of sinners does not mean license to sin. Grace is risky business; some will take advantage of its freedom. Some will enjoy grace for a season and then cast it off, while others allow it to become the single most important part of their lives. Many want to take the risk out of grace and protect it from abuse. They make rules to show others what not to do in order to "walk in the light." Legalism is mostly humanity's attempt to safeguard the wonderful gift of God's salvation. But as hazardous as freedom can be, the Christian is called to love those who may at times even misuse their liberty.

Acceptance itself is not what breeds license. "To the contrary, your very acceptance of a brother will make him strong. It will never confuse him in questions of right and wrong if your teaching and personal lifestyle establish clear standards. For example, a person who uses profanity is not going to imagine you approve of such language just because you accept him personally. As he hears your reverent speech and learns God's Word and, most important, comes to know God, he will understand clearly that profanity is wrong. But if you communicate personal rejection to such a person, he will never be around long enough to be touched by God through you."⁴

Our world is a "soft touch" world. We are under a constant barrage of messages that tell us we can have it our way. One street corner five blocks from where I used to live features four different styles of hamburgers from four different food chains. I had my choice among them. And the hamburgers I chose were at the College Deli, made from soybeans. Nobody forced me to eat them. My own free will was operating.

The soft-touch approach that honors personal freedom can be applied in every major area of life. The old "industrial" model, in which the decisions were made from higher up and handed down, is no longer a desirable pattern.

The hazard of relativism

Secular relativism is the term used to describe an individual's choosing a course of action without external considerations. Possibly the greatest issue facing the Christian community of grace is relativism creeping into the church. With no absolutes, there is no consensus of truth or behavior. If nothing really matters, there is no need for personal commitment. Dennis Prager, a Jewish historian and broadcaster, warns of this trend:

"This generation believes everything is relative—everything. Good and evil don't exist. It is all relative. There is no truth. Everything is determined by one's individual agenda."⁵

When I was a youth in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the church offered clear instruction on what it meant to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Good members did not wear jewelry of any type. We were mostly vegetarians. Adventist women did not wear polish. We ate no pork, and never went to movie theaters except to attend evangelistic meetings, afraid that angels would abandon us at the front doors of such establishments. Theologically, we had the truth, and everyone else lived in falsehood.

Some in the church today challenge these assumptions. In addition, theological threats have emerged that

were unimaginable in simpler times. Theology at times seems to be another "have it your way" eclecticism. This process actually has been healthy. The church has had an opportunity to explore the meaning of grace more completely and has rid itself to some extent of cultural trappings. This new outlook, however, comes with a built-in hazard: a lack of clearly defined parameters. We must remind ourselves that the gift of the cross is never separated from the claim of the cross.

In my early years, the church seemed to talk exclusively of the claim—namely, sanctification. For the past 20 years many members have talked more about the gift than its claim. And now with the emergence of relativism, even defining the claim of the cross can prove to be a troubling exercise. Each member defines the claim differently. There is widespread variance among congregations as to the sanctification of the saved—a type of congregational relativism. By practice churches have allowed each pastor to define what it means to walk with the Lord. Thus, instruction varies. Emphasis differs. And how discipline is understood and administered also varies.

The church needs to be that one safe place in our lives where we can fail yet still be loved and taught the fuller meaning of Christ's claim on our lives.

How can we cope with this crisis? Through the Scriptures. God's Word cuts through cultural tendencies and shifting standards. The goal of biblical hermeneutics is to find the eternal principles and apply them to the cultural context in existence. Standards change frequently, but principles

never do. Applications of truth vary from time to time and from place to place, but the principles upon which they are based never do.

New Testament discipline

In our seeking to apply biblical principles to the matter of church discipline, it helps to know that the New Testament uses two words to describe the process. *Paideuo* means educating or instructing children, with emphasis on teaching and learning. The other word, *gumnazo*, has the connotation of training and exercising. The primary meaning is to shape someone into something he or she was not when training began. By nature these words exude positive reinforcement toward a goal of education and training, with no suggestion of punishment or banishment from fellowship. The gospel of grace compels the church to provide a climate where teaching and learning are combined with training and exercise. The church needs to be that one safe place in our lives where we can fail yet still be loved and taught the fuller meaning of Christ's claim on our lives.

The religious leaders of Christ's day did not provide a safe haven for sinners. The leaders were condemnatory and judgmental, as when they dragged up the woman caught in adultery. Jesus did not excuse or deny her sin. No, He upheld the principle of sexual purity, while instituting a different order of behavior toward sinners. Instead of condemning sinners, He loved, accepted, and forgave them. To the woman He said, "Did no one condemn you? . . . Neither do I condemn you. . . . From now on sin no more" (John 8:10, 11).

In His story of the two brothers, Jesus portrayed God's acceptance of returning sinners by describing the father placing the best robe around his son (see Luke 15:22). This may have been shocking enough to His audience. But when the father continued with placing the ring on the son's finger, the audience no doubt gasped. That ring signified access to his father's assets. The son

who had just squandered all his inheritance now had a passbook to his father's bank account. All that his father owned was at his disposal. For many, this was a much too radical picture of God.

Even today few of us would allow our wayward children access to much of what we possess until they have proved themselves trustworthy. But we see from Jesus' parable that the positive power of grace is what stimulates repentance. When sinners see the depths of God's love and acceptance, their resistance fades away and a desire to please Him pervades their soul. "When the truth takes hold of your heart, it will work a reformation in the life."⁶ Unfortunately, much of the discipline done in the name of Christ is a denial of grace rather than a dispensing of its eternal principles.

The father of Christ's story proceeded to throw a party for his returned son. A party connotes value of and joy toward the object of attention. When your children each had their first birthday party, the attention of the family was centered on the one celebrating. They knew they were loved and appreciated. Is it possible that if the church threw more parties for its wayward ones, we would see 100 in the church where today we see one? Living from the core of grace is to live with an appreciation of each person's potential and this happens once we are confronted with a true picture of God's love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Once a person sees this God, the words "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11, KJV) ring with urgency to surrender one's life to Christ and grow in Him.

Grace in small groups

Small groups may be the best way to express value and appreciation. To foster an atmosphere of joy and love coupled with acceptance and desire to please God may be the most compatible way to live out the true meaning of discipline. Small groups provide ways to learn and be taught the will of the Lord. Studying, praying, and sharing together develop spiritual disci-

plines that guide and protect Christians as they travel together toward the kingdom. Strength is gained by sharing victories as well as struggles. Accountability to one another provides impetus to deeper commitment and surrender.

When we neglect the principles of God's grace, is it possible that any attempt to purify the church merely limits its spiritual growth? Church discipline based on grace is much different than the traditional model of discovering sin, deciding who is guilty, and then censuring or disfellowshipping. Modeling grace is harder work and requires patience and forbearance with one another. Trusting the inner workings of the Holy Spirit is risky business. It may take time to reveal the intent of the heart.

Paul addresses church discipline

them. He called them to be His disciples. He even allowed a despised woman to touch His feet. However, Jesus spoke directly against those whose hearts were entrenched against the power of His love. He said, "These will receive greater condemnation" (Luke 20:47).

The church must protect itself from those individuals who remain unsubmitive to God's loving way. Members who disrupt the body of Christ should face discipline before they destroy the spirit of caring and unity. If they persist in attacking the body of Christ, they should be removed from fellowship and be treated as Matthew 18 would suggest: as Gentiles and tax gatherers. In other words, the church is to treat them as people for whom Christ died, seeking to win them again.

The Gospels contain many warnings against those who oppress God's people. Too often the church aims its discipline at those whose sins are flagrant but neglects to call to account those who destroy a caring environment. We cannot allow wolves to remain with the sheep if we want to provide a safe haven for repenting sinners. The church must care enough to offer soft-touch discipline. ■

Unfortunately, much of the discipline done in the name of Christ is a denial of grace rather than a dispensing of its eternal principles.

in 1 Corinthians 5: "But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one" (verse 11). The man found in the incestuous relationship is to be cast out of the fellowship—not because he is a greater sinner than the rest, but because he persists in his sinning. This can be the only explanation because Jesus surrounded Himself with just the same type of people Paul tells us to avoid. He did not remove Himself because they were too sinful. He drew near to those who were damaged by sin. He ate with

* Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations in this article are from the *New American Standard Bible*.

¹ Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 1990), pp. 19, 20.

² Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 144.

³ Richard John Neuhaus, *Freedom for Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 9.

⁴ Jerry Cook with Stanley Baldwin, *Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1969), p. 19.

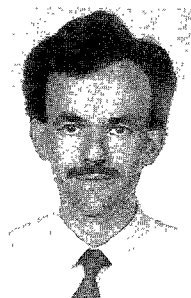
⁵ Dennis Prager, interview in *Door*, November/December 1990, p. 11.

⁶ White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 2, p. 678.

Unlikely hero! Unlikely army!

James Astleford

Gideon addressed a recent gathering of ministers—James Astleford was there to take notes.



James Astleford, until recently a church pastor, is the director of Adventist Development and Relief Agency in Sri Lanka.

Unlikely heroes, unlikely armies, and unlikely victories? That depends on your perspective! I must begin by thanking the conference president for inviting me to speak to you. Frankly, I shrink from the task of challenging you ministers in these momentous times (Judges 6:15), but I have learned that the Lord can use the most unlikely candidates if they are committed. Although you all are acquainted with my story, it might be well to go over it again highlighting some of the applications for you today.

My story begins with my people's apostasy. God had stopped shielding us from security threats around us, and consequently the Midianites invaded us. Now, that is quite an irony, considering that the Midianites were our relatives (see Gen. 25:1-6). Probably many of your members encounter similar problems; parents, children, or other relations can bring about difficulties and temptations. Family members are not always supportive.

Fortunately, our nation came to its collective senses and cried out to the Lord. He graciously heard us, despite our having grievously and callously neglected Him (Judges 6:6). How ready God is to forgive, and how inclined He is to hear prayer. Scripture certainly bears testimony to this (see Isa. 55:7; Neh. 9:17; Jer. 33:8). Never forget that even if you have wandered from God, your relationship to Him and your ministry are not doomed. Our God is a saving God.

God sent a prophet to us (Judges 6:8). He came not to drive us away but to discipline us, to bring us back to Him and to life. Unfortunately people usually pay no attention to loving words and kindnesses, and then it appears that God has to speak in harsher tones. I understand that many of you have members who are uncomfortable with the prophet whom God graciously provided in your recent history. I want to encourage you to keep your prophet's messages before the people; we ignore them at our peril.

Well, my part in the story begins with me somewhat ignobly threshing wheat in a winepress. Obviously, I wasn't bravely tackling the Midianites; I was skulking in the winepress trying to do a job without anyone finding me. You see, although history has been kind to me, painting me a brave hero, I wasn't really anything of the sort. My clan was the weakest in Manasseh, and I was the youngest in my father's house. If any of you are familiar with Eastern customs, you know that position, caste, and family are all important; if you're not the heir and chief, you don't count. Frankly, I didn't have a lot of faith either. You know how I challenged God to provide at least four miracles before I was ready to do His bidding (Judges 6:21, 36-40; 7:9-14).

God uses the weak

Do you ever feel like you are the least? Maybe you don't have a large

bank balance, powerful car, or high profile position. Possibly you come from a humble background and are conscious of your deficiencies in public speaking, singing, or whatever. You have a gnawing realization that you don't possess much faith. Even at this meeting you see some of the ministerial "stars" and you fear that you will never preach, administer, counsel, or organize like these persons. So maybe you're wondering if you should be in the ministry at all. What can God do with you?

Don't worry. God is probably looking for someone exactly like you. After all, He found me and used me! "God does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use."¹

When the angel called me to my ministry (later I came to recognize that it was the Lord Himself) He brought me both a challenge and an assurance: "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man" (Judges 6:16).^{*} This promise is a theme to my story. To us problems may seem many; but to God they are just one. All I could see was thousands of enemy soldiers, but God saw them as one. I suspect that in your ministry you find hordes of problems too. Cranky members, obstructive boards, shrinking financial support, unsympathetic conference officials, more requests for help than you have time or energy for . . . I am sure you could recite a long list. But to God those multiplied problems are as one. Are you ready to let the Lord be with you to deal with them?

Before I could rush out and send those Midianites packing, God had some homework for me to do. I had to tear down the family altar to Baal. That wasn't easy. You don't mess around with Dad, especially when you're the youngest in the family. But every idol must be removed from the heart if we would claim God's blessing. It's a principle that God constantly sets before us (see Matt. 6:33). Do you rush in to battle the enemy without first having removed the false idols or

roadblocks in your life?

This is a meeting of pastors, and your members aren't listening, so let me ask the unaskable questions. Is there in your life something that prevents God from blessing your ministry? Perhaps it's dislike or hatred of a member, fellow pastor, or conference leader. Perhaps it's "quantity time" spent before the modern idol for many, the TV. Or do you linger too often in the bookstore "accidentally" looking at centerfolds in the glossy magazines? Whatever your idols are, tear them down!

You know, of course, that having taken the bull by the horns, so to speak, the Lord really blessed, and good old Dad came to my rescue when the townsfolk were ready to kill me for pulling down the altar. "Let Baal take care of himself!" Dad challenged. He didn't, and I got a new nickname: Jerubbaal, or let Baal plead!

Making a bold start

Having made a bold start, however, I couldn't bring myself to accept that God really wanted me to launch out in faith against impossible odds. Others may show faith (consider the centurion's faith in Luke 7:1-10), but I was scared. And so I set

and depend less and less upon confirming signs. May I say one word in my defense? I was cautious about placing myself at the head of the army without conviction that God had called me. Surely it is fitting to be cautious about advancing ourselves. Are you ministers similarly cautious about "promotions"? At the triennial, when the nominating committee puts your name forward for department director, or secretary, or president, will you agonize over whether this is God's call or not?

Finally convinced of my calling, I went out to look at the forces that had assembled to help me. I got one of the biggest shocks of my life. The Lord said I had too many! I had only 32,000, and the enemy had more than four times as many (Judges 8:10). Of course, I had forgotten the promise that they would all be "as one man." God wanted us to understand that victory did not come, would not come, from our physical strength and numbers. And those who were unwilling to face danger or whose worldly interests would draw their hearts from the work of God would add no strength to our armies.

How many today recognize this truth? Many of our church books are swollen with numbers, but these numbers of themselves add no strength to the church. It is commitment that counts, not membership (see Rev. 3:16).

So I released from the army all those who wanted to go home. To my horror, two thirds of the army left! How astonished I was to hear from God that I *still* had too many. So down we went to the river and just 300, thinking that we were about to make an attack, hastily splashed a little water to their mouths as they made ready to fight. The rest were more concerned about themselves, and the Lord told me I didn't need them. The men of His choice were those who would not permit their own desires to delay them in the discharge of their duty. In the end, there were only 300 that God could use.

As you look around you this morn-

He makes the best use of the instruments available and often honors the weak in faith.

out my fleece. Looking back on the incident, I marvel at God's patience. He makes the best use of the instruments available and often honors the weak in faith. However, I have no doubt that as faith develops, God expects people to take Him at His word

ing, does it not seem to you that our ranks are pretty thin? How will we ever evangelize this conference with so few ministers? Even if you factor in our church membership, as those of you who are theologically awake must do, our band is still precious few. Now, wouldn't you be shocked if the Lord walked in this morning and said that we had *too many*? Because if any of us this morning are fainthearted and overly concerned about our own selves, our standard of living, or whatever, we are too many. And the Lord might have to trim down our numbers until He has a band of committed pastors.

My 300, meanwhile, were divided into three groups and provided with trumpets, pitchers, and torches. How would you translate that today? What seems powerless in the eyes of the world? The cross, the proclamation of the gospel, the Holy Spirit?

Our army had a battle cry: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" That cry was more than just a yell to keep our spirits up. It broadcast the unbeatable combination of the Divine and the human. "It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honor of acting as coworkers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls."²

Letting God do His work

Cooperating with the Lord means allowing Him to do His work. We "stood in our place" around the camp. This is a lesson that Job, Moses, and Jehoshaphat came to understand (see Job 37:14; Ex. 14:13; 2 Chron. 20:17). All through my story I hope you have seen the emphasis on the Lord's victory. At least eight times in my narrative this emphasis is made (Judges 7:7, 9, 14, 18, 20, 22; 8:7, 22).

Are you led to wonder sometimes at the task and the tools that the Lord has given us? Frankly, some of my soldiers were inclined to feel a little foolish with trumpets, pitchers, and torches. I would like to share this with you: "The simple act of blowing a blast upon the trumpet . . . by Gideon's little band about the hosts of Midian

was made effectual, through the power of God, to overthrow the might of His enemies. The most complete system that men have ever devised, apart from the power and wisdom of God, will prove a failure, while the most unpromising methods will succeed

The most complete system that men have ever devised, apart from the power and wisdom of God, will prove a failure.

when divinely appointed and entered upon with humility and faith."³

Temptations of power

I come now to one of the most significant parts of my story—how I almost became King Gideon! After the victory over the Midianites, the people proposed that I become their king. I recognized that this was in violation of the theocratic principles on which our nation was established. "I will not rule over you," I declared, "nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you" (Judges 8:23). I would be telling less than the truth if I didn't admit that there was quite a temptation here. Maybe it was almost easier to defeat the Midianites than to turn down this alluring offer. But we can't ever forget that we are the people of the Lord, not of some power figure. [I was very heartened to hear that at the Indianapolis session of the General Conference the newly elected president announced that Jesus Christ, not he, was the president. We need more of that attitude.] Those of you involved in conference leadership, remember it is the Lord's organization—not yours. He may ask you, for a time, to perform certain tasks.

But learn to back away gracefully when your time is finished. Do not try to carve out political kingdoms for yourself in the body of Christ. Save yourself the heartache so tragically common at constituency meetings when people who live for the glory of their office suddenly find themselves not elected and consequently crushed. If "the Lord shall rule over you," then it doesn't matter who gets elected as long as you are enlisted in His service *wherever* He wants you.

I wish I could end my story here. But honesty compels me to admit that there is more. Although I refused the kingdom, I did allow myself to take a bonus from the booty. About 20 kilograms of gold was handed over to me. Instead of investing the money wisely for my people, I made an ephod out of it. I suppose I thought that since the dinner I offered the angel had become an offering, I now had the prerogatives of the Aaronic priesthood. But although I coveted the Lord's assurance before the attack on the Midianites, now I did not seek divine sanction for my actions. To my shame, I, who had helped to overthrow their idolatry, led the Israelites astray. Eventually I did obtain peace, but the evil seed I had sown bore bitter fruit in the next generation.

"Those who stand in the highest positions may lead astray. The wisest err; the strongest may falter and stumble. There is need that light from above should be constantly shed upon our pathway. Our only safety lies in trusting our way implicitly to Him who has said, 'Follow me.'"⁴ ■

* Bible texts in this article are from the New King James Version.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 553.

² ———, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 573. See also vol. 6, p. 40, and ———, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), p. 111.

³ ———, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 554.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 556.

When life goes up and down

**Kristen Johnson
Ingram**

**It's a dangerous
ride for Christian
professionals.**



Kristen Johnson Ingram, author of 10 books and more than 1,000 articles, writes from Springfield, Oregon. She has also served in the Episcopal Church as a retreat director and speaker.

I'd trade my exciting life for a few months of monotony," Jeff told his astonished congregation. Jeff is the popular senior pastor of a huge urban church who speaks at keynote church conventions and conducts seminars across the country. He's already written one book and has contracted for another.

"You folks see only the upside," he said. "You can't know about the letdowns, the emotional drops, the days when I feel dizzy from running around the country. Sometimes I consider moving to a little rural church and fishing in my spare time. I had four colds last year and a chronic sinus problem—and I think my lifestyle had something to do with that."

The ferris wheel syndrome

Pastors, writers, traveling lecturers, and conference speakers are often victims of *ferris wheel syndrome*—an up-down, round-and-round, turned-over lifestyle that can cause stress, lower the human body's immune defenses, and contribute to physical or emotional breakdowns. It can also lead its victims into sin.

"It isn't just jet lag," explains Lisa, a well-known Christian educator whose summer is crammed with speaking dates. "Pretty soon I lose touch with the realities of daily life, and between speaking dates I some-

times suffer from emotional let down."

The up-and-down effect of ferris wheel syndrome may start with too-frequent travel, unfamiliar food and water (doctors tell us that water even from the next state can contain temporarily toxic compounds), and disrupted rest patterns. But the effect is exacerbated by applause, adulation, and autograph-signing. When stars fall down, back to their own families, they may feel restless, empty, and even confused.

"I don't even have to travel," says Rod, another popular pastor. "On Sabbath I'm the hero of the congregation. People pump my hand and thank me for my sermon, and even crowd the church at evening services. But on my day off, my wife and kids treat me like an ordinary human being! Why, last time, just as I was reviewing the previous week's sermon and feeling particularly valuable to the kingdom of God, my wife asked me to mow the lawn!"

Upside-down values

Because the temptations of *pride* and *vanity* are especially severe for those in public view, value systems can become inverted, much like those enclosed cabs on some ferris wheels that spin upside down as they move around.

"That's me," says Lisa. "Round-

and-round, upside down. If I didn't need the income, I'd cancel all my speaking dates and just stay home. Whenever I have some time alone, I realize how wrong side up my values become on the road. I get demanding and fussy about hotel rooms and plane schedules, I buy clothes that cost too much and, worst of all, I begin to think only of myself and my work."

Lisa's upside-down mentality when she's out on the road is typical of those who minister in any way.

"I can see what's happening," Rod says. "But I can't find the way to change things. Who's going to get me out of this?" Echoing Paul in Romans 7, he adds, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

Breaking the syndrome

The answer for Rod, Lisa, and Jeff is the same one Paul received—living for Christ alone. Sometimes, though, it takes a while to get off the ferris wheel! Following are some suggestions for helping yourself to grow away from the syndrome and toward God.

Observe the Sabbath. Of course you do—or do you? Is your Sabbath day *only* a day of preaching, teaching, and counseling? The Sabbath was made for humanity—made as a blessing to us, for our refreshment. Even though this is the day you're in charge of a church or Christian education program, you need to relax, read spiritual material, rest, and enjoy creation on this day, just as much as laypeople do.

Take time out for a silent retreat. Go to a retreat house or rent a cabin in the hills. The only requirement is that you talk to *nobody*—unless to say thank you to someone like a food server—for at least three days. Read no journals, no books on ministry, no notes for future works. Don't plan your next sermon, and take nothing to read except Scripture.

Do something physical. Rod's wife is offering him a redeeming opportu-

nity when she asks him to mow the lawn. Speakers, writers, pastors, computer programmers, and others who do lots of "head work" need the refreshment of manual labor. When you *do* have time, dig a garden, paint a chair, sweep down the rain gutters, scrub a floor, or trim the hedge. You may be shocked at how much relief from mental fatigue or irritability you can get from physical work. Remember that Jesus and the disciples *walked* from town to town and frequently had to pick their own food!

Immerse yourself in Scripture wherever you are. On planes, in restaurants, even between workshops, find a quiet corner and thrust yourself into the Bible. Don't skip and skim—settle on one chapter or Psalm or

Satan seems to love to attack us both mentally and physically when we're worn out.

section and read it again and again until your heart responds. You may even want to memorize some of it so that your mind can *hear* the Word instead of just seeing it. You might especially benefit from the insights about ministry in 2 Corinthians 4.

Get extra rest. Satan seems to love to attack us both mentally and physically when we're worn out, so when traveling or teaching, get as much rest and sleep as possible. Leave the banquet early, limit the number of books you autograph, stretch out while you bone up for the next workshop, and catnap whenever you have an opportunity.

Seek direction. Select a good friend, fellow pastor, or person whose Christianity you respect and ask him

or her to help you climb off the ferris wheel through spiritual direction, counseling, and shared prayer. A really good friend can point out your successes and failures without insult or flattery, and will be instrumental in your recovery from ferris wheel syndrome.

Pray. Pray without ceasing, when you're eating alone in the airport or driving to church or falling asleep at night. Prayer isn't just something done during a "quiet time"; it's a way of life, and those who live that life are never as tired, as prideful, or as trapped in the up-and-down effects of fame or popularity. It doesn't matter what you pray about, or even if you use words. What matters is intimacy with Christ.

Praise. The strong biblical command to praise isn't because God has a colossal ego; praise is meant as a blessing to *us*. When we describe God's mighty works and personhood, when we glorify the Lord and express our appreciation of God's creation, salvation, and grace, we drink from the fountain of living waters. The Psalms tell us that "God inhabits the praises of his people," which means that we are closest to God as the source of our being when we praise.

Confess. We are commanded to confess our sins so that we can be freed from them.

Tell God that your ferris wheel syndrome is a symptom of *sin*—of pride, selfishness, greed, ambition, or too much joy in being applauded. Ask that you might continue your ministry in a new spirit of humility, recalling that those who are in Christ run without weariness—it's only those who try to do it on their own who fall down.

When you've accomplished all those suggestions, take one more look at your time. Is there something you need to give up? Have you taken on too much, claiming it as ministry, when you're really just flattered or desirous of more income? Are you *really* serving God's people—or is your service leading you to a dangerous ride on the up-and-down ferris wheel? ■



Expectations of an intern pastor

Brian W. Dudar

Expectations are interesting when compared with reality. What we expect and what we receive from each other are often quite different. Pastors are not immune to disappointed expectations in their personal relationships. In fact, they probably suffer them more than most others do, even when dealing with fellow pastors.

But why? Why should two pastors have differing expectations? They serve the same Lord and even work at the same church. What they expect should be the same, shouldn't it? Too often pastors working together make this assumption. Interns and supervisors often fall into such a trap and find themselves frustrated. And how could it be otherwise? Without understanding what to expect from each other, they have little hope of surviving and thriving together.

My expectations

In pondering my expectations of my supervising pastor, the first thing that comes to mind is the image of a mentor. I'm not suggesting that my supervisor be a wise *old* man. Just wise. Someone I can look to for guidance and strength as I grow and learn, someone I will miss when I move on—instead of being glad to get away from Ol' Iron Pants.

Honest self-disclosure is essential

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in my mentor. He needs to share lessons learned from personal experience, victories as well as defeats. I need to see his life beyond the pulpit, beyond the confines of the church and its functions.

I also need my mentor for a friend. Pastors working together need one another's encouragement and support. Because I have a hard time enjoying the fellowship of Mrs. Jones, who calls Monday mornings to complain that "Shall We Gather at the River?" was played much too fast, a good mentor fills that need on a personal, social level.

Competence is important as well—I need to know I can depend upon my mentor's work and his experience. Furthermore, he needs to inspire my growth, challenging my creativity to move beyond the status quo.

Dividing responsibilities

Within the working relationship of church ministry, I need my supervisor to entrust me with responsibility. Not so much that I am crushed by the weight of all the work, and not so little that I become bored; just enough to keep me striving for excellence.

How should church responsibilities be divided? This calls for dialogue so that duties match interests and talents while also providing challenges that stimulate growth. Supervisors should not assign "throwaway" responsibilities they do not like. For example, I am not a personal servant to clean up the messes, nor do I mow lawns or wash cars. These are not the

tasks that help me grow.

I need assignments that give me a variety of opportunities to make a positive contribution to church life. I need my supervisor to share the mission of the church with me. I need to learn how to manage and administer church business without being stuck with busywork in the church office. True ministry takes place when I am involved eye-to-eye with people I can help.

Frankness and freedom

After the duties of the church have been divided, I need regularly scheduled evaluations. These sessions should be frank, not painting a rosy picture that ignores difficult areas. But they should not be brutal, destroying my identity or discouraging me. An evaluation from a good mentor nudges and inspires me to correct my faults and sharpen my skills.

Most important, I need the freedom to become the person God has created and calls me to be. He has given me talents that are unique to me; my mentor must not attempt to duplicate himself/herself within me. I need freedom to disagree, to point out options, and to create different and innovative ideas. A supervisor must foster individuality and freedom, remembering that to a great degree my support for him or her is a reflection of how he or she supports me.

Finally, I need to see Jesus in my mentor's dealings with church members, conference leaders, and with me. ■



On being evaluated

James A. Cress

It happens every time we preach a sermon, every time we conduct a Bible study, even every time we tell a story to the cradle roll toddlers. We are being evaluated. All day long and everywhere we go, people who know we are spiritual leaders scrutinize everything we say and do. Their ongoing evaluation may be silent and informal, but it is real just the same. For example, right now you are evaluating whether this article is worth the time it will take to finish reading it.

Being the objects of incessant evaluation can intimidate us, especially if we are uncertain about the conclusions people are forming about our ministry. Unless we know they have confidence in us, we can't expect them to follow our leadership. How can pastors tell what verdict their members are reaching?

One indicator is church attendance. If members don't like their pastors, they vote with their feet and go elsewhere. Or they just stay home. Another measurable clue of how members evaluate pastors is financial commitment to the church.

Yet another feedback indicator is the involvement of members in church activities. This is less tangible than some other evaluation criteria, since members can use excuses to mask their motives for withdrawal. A deacon might ask the nominating committee for a hiatus, explaining: "I'm just burned out." The invisible reason may be dissatisfaction with the church program or the pastor. Burnout more often results from disappointed expectations than from physical exhaustion. The pastor is weighed in the balances of the member's mind and found wanting.

As if the continuous process of membership evaluation were not

enough, Seventh-day Adventist pastors are also scrutinized at the conference office. That's where the paycheck gets mailed from, and that's where decisions take place about ordination and transfers. Again, this evaluation often happens informally.

Formalizing evaluations

Evaluation is inevitable, but when it is only informal and spontaneous, our leadership is at risk: (1) we are uncertain of the criteria involved, and (2) the criteria may not be valid or equitable. For example, few would disagree that baptisms are a fair basis for evaluating pastors. The question is How many should there be? In Ohio where I once worked, a large city pastor could get three or four baptisms for every one that a rural pastor brought to Christ. Thus the raw number of baptisms alone is not a fair basis for evaluation, even though baptisms themselves are a valid criterion.

Tithe income also is a fair basis for evaluation, but only after local data are factored in. Demographics affect church finances. When I pastored in one of the five fastest-growing counties in the country, I would have had to drive people away from the church to avoid a tithe gain! But in places where people are moving out faster than they are moving in, a pastor may be doing well just to maintain the giving level.

I think you see the need for establishing a formal evaluation system that factors in demographics and other circumstances that affect performance. Informal evaluation by itself leaves the door open to misunderstanding that can develop into paranoia. Pastors who don't know what members are thinking (and vice versa) tend to misinterpret motives. They may see themselves

as victims, imagining that people around them are out to get them. The real problem is a lack of communication, specifically the lack of a recognized system of evaluation.

When the scrutiny that inevitably happens anyway becomes organized into a formal evaluation, those problems are solved. Both parties can agree upon the criteria and the method of evaluation. Everything is up front; nothing is left for the imagination to worry about. Evaluation becomes a constructive and encouraging force rather than something to dread.

One simple process in formalized evaluation is to ask three basic questions, requesting a minimum of five responses to each:

1. What should we preserve? (This starts the evaluation on a positive note, affirming the good things happening.)
2. What should we avoid? (This identifies problem areas and potential challenges that need remedial measures.)
3. What should we achieve? (This closes the evaluation on a positive note, pointing to the future and its dreams.)

The ultimate evaluator

Above any responsibility we have for fellow humans, we live our lives unto God. All our service is due Him (see Col. 3:23, 24), and He alone understands everything. "The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7, NKJV). Evaluation will happen whether we like it or not. Let's establish a proper system so that both we and the people we serve can sharpen our talents and grow in the Lord.

See Shop Talk for information on evaluation instruments.

A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions

Clark H. Pinnock, *Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1992, 217 pages, \$14.95, paper. Reviewed by Lyndon K. McDowell, retired pastor, Scottsdale, Arizona.*

A few years ago it would have been unthinkable to see a Buddhist temple, a Hindu shrine, or a Muslim mosque next to a Christian church in suburban America. But the world has shrunk, and immigration has brought in many kinds of non-Christian faiths. Clark Pinnock asks, "How do you communicate the gospel in a pluralistic setting?"

Pinnock uses five chapters to address his concern: "The Optimism of Salvation"; "Jesus, Savior of the World"; "Religions Now"; "Religions Tomorrow"; and "Hope for the Unevangelized." The first two chapters explain the author's stand on the universality of God's love and the supremacy of Jesus Christ.

The author begins with the Old Testa-

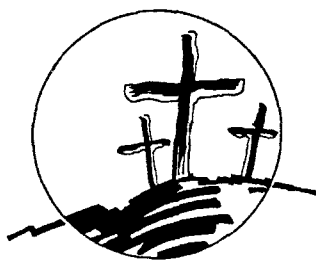
tament, drawing heavily on God's dealings with Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Melchizedek, Jethro, and others. "From the earliest chapters of the Bible," he writes, "we learn a fundamental (if neglected) truth, that salvation history is coextensive with world history and its goal is the healing of all nations. . . . God has it in His heart to bless the whole race and does not want only to rescue a few brands plucked from the burning." Israel's election, he believes, is not the election of Jews to be saved as the Augustinian paradigm would have it, but the election of a people for service and witness. The New Testament does not change this meaning. Pinnock argues that theology suffered a major disaster "when Augustine reinterpreted the biblical doctrine of election along the lines of special redemptive privilege rather than unique vocation on behalf of the world."

The author shows that a "high Christology" can permit an openness to other faiths and does not require a harsh, restrictive approach. In fact, the

author uses the term *pagan saint* to register "a protest against viewing people outside the church as normally or necessarily unbelieving or unclean."

This does not mean an unrestricted pluralism. The author indeed defends the incomparability of Jesus by pointing to the Old Testament again. The Old Testament God, he says, is not a generic deity serving as the center of world religions, as pluralists suggest. The distinctiveness of Christ has to be examined in the context of the whole biblical story from which comes a firm foundation for the divinity of Jesus. "He stood in the very place of God on earth." The early church called upon people to decide about Jesus Christ. Pinnock briefly reviews some of the theological ideas that disagree with high Christology.

The author discusses what makes bad religion. True religion, he believes, can be judged by asking: Do its adherents fear God? Do they pursue right behavior? By using this criteria, we may find good in non-Christian reli-



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gions. Pinnock asks, "Would God accept people whose beliefs fall short of the truth?" The author's answer is yes. Even though the author gives several biblical examples to support his stand, he fails to make full use of Romans 2:14-16.

Pinnock remains optimistic about the success of the church's mission. Religions are not static, but dynamic interacting with culture. Since God has a plan to unite all in Christ, He "has designs on them." Pinnock admonishes us to "explore other people's opinions about God" and test their claims for any rational, moral, or religious power they may possess. The church cannot escape a confrontation with the world religions when God has a redemptive purpose in mind for all humans.

Dialogue, the method used by Paul, is still the best way of approaching other religions. Such a method includes caring about other people, listening respectfully, and stepping into their shoes before clarifying differences. Christians must also be self-critical about their own religion, and if done honestly others will respond in the same way.

Concerning the unevangelized, Pinnock says universalism feeds on the mistakes of orthodoxy, and if Christians hold on to the "fewness doctrine" and deny universal access to salvation, universalism will be seen as an improvement. The author also deals with a doctrinal error that promotes universalism. "Another error that promotes universalism," says the author, "is the traditional understanding of the nature of hell." Pinnock says that "the idea that hell means everlasting conscious punishment contributes much to belief in universal salvation." Pinnock argues that "it is very probable that the biblical doctrine of hell does not entail everlasting conscious punishment," but annihilation. He lists prominent evangelicals who have come to the same conclusion.

In his last chapter the author defines the purpose of the book—to stimulate thinking and challenge the influence of restrictive salvation among evangelicals. Many scholars, he believes, have remained silent on these

issues for fear of criticism. "I hope to draw out greater support for the broader outlook from a significant number of these leaders," concludes the author. Pastors will enjoy the absorbing insights of this well-known Bible scholar as they learn to appreciate and preach more on the wideness of God's mercy.

Pinnock's book includes a bibliography, a subject index, and a Scripture index.

The Word of the Cross: A Contem-

porary Theology of Evangelism
Lewis A. Drummond, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1992, 383 pages, \$19.99, hardcover. Reviewed by Derek Morris, professor of preaching and pastoral theology, Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.

First impressions can mislead. I opened *The Word of the Cross* expecting practical Christ-centered strategies for sharing the gospel today. Instead I encountered a systematic theological

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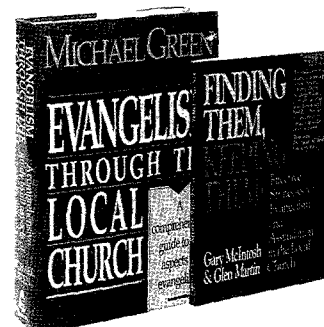
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treatise offering a philosophical and biblical basis for Christian evangelism.

The author, currently professor of evangelism at Beasom in Atlanta, understands theological tensions, having served both in conservative and more liberal Southern Baptist seminaries. His conservative stance on scriptural authority constructs an "informed, solid foundation from which to proclaim the evangelistic message."

As J. I. Packer points out in the

foreword, Drummond leaves nothing out. The author challenges basic presuppositions asking: What is the basis of your faith? Where is your source of authority? His writing is clear, his material comprehensive and well organized. I found particularly helpful the chapter on "God as Son: Provider and Means of Redemption."

Apart from a reference to the priesthood of all believers and an appendix on how to build an evangelistic church,

The Word of the Cross is theological and abstract. But for those wrestling with an issue such as the epistemological basis for Christianity, the authority of Scripture in church life, or the biblical mandate for evangelism, this book invites careful study.

Multiple Choices: A Guide for Women: Making Wise Decisions in a Complicated World

Ruth A. Tucker, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1992, 208 pages, \$15.99, hardcover. Reviewed by Annabelle Kendall, secretary, Shepherdess International, Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

This book is written to help women in decision-making. Ruth Tucker accomplishes the task by skilled description of what was and what might have been. She turns to Bible women and discusses their choices, depicting scenarios of what might have happened if they had made other decisions.

The author compares Jesus' mother, Mary, with Eve. We see a difference in decision-making. Mary trusted God and accepted being the mother of Jesus, while Eve grasped for immediate satisfaction and ate the forbidden fruit. What might have happened if either one had made the converse decision?

Because Mary made the right choice and Eve the wrong one does not make Mary good and Eve bad. It was the decisions they made that were good or bad; even good women make bad choices.

According to Tucker, when faced with a decision, we need to study the pros and cons and ask, Am I trying to please myself or God? Unfortunately we are continually tempted to take the road of least resistance.

Tucker reminds us that good choices and better choices can come at the same time. Take the example of Mary and Martha. Martha made a good choice to prepare food for Jesus, but Mary made a better choice to spend time with Him.

Tucker deals with 13 kinds of choices: impossible, enduring, spiritual, lifestyle, confident, better, liberating, foolish, manipulative, painful, compromising, confrontational, compassionate. She also provides heart-

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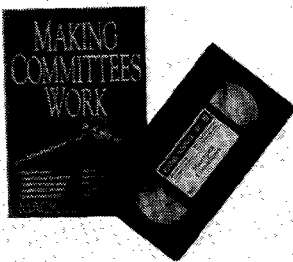
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probing questions to ask ourselves when faced with a decision.

The author considers more modern women also, the choices they made, and how their decisions affected others. For example, Mary Slessor devoted herself to Africa and helped save the lives of children. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, lived off of the wealth of her followers. Both became influential women, but one made a better choice than the other.

Tucker concludes her book by discussing the consequences of our choices, noting that our decisions may affect future generations.

I recommend *Multiple Choices*, not only to women but to men as well. Because of this book, I read the Bible in a new way. As I read the biblical stories, I think about the choices ancient people made (or might have made) and the consequences of their decisions. The author also reminds me how the choices of others influence our lives and in turn how our actions affect other people.

The Vineyard: Nurturing Your Life in the Vine

Wayne Jacobsen, *Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1992, 290 pages, \$9.25, paper. Reviewed by James Ayers, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Waltham, Massachusetts.*

Most books about theology assume that anyone interested in the subject will know the required vocabulary. As a result, they reward the knowledgeable with genuine insight, while the average Christian finds them opaque. By contrast pop religious books avoid the real issues of life and faith. They may be sympathetic or heartwarming but presume their readers want only the shallowest explanations of difficult texts. As a pastor I am embarrassed to recommend the fluffy devotional literature available; but theological books can be incomprehensible. We need an informal devotional book of adequate theological depth.

Wayne Jacobsen's book comes closer than most to the ideal. He offers 42 applications of verses about personal growth, interweaving insights from his experience as a child on a farm and later as a father and pastor.

Occasionally his analysis fails to address the complexity of a problem, but in most cases he presents enough clarity for the average reader to understand.

For example, consider *immanence* and *transcendence* as applied to Christ. These words are difficult, but how can we claim to understand Christ fully if we don't know what these words mean? Is Jesus bigger than the universe, exalted over it, powerful, and sovereign?

Or is He present within it, within our own world, desiring to be our friend. Either one of these notions may be understandable to people, but orthodox Christian theology insists that both are true. How can that be? What if they are not? People deserve serious answers to such inquiries. To his credit, Jacobsen attempts to answer these questions much better than one would expect in a popular work.

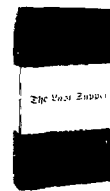
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Making Effective Referrals

Sharon E. Cheston, *Gardner Press, New York, 1991, 205 pages, \$29.95. Reviewed by Andreas Bochmann, Ph.D., pastor and pastoral counselor and trainer of counselors, Berlin, Germany.*

Even though Sharon Cheston primarily addresses mental health professionals, her work can be valuable to anyone involved in counseling (as most pastors are). Pastors need to start with the last chapter ("Referral Practices in Parish Ministries"). While most people first contact a pastor when in emotional pain, the referral rate from clergy to mental health professional remains unfortunately low. Cheston, who teaches and supervises pastoral counselors, explains why the relationship between the two professions is often strained or nonexistent. Though sympathetic to clergy hesitations, she questions their sense of self-sufficiency. Pastors need to keep Cheston's rationale in mind when reading the rest of the book.

Avoiding technical jargon and using case studies, Cheston deals with the questions of when, why, and how to refer clients. She addresses important ethical and legal considerations and suggests how to find good referral sources while avoiding pitfalls. Beyond the practicalities, the author deals with pertinent issues such as the counselor's state in referring, and discussing feelings of failure, guilt, anger, rejection, and grief.

Though easy to read, this book is profound and well researched. Its systematic structure, index, and extended bibliography make it usable for study and reference. Those involved in counseling ministries need to get acquainted with this book.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Kenneth S. Hemphill, *Broadman Press, Nashville, 1992, 191 pages, \$7.95, paper. Reviewed by Danny R. Chandler, member of the executive committee of the South Central Conference, and pastoral assistant, Columbus, Mississippi.*

After 13 years of trying to understand the difference between spiritual gifts and acquired skills, I have found some answers in *Mirror, Mirror on the*

Wall. The author does an excellent job of introducing his subject, and leading the reader to the mirror. Some chapters read more like a Bible commentary than the handbook I expected, yet this did not break the continuity of thought.

This book is about discovering yourself and your spiritual gift(s). In reading it you cannot miss the call to total Christian living—the one talent we all possess.

Recently Noted

Hymn and Scripture Selection Guide: A Cross-Reference Tool for Worship Leaders, *Donald A. Spencer, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1993, 315 pages, \$21.99, hardcover.*

If you have prepared your sermon, selected the Scripture reading, and given the sermon a title, the next thing you need is appropriate hymns. This volume helps the pastor or music director to find the right hymn for a particular Bible text. Spencer gives more than 14,000 Scripture references and more than 2,500 topical references for 432 well-known hymns and songs.

America's Original Sin, *published by Sojourners, Washington, D.C., 1992, 178 pages, \$10.00, paper.*

This volume is a selection of articles, from the journal *Sojourners*, on racial issues. It also includes study guides for churches interested in learning more about the sin of racism and how they can deal with it in their communities and lives. *Sojourners* is an ecumenical Christian community and magazine located in the inner city. They exist as an expression of the gospel, seeking spiritual renewal and social transformation. The book is recommended for those interested in religious liberty and in racial equality; the two are intertwined.

Preach with power

From page 11

House, 1977), p. 13.

² H.M.S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 19.

³ Carlyle B. Haynes, *The Divine Art of*

Preaching (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1939), p. 19.

⁴ Henry Ward Beecher, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: Fords, Howard, and Hulbert, 1900), p. 29.

⁵ Phillips Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1907), p. 5.

⁶ A.W. Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 3.

⁷ Richard Carl Hoefler, *Creative Preaching and Oral Writing* (Lima, Ohio: CSS Pub. Co., Inc., 1984), p. 5.

⁸ David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 449, 452.

⁹ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development: With an Appendix on Eschatology and History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 7. He writes that "the New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching."

¹⁰ In a thorough refutation of Dodd's theory, Robert Worley's *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), pp. 30-56, is quite helpful.

¹¹ Donald E. Demaray, *Introduction to Homiletics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 39.

¹² John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed., rev. by Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 170.

¹³ Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), p. 35.

¹⁴ Andrew Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 255.

¹⁵ *Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary* (New York: Berkley Books, 1984), p. 623.

¹⁶ William D. Thompson, *A Listener's Guide to Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁸ David Brown, *Dramatic Narrative in Preaching* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1981), p. 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

²⁰ Quoted in Paul Sangster, *Doctor Sangster* (London: Epworth, 1962), p. 90.

²¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, rev. ed. (London: S.C.M., 1959), p. 79.

²² Donald R. Sunukjian, "The Credibility of the Preacher," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 (July-September 1982): 256.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

Flee from Jerusalem

From page 4

"There will be a reinstatement of the Jewish worship according to the law of Moses with sacrifices and oblations." * Imagine that—modern animal sacrifices in Jerusalem! Wouldn't such an abomination compete with Calvary?

When Jesus died, the veil of the

Temple was torn apart, symbolizing the end of the Jewish Temple services and sacrifices. Restoring those animal sacrifices would deny what Christ has accomplished as the Lamb of God. *And anything that competes with the finished sacrifice of Christ is the work of Satan.* So how can Christians hope and pray that Jerusalem's temple will be rebuilt, anticipating that animal sacrifices will be offered on its altar? How could they associate such idolatry with the fulfillment of a covenant based upon Christ's blood alone?

Jerusalem temple theology poses troubling questions for anyone who values Calvary's saving sacrifice. Enlightened Bible scholars know that the Old Testament is not primarily Israel-centered but Messiah-centered. And the New Testament points away from any Jewish temple on earth to heaven's sanctuary, where Jesus intercedes for us: "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man" (Heb. 8:1-3, NKJV).

God's true temple is in heaven now. The Lord, not human beings, built it. Anything built down here would be a counterfeit temple. And that which glorifies the work of humanity in building a false temple must be false teaching. Thus whatever happens at the Temple mount of old Jerusalem cannot be a fulfillment of God's covenant.

What made the difference between true and false prophecy in Israel's history? True prophets said the nation must repent to benefit from the covenant, while false prophets taught that God would bless Jerusalem—no matter what. Also, today true prophecy points upward to heaven's temple in the New Jerusalem, while false prophecy points downward to an earthly temple in old Jerusalem. So let us fix our faith within the veil of the heavenly sanctuary, where Jesus intercedes as our high priest with the blood of the new covenant from Calvary. ■

* Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), p. 46.

Can pastors keep the Sabbath?

From page 5

conomic gain once a week, but every seven years they were to leave the land fallow and live off the natural fruits it might produce. And every 49 years (seven times seven) they were to trust God by leaving the land fallow for two years.

Thus, the Sabbath is not only a remembrance of Creation, but an acknowledgment that we belong to God. On the seventh day of each week we withdraw from the busy activities of earning a living to spend time in building our relationship with God and with each other. Works of necessity and mercy that are not part of our economic livelihood are appropriate on the Sabbath.

The Sabbath for pastors

How does this apply to the pastor? The Levites were the only tribe that did not receive an inheritance of land when the Israelites entered Canaan. They were devoted to the priesthood and the support of the Temple and the worship services. They worked for God, not for themselves or for others. This meant that they were dependent economically (through tithes and offerings) on the generosity of the other 11 tribes. While the other 11 tribes worked six days (for their living) and trusted God one day (for their living), the Levites worked seven days in the service of God and trusted Him all seven days (earning a living); every day was the same. In some ways they worked harder on the Sabbath than on the other days.

On that day they offered double the normal number of sacrifices (see Num. 28:9) and every Sabbath the shewbread was changed (see Lev. 24:8). This is probably what Jesus meant when He said that on the Sabbath the priests "profane the Sabbath." The priests prepared all week for leading the people in worship on the Sabbath. Are pastors just as unique a group today as the priests were of old? Are there any portions of the pastor's work that should

not be done on the Sabbath?

To what extent should the Sabbath be reserved for the pastor's family? If the spouse helps in ministry, who cares for the children? Should the pastor's children run free on the Sabbath while the parents go about the work of the Lord?

Ministry desires your answers to these questions and reactions to this editorial. We will pay \$25 for each response published. If what you send is of article length (1,000 words or more), we will pay at our regular rates on acceptance. Address your reply to: Sabbath Editorial, *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. ■

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, "Confessions of a Former Sabbath Breaker," *Christianity Today*, Sept. 2, 1988, p. 26.

² Gerhard F. Hasel and W.G.C. Murdoch, "The Sabbath in the Prophetic and Historical Literature of the Old Testament," Kenneth Strand, ed., in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), p. 48.

Letters

From page 2

church. I continually search for ways by which I could become a more effective pastor. *Ministry* has helped considerably along these lines.

It suddenly occurred to me that instead of just being grateful and acting upon what I have learned from *Ministry*, I ought to show my appreciation in more tangible ways and send a token gift to help support your ministry to nonsubscribers. Enclosed, please find my check for \$50.—Reverend Charles E. Cowell, Jr., Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

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Pastors' resource network

Hart Research Center is pleased to announce an exciting and innovative new service for pastors. It is called the Creative Resource Network Report, and it is FREE!

The CRN report is designed to network pastors together to share practical hands on renewal and outreach ideas actually working in the field.

Each contributing pastor has been interviewed in-depth and their best ideas are published in the CRN Report. The CRN Report is sent to each conference for duplication and distribution to their pastors FREE.

Every idea is "pastor tested," and comes with the name, address, and phone number of the pastor using it. If you want to follow up on an idea, you can contact the pastor

listed and obtain additional information.

If you haven't received your copy yet, be sure to contact your ministerial director and ask for your copy today.—Dan Houghton, Fallbrook, California.

Evaluation instruments

Your Ministerial Association has prepared sample evaluation instruments available through the Ministerial Supply Center (contact Seminars Unlimited, P.O. Box 66, Keene, Texas, 760590; U.S. toll-free 800/982-3344; fax 817/641-3640). With these forms you can evaluate yourself, have your church evaluate you, and lead your church in evaluating itself. There also are forms for conference administrators to evaluate pastors or their office staff, and for workers in turn to evaluate

their leaders.—Jim Cress, GC Ministerial Association.

Church scheduling

Scheduling has always been a struggle to keep up with, especially in a multichurch district. Formerly I had to consult several different lists to find out who was doing what, but now my wife and I have developed the super schedule. On a computer spreadsheet file (we use Quattro Pro, but other software would do) we list across the top all positions needing to be scheduled: Sabbath school superintendent, chorister, pianists, greeters, public-address personnel, deacons, elders, worship coordinators, and who has the sermon, children's story, Scripture, and prayer. Down the left side we list all the Sabbath dates—one quarter, a half year, or a whole year,

depending on how far ahead we want to go.

Our super schedule has many advantages. First, it saves time. I can plan the whole year in a day or two, leaving the rest of the year to do things other than scheduling (which I hate). Second, it lets members know that their pastor considers the church program important enough to get organized and plan ahead. Third, it allows people holding multiple positions to coordinate their commitments and schedule time off. Fourth, it reduces the number of lists people have on their refrigerators, which makes fulfilling their responsibilities less confusing. And they have only one place to look when they need to swap responsibilities. We change the color of the schedule each time we update it and also print the date of revision to avoid confusion.

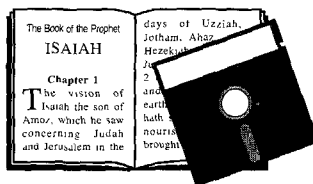
The super schedule has been a lifesaver for us; perhaps it might help you as well.—Ron and Barb Hessel, Payette, Idaho.

Special offer for *Ministry* readers

Are you enjoying the benefits of computer Bible study? My favorite among many excellent software packages is the BibleSoft Reference Library. It comes loaded with the KJV and NIV (and a free coupon for the old American Revised Version), *Nave's Topical Bible*, *Nelson's Bible Dictionary*, *Englishman's Concordance*, *Strong's Greek-Hebrew Dictionary*, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, and a basic word processing notepad with import/export capabilities. (Add-on versions available from the publisher are the NKJV, RSV, and TLB.) All you need to run this total interactive software system is a basic office PC. Advanced data compression minimizes the megabytes required of your hard drive.

The BibleSoft Reference Library in either DOS or Windows lists for US\$239.95. Occasionally it sells for \$199, but the Potomac Adventist Book Center is offering *Ministry* readers a special one-time price of US\$169.95, plus shipping (\$5.95 in North America, \$11.95 for international surface shipping). Specify DOS or Windows version.

This truly remarkable deal is only for *Ministry* readers, and the Potomac ABC must receive your order by April 30, 1995. Ask for Jay Cole to get your special price when you call (toll-free in the U.S.) 800/325-8492. Or fax 301/439-1758. Or write Jay Cole, c/o Potomac ABC, 8400 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912.—Martin Weber.



\$25 for your ideas

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