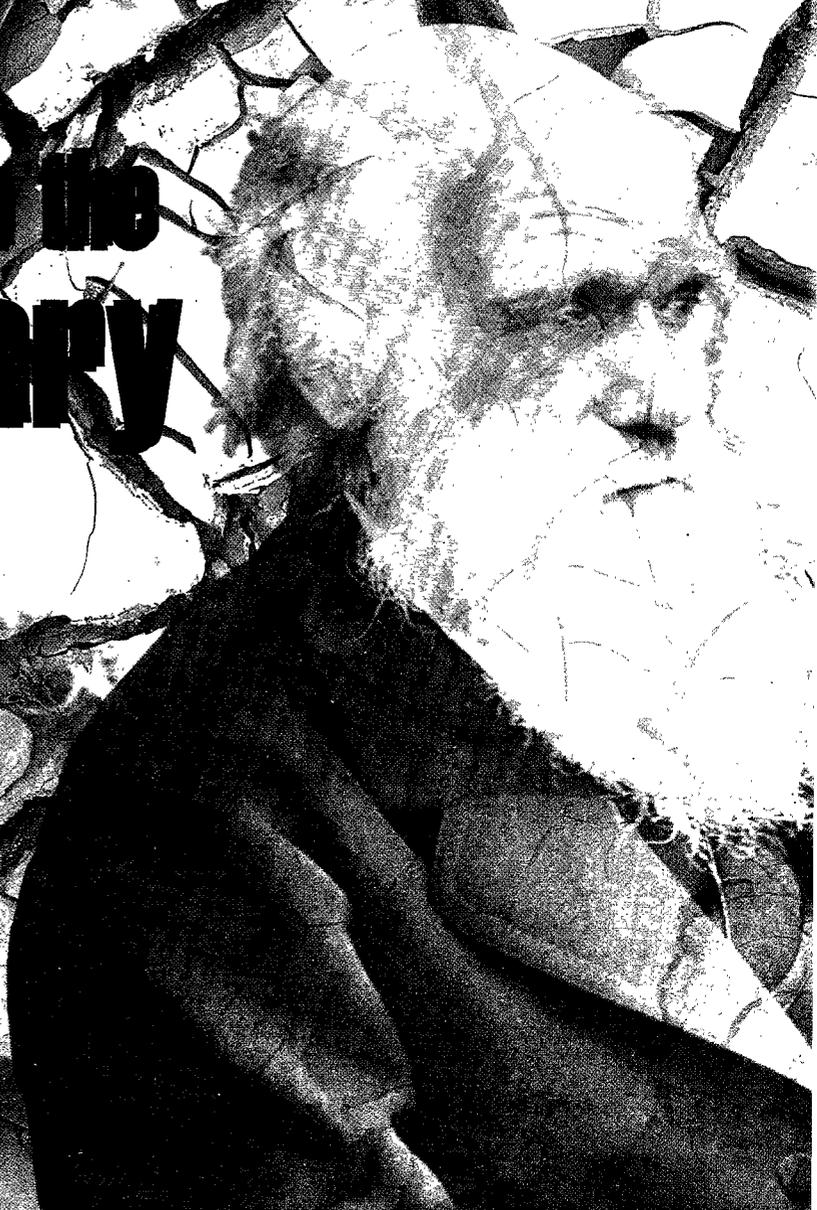


Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

September 1995

**Cracks in the
Evolutionary
Facade**



Compassion versus confrontation

Churches must face the possibility that there are child abusers in their midst. Despite Bobbie Drake's warning ("Compassion Versus Confrontation," March 1995), I do not think that child abuse is rampant in churches or among conservative Christians. Where there are real cases, there can be trauma to the child, the families, and the church. However, fear is very traumatic, especially when acted upon with no safeguards to the families involved.

A number of my colleagues and I have been trying to work through this problem. We recommend: (1) if an allegation of child abuse surfaces, get assistance immediately from properly trained workers aware of the pitfalls of questioning children; (2) protect both sides with confidentiality until the matter is sorted out; (3) avoid jumping to any conclusions or presumptions about the case; (4) allow advocates or counsels to participate for all involved parties to minimize violations of rights and liability claims; (5) work with both sides to get at the truth, not to presume the truth in any way; (6) understand state law and get wise counsel on how the allegations and what is found upon due investigation fit into the requirements of civil and church law; and (7) follow legal steps carefully.

While churches have been sued for failing to respond to allegations, civil actions against the church for believing and acting on false allegations are also a real possibility.—Rev. Jerry Eckert, Emmanuel United Methodist Church, Horicon, Wisconsin.

■ Given our historic mandate to "be an example to the world," I think it took great courage to acknowledge in print the amount of sexual abuse occurring in religious homes. I was also impressed by the awareness that a pastor or Christian counselor may not have the skills to deal most appropriately with either survivors or perpetrators of sexual abuse. I am impressed with the views

on treatment. And I am most impressed with the attitude that holds offenders responsible for their actions in a compassionate way.

In a context with high moral mandates, such as ours, it is a struggle to create an environment in which victims are believed and in which, simultaneously, offenders can ask for help. Thank you for your contribution to this conversation.—Catherine Taylor, LICSW, Greenfield, Massachusetts.

■ I agree with everything in Bobbie Drake's well-written article, except for this: "The more religious, conservative, and fundamental a denomination, the more likely that molestation will occur!"

Her statements tying the etiology of sexual deviance to conservative belief systems is an oversimplification, to say the least. Yes, sexual abuse does occur in conservative homes. Whether it occurs disproportionately, I question. Assertions like "Seventy-five to ninety percent of sexual molestation occurs in religious homes" stem from anecdotal research done by therapists who probably have an ax to grind.

The "research" that Drake quotes is meaningless on the grounds that the variables are undefined. What is meant by "religious homes"? What is "conservative"? If we are talking about *common denominators*, such as *authority*, *control*, and *anger*, then I agree. But "religion" is not regression, and "conservative" shouldn't be a code for *control!*

Research overwhelmingly testifies that sexual molestation is one of the deviant behaviors created by an obsession for control and power. People who have lacked control in their own lives, who have been controlled—sexually or otherwise in a twisted way—*sometimes* (most people prefer depression) try to gain mastery over that abuse by now being the abusers. A few months ago I finished a one-year clinical internship in counseling psychology, working with unfortunate people such as these.

I have come to a few personal ideas as to why conservative churches "might" have a large number of people with abuse issues.

People with these issues might be attracted to "conservative churches" for one of two reasons: (1) Persons with authority and power issues might be attracted to a conservative group because they see in that group an expression of their own angry values; they see a means to use rules and "high standards" to abuse others, and achieve the feelings of superiority their damaged egos crave. (2) A second group are those who hope that the strictness of the religion will help protect themselves from themselves.

There are healthy and unhealthy boundaries, of course. And both *look* "conservative"! We must learn the difference—the distinction between love and control, support and suppression! It is a difficult subject! Only God, through the Holy Spirit, can help us!—Darrel Lindensmith, Pastor, McClusky Seventh-day Adventist Church, Phoenix, Arizona.

■ *Bobbie Drake responds: The research quoted in my article is not anecdotal. The problem of child abuse cannot be investigated like one does a murder or a battered woman. Trying to "solve" issues by ourselves may bring more legal problems. The number one rule is to report all allegations to authorities. What we would like to believe may be far different from reality. To do what we must under the system in which we live is not to deny the power of God to change human hearts.*

Avoiding adultery

Marvin Wray's article, "Avoiding Adultery" (May 1995), omits one person's needs: that of the woman with whom the pastor committed adultery or sexual misconduct. Wray speaks about what to do if a pastor's situation has already advanced into a full-blown affair.

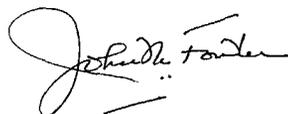
Continued on page 21

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.

For too long the "faithful" in the scientific community has considered Darwinian evolution as the only possible answer to the origin of life. But lately cracks have appeared and doubts have been freely shared. John Baldwin (p. 6) takes us on a tour of evolutionary claims and shows how Christians can affirm without apology their commitment to Genesis. Dr. Baldwin has made a difficult subject easy to read and essential to include in the pastoral armor.

David Newman, the editor, takes a different but poignant approach to the problem of creation and evolution. He argues that one cannot believe in the cross and evolution at the same time. The two are contradictory. "Since the Bible," says David in this excellent defense of the Christian commitment to Genesis and the cross, "ties the cross . . . to a special creation, I must let special revelation determine how I will understand natural revelation." You will not want to miss this powerful argument for our faith in creation and the cross.

David also writes in this issue his farewell editorial. His 11-year stewardship as editor has turned *Ministry* into a respected professional journal, eagerly read by pastors around the world. Readers will miss him. In addition to this change, there are other transitions in the Ministerial Association (p. 5). The new team will no doubt carry forward the primary mission and purpose of *Ministry*: to assist pastors everywhere in the fulfillment of their calling.



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

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Volume 68 Number 8



Farewell

J. David Newman

Action and reaction, ebb and flow, trial and error, change—this is the rhythm of living,” said Bruce Barton. The delegates to the 1995 General Conference session in Utrecht, Holland, as part of the rhythm of living, voted that a new person occupy the editor’s chair. So this is my last editorial.

It has been a privilege and honor to serve in this capacity and to work with a wonderful and dedicated editorial staff for the past 11 years. They have been challenging years, growing years, and learning years. During this time I have sought to be faithful to God, faithful to the church, and faithful to the standards of ethics and professional practice of the Associated Church Press, of which the following is a part: “Disciplined journalistic curiosity seeks out information and insight in the service of the reader and the common good, out of the knowledge that the individual readers—the ultimate ‘consumers’ of journalism—need truth to form their opinions and conduct their lives in consonance with God’s will, and that society as a whole, and each community within society, specifically the churches, need trustworthy sources of information and interpretation in order to function as community.”

Controversial topics

This has been a challenging task, because what one regards as vital and necessary another might regard as subversive and unwarranted. This is why this journal has covered controversial topics such as the ordination of women, abortion, competitive

sports in schools, the nature of Christ, church hospital executive salaries, theological pluralism, issues in justification, different forms of evangelism, divorce and remarriage, sexual ethics, church authority, inspiration and interpretation of Scripture, creation and evolution. We could extend the list.

We live in a complex age, and there are no easy answers to many of the dilemmas facing us. We need accurate information to help form our opinions and decide how best to approach the issues we face in ministry. While truth never changes, it needs to be dressed in its cultural context. Some applications of principle relevant for one generation may be irrelevant today. Many confuse principle and application. While principles are timeless and universal, their application may vary from time to time and culture to culture. Credibility is increased when pastors see church leaders grappling with these difficult issues and find leaders to be open and candid.

The cross supreme

Above all I have tried to lift up the cross of Christ. When all the shouting dies away, when all the issues are laid on the table, when all the doctrines have been discussed, when all the policies have been voted, the only thing that matters is Jesus and our relationship with Him. Paul, one of the most erudite men of his day, wrote, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).^{*} To the believers in Galatia he said, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the

world” (Gal. 6:14).

Ellen White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, wrote: “Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.’ Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Savior, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1113).

The cross stands as a mighty beacon radiating through time, declaring that God is love. When atrocities caused by marauding armies cause us to wonder, the cross declares that God cares. When violence strikes and a mother is taken from her children, the cross declares that God is still love. When factions make a country ungovernable and we wonder where God is, the cross rings out that God is love. When tragedy strikes in the bloom of youth and a person is crippled for life, the cross declares that God is still in charge. When we have no answers to the intractable problems of life, the cross is the only answer we can cling to.

So as I say farewell, never give up the faith, never despair, never sink into stubborn defiance. Look always to Jesus, for He only is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). Always remember that “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). ■

^{*}Bible texts are from the New International Version.



Transitions in Ministerial Association

James A. Cress

The axiom is accurate! One thing you can depend upon is that things will change. Currently our Ministerial Association is undergoing quite a change of personnel which couples the pain of saying farewell with the joy of welcoming new team members.

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of those who are departing and introduce you to our newest staff recently elected at the General Conference session in Utrecht.

Jim Zachary, associate secretary, has officially retired even though he will continue one project through next June. Jim and Jeanne's many years of team ministry have included pastoring, teaching, preaching, field training, resource development and departmental leadership at every level. In these activities Jim has always focused first priority on evangelism. Through his final project, developing evangelistic picture rolls, his influence will continue until Jesus returns.

My friendship with departing *Ministry* editor, David Newman, goes back to 1972 when he and I worked together one summer in Glasgow. We again worked together in the early 1980s in the Ohio Conference during a time of dynamic organizational experimentation and for the last three years here at the Ministerial Association. David has always challenged my thinking and encouraged all who associate with him toward excellence.

Associate editor, John Fowler, has been elected as associate director of the General Conference Department of Education. Although this move signals a career advancement which combines John's expertise in education, management, editing, and supervision with his worldview of the church, I will miss the day-to-day interaction with a quiet man whom I have come to love as a brother and respect as a theologian and spiritual leader.

Martin Weber has begun a new assignment just a few miles away as

senior pastor of the New Hope church, a growing congregation with a newly developed and dynamic traditional worship service as well as an exciting contemporary service for seekers and young adults. Because of close proximity, our staff will still enjoy Martin's involvement in special projects and as editor at large. You will hear more about New Hope.

Walter Pearson, who has been elected associate secretary for Church



Walter Pearson

Growth and Evangelism, came to the General Conference in 1993 from nearly a decade as senior pastor of the Berean church, Atlanta. His strong preaching and leadership skills, coupled with a real-world understanding of the dynamics of church growth, have earned Walter the respect of his colleagues among multid denominational and civic leaders. In addition to warm friendship, Walter and Sandra, who serves as a human resource specialist, offer clear insights into the challenges that pastoral families face.

Wilmore Eva, who has been elected associate secretary for *Ministry*,



Wilmore Eva

comes to this editorial task from five years as senior pastor of the Kettering, Ohio, church. Will and Claire, a teacher and educational curriculum developer, previously pastored clergy families in the Potomac Conference and Columbia Union where Will co-ventured the publishing of *Praxis*, a journal of pastoral excellence, and instituted an aggressive growth strategy by recruiting a strong training team and encouraging pastors everywhere to try evangelism for themselves.

James A. Cress is the General Conference Ministerial Association Secretary.

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Cracks in the evolutionary facade

John T. Baldwin

Biological facts interpreted from an empirical standpoint fatally undermine Darwinian theory.



John T. Baldwin, Ph.D., is an associate professor of theology, Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Is Darwin invulnerable? Is the evolutionary theory of origins so formidable as to make Christian faith in Genesis weak and obsolete? Not so. Fresh winds blowing across the academic world indicate that scholars are raising new questions on Darwinism. Samples:

Richard Dawkins in his book *The Blind Watchmaker* attempted to undercut the argument from perfection. He assumed that the first small incipient stages of a future eye on the way to completion might have had vision. Kenneth T. Gallagher shows how unconvincing this assumption is,¹ pointing out that incomplete stages of a future eye could not have vision, thereby fatally undermining Darwin's theory of origin. No Darwinian biologist has yet adequately addressed this critique.²

Can life and human consciousness be reducible to the laws of physics and chemistry? No, argues Michael Polanyi.³

John Cobb, Jr., asserts that subjectivity cannot arise from objectivity, thus indicating that from its own materialistic resources and without help from a divine power, Darwinian evolution cannot occur.⁴

After subjecting Darwinian theory to the principles of probability theory, mathematicians Sir Fred Holye and Chandra Wickramasinghe expressed surprise how so simple and so decisive a disproof of the Darwinian theory has escaped the attention of social scientists for so long. "There can, we think, be no explanation other than intellectual perversity."⁵

Contemporary German advocate of

polymeric chemistry Bruno Vollmert writes: "The stricter my argumentation takes place in the frame of the exact sciences by treating the biological evolution in the sense of Neodarwinism as a process by chance, that is to say (the terminology of polymeric chemistry) as a statistical copolycondensation, the less I am afraid to understand the world as the creation of an almighty creator as an alternative to Darwinism."⁶

Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould challenges the rate of Darwinian developmental theory: "The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips. . . of their branches; the rest is inference, . . . not the evidence of fossils In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the steady transformation of its ancestors; it appears all at once and 'fully formed.'"⁷ Gould, of course, remains an evolutionist, but faithfully reports his findings as problematic as they may be to traditional Darwinian developmental theory.

Pierre Grassé of the University of Paris speaks out on the implications of the lack of transitional forms: "From the almost total absence of fossil evidence relative to the origin of the phyla, it follows that any explanation of the mechanism in the creative evolution of the fundamental structural plans is heavily burdened with hypotheses. . . . We do not even have a basis to determine the extent to which these opinions are correct."⁸

The reference to hypotheses may

suggest some form of a mechanism of change, but what are the causes for the orientations and living functions? Grassé's confession is significant: Perhaps "in this area biology can go no farther: the rest are metaphysics."⁹ In this confession, do we possibly have a beautiful concordist between science and religion? On its own terms biology surveys all its causal options and concludes an inability to account fully for the biological forms studied, implying the need for some form of causality other than the Darwinian paradigm. Faith can supply the needed transempirical causality: the Divine Creator of heaven and earth.

The illustrations can be multiplied, but suffice to note that a fresh scholarly skepticism of evolutionary theory is growing in academic circles. Of even greater interest is the opening of a window of opportunity for a serious academic hearing of creation and science, provided the principles are presented in a scholarly, accountable fashion in light of the most recent research.

A window of opportunity

Just as Karl Barth's *Som-erbrief* is said to have fallen

"like a bomb on the playground of the theologians" in 1918,¹⁰ so in 1991 Plantinga's "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible"¹¹ and Johnson's *Darwin on Trial*¹² have fallen like two bombs on university departments of religion. Stunned scholars are scrambling to respond. Strikingly, both studies claim that biological facts interpreted from an empirical standpoint fatally undermine Darwinian theory.

Evoking the probative argument from perfection concerning the development of the eye *de novo*, Plantinga asks: How can one biologically "envisage a series of mutations which is such that each member of the series has adaptive value, is also a step on the way to the eye, and is such that the last member is an animal with such an

eye[?]" His point is that on "Darwinian assumptions, none of [these steps] could be the path in fact taken . . . so how could the eye have evolved in this way?"¹³ The answer is that the eye could not have developed in this fashion. Plantinga insists that these considerations suggest that the Christian needs a scientific account of life that is not restricted by "methodological naturalism."¹⁴ No wonder the academic community is reeling.

Johnson offers an evaluation of Darwin's theory from the perspective of a teaching trial lawyer at Berkeley. After critically, carefully, and thoroughly surveying the evidence for Darwinian naturalistic biological evolution, he concludes that viewed strictly from the point of view of logic and the princi-

Faith can supply the needed transempirical causality: the Divine Creator of heaven and earth.

ples of scientific research, the Darwinian theory of origins "is not supported by impartially evaluated empirical evidence."¹⁵ Thus Johnson asks, "Why not consider the possibility that life is what it so evidently seems to be, the product of creative intelligence?"¹⁶

Because of the cogently expressed skepticism of Darwinian theory by Plantinga and Johnson, evangelical scholars supporting theistic evolution, such as Van Till and Hasker, are understandably on the defensive. However, in the several exchanges that have been published among the latter three scholars, two significant developments¹⁷ need to be noted.

Scientific respect for creation

Perhaps for the first time in recent history, proponents of some form of

special creation are being treated with respect rather than with the usual opprobrium. This is an important new development. For example, Ernan McMullin, director of the Program in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Notre Dame, and a colleague but an outspoken critic of Plantinga, admits that it is worthwhile to consider Plantinga's argument because he [standing in the Calvinistic tradition] not only is a well-known philosopher of religion, but also presents a very "sophisticated sort of defense of special creation."¹⁸

Van Till salutes Johnson and Plantinga by saying that when compared to traditional scientific creationists, their cases are "more persuasively formulated,"¹⁹ rendering them worthy of

being addressed. In a lecture delivered in February 1993 Michael Ruse, Darwinian philosopher of science, surprised an audience of evolutionists when he complimented Johnson by saying that he correctly shows that "evolution akin to religion involves making certain *a priori* or metaphysical assumptions which at some level cannot be proven empirically."²⁰ These illustrations indicate that the

wall of defiance against serious consideration of creationism may be cracking in segments of academia. However, the most significant current development is that occasioned by the comments of William Hasker.

In his response to Johnson, Hasker,²¹ a severe critic of Johnson until now, welcomes his proposal for a new research agenda to include a call to "paleontologists to interpret their evidence without Darwinist prejudice."²² Hasker magnanimously allows that Johnson's research proposal "could produce a genuinely viable special creationism alternative."²³ Then Hasker articulates a window opening challenge: "I hope [Johnson] will find scientists who are willing and able to undertake the research he has in mind." There it is, an opportunity flung wide

open by the scholarly community itself to be informed by the latest science and religion research.

This means that a time of unequalled possibilities lies open before the Geoscience Research Institute and Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities with graduate programs in science to rise to the glory of God in making major contributions, some perhaps of epoch-making significance, concerning issues of origins and neo-catastrophism, indicating that true science and inspiration are harmonious after all.

In this volatile environment of contemporary biblical and theological reexamination of the role of inspiration and the natural sciences, responsible strict concordist scholars will surely discover additional new harmonies between Scripture and science about which to write, not only with breathless excitement but above all with deeply compelling academic power. This effort can continue to show that concordist is not an anachronistic effort, but is very relevant indeed in the post-Darwinian age.

In view of these possibilities, John Woodbridge is so right when he observes: "It is ironic that some evangelical scholars are discounting the Bible statements about nature and history at the very time evolutionary thought is in such flux."²⁴ Now is the time to tremble at the word of the God of creation and not to tremble at the words of Darwin, whose theory is in crisis.²⁵ Strict concordism's day in court may have come. At least the academic ball is in its court. What will the Adventist ministry speak in response? The general community, for the time being at least, is listening. ■

¹ Kenneth T. Gallagher, "Dawkins in Biomorph Land," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 32, No. 4 (December 1992): 501-513.

² For a discussion of the argument from perfection, its history and cogency, see John T. Baldwin, "God and the World: William Paley's Argument From Perfection Tradition—A Continuing Influence," *Harvard Theological Review* 85, No. 1 (1992): 109-120.

³ Michael Polanyi, "Life's Irreducible Structure," *Science* 160 (June 21, 1968): 1308-1312.

⁴ Cobb made this point in a lecture delivered at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in 1982.

⁵ Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Why Neo-Darwinism Does Not Work* (Cardiff, Wales: University College Cardiff Press, 1982), pp. 32, 33.

⁶ Bruno Vollmert, *Das Molekül und das Leben: vom makromolekularen Ursprung des Lebens und der Arten: Was Darwin nicht wissen konnte und Darwinisten nicht wissen wollen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965; reprint 1985), p. 26 in early edition; quoted in Kurt Hübner, "Genesis and Modern Theories of Evolution," *Man and World* 25 (1992): 406.

⁷ Stephen Jay Gould, "Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History* 86, No. 5 (May 1977): 14.

⁸ Pierre Grassé, *Evolution of Living Organisms* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹⁰ Attributed to Catholic theologian Karl Adam, quoted by John McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth* (New York: R. R. Smith, 1931), p. 43.

¹¹ Alvin Plantinga, "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible," *Christian Scholar's Review* 21, No. 1 (1991): 25.

¹² Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991).

¹³ Plantinga, p. 25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁵ Howard J. Van Till and Phillip E. Johnson, "God and Evolution: An Exchange," *First Things* 34 (June/July 1993): 39.

¹⁶ Johnson, p. 110.

¹⁷ See, for example, William Hasker, "Mr. Johnson for the Prosecution," *Christian Scholar's Review* 22, No. 2 (1992): 177-186; Phillip E. Johnson, "Response to Hasker," *Christian Scholar's Review* 22, No. 3 (1993): 297-304; in the same issue, Hasker's "Reply to Johnson," pp. 305-308; Howard J. Van Till and Phillip E. Johnson, "God and Evolution: An Exchange," *First Things* 34 (June/July 1993): 32-41; Howard J. Van Till, "Is Special Creationism a Heresy?" *Christian Scholar's Review* 22, No. 4 (1993): 380-395.

¹⁸ Erman McMullin, "Evolution and Special Creation," *Zygon* 28, No. 3 (September 1993): 300.

¹⁹ Van Till, p. 381.

²⁰ Michael Ruse's Boston lecture, "Nonliteralist Evolution," delivered before the AAAS, was one in a series of presentations by various speakers on the theme "The New Antievolutionism."

²¹ Hasker, "Reply to Johnson," pp. 305-308.

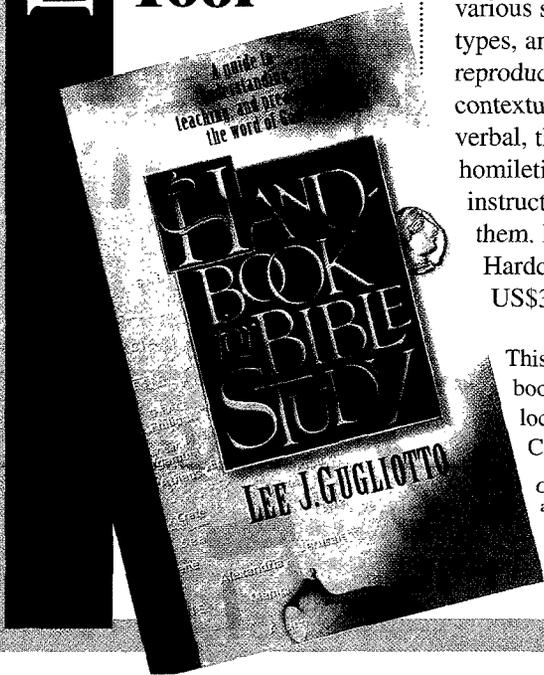
²² Johnson, "Response to Hasker," p. 303, n. 7.

²³ Hasker, "Reply to Johnson," p. 308.

²⁴ John D. Woodbridge, "Does the Bible Teach Science?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142 (July-September 1985): 205.

²⁵ Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, Md.: Adler and Adler, 1986).

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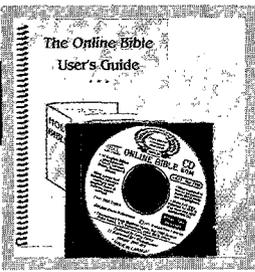
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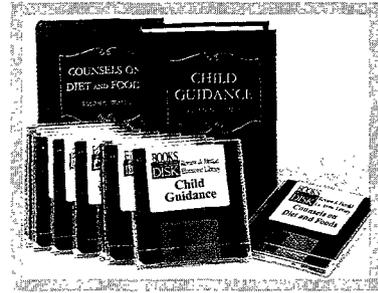
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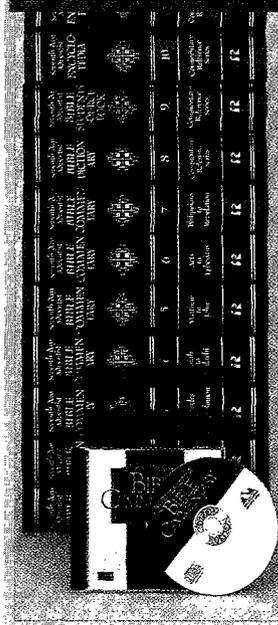


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Christian worship: is this one of God's terrible springtimes?

Don Hustad

Worship renewal must be based on Scripture, theology, and a sense of history and mission.



Don Hustad is senior professor of church music at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

One of God's terrible springtimes." The phrase appeared in one of Billy Graham's sermons, but the context is now completely forgotten. The idea that lingers is that there are periods of history in which circumstances of life and culture seem to be ominously dark and foreboding, like the bitter cold and slush of the last winter storm in our so-called temperate climate zones. But late winter may be no more than a "terrible springtime," because underneath the snow and ice live shoots are beginning to emerge from long-dormant seeds. A new greening of the landscape will soon take place!

In the worship life of our generation, the prevailing winds are those of change, in some instances radical change. Old forms, especially of music, are disappearing and new ones are taking their place. For some folk, who call the movement "contemporary and creative," full-blown, pleasant spring is already here, and the new music and worship expressions are its wonderful symbols. For others, what is happening is iconoclasm, liturgical housecleaning, a destructive pulling up of the life-giving roots of our evangelical tradition. For them this is the dead of the winter, and part of the bleakness is because of the conflict created between age groups or cultural preference groups in the church.

But could this be only a "terrible springtime" that precedes genuine renewal? For the first time in memory some evangelicals are beginning to understand the significance of full, corporate Christian worship, and are committed to practicing it within the life of the church.

Other terrible springtimes

The church has experienced terrible springtimes at other times in its history. During the sixteenth-century Reformation, in an effort to remove from worship the theological errors and the liturgical excesses of the Middle Ages, evangelical leaders threw out much that was both meaningful and orthodox. Zwingli, for instance, eliminated all music from his services, and Calvin tried to do the same. When the Genevan Reformer finally admitted music to worship, it was limited to metrical psalms, sung in unison by the congregation. All choir books had been burned and organs put to the ax! The English church was strongly influenced by Calvin, and especially during the rebellion that established a commonwealth under Cromwell, Puritans eradicated choral and instrumental music, all written liturgy, and all worship symbolism. Once the monarchy was restored, Anglican worship tended to move back toward better balance.

A more recent wave of iconoclasm has affected American church music negatively, for almost 200 years. In 1800 the camp meeting revival broke out in the rugged frontier culture of Kentucky. "Brush arbor" meetings were characterized by highly emotional verbal and physical expressions which resembled those of modern charismatic worship. Music also had much in common with that of today; it was simplistic, highly repetitive, often improvised in the fervor of a worship experience, and centering in a refrain that foreshadowed today's "praise chorus." Obsession with these new spirituals (so-called as a contraction of Paul's "spiritual songs") was so

complete that many churches completely lost interest in the theologically rich hymns of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, which were just beginning to be known in this country.

The camp meeting movement was part of the long succession of revival phenomena that culminated in the Second Awakening under Charles Finney, and the missions of Dwight L. Moody later in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the camp meeting spiritual became the model for later gospel songs that dominated much of evangelical life for 150 years. As expressions of Christian experience, gospel songs were the logical and helpful adjuncts of evangelistic preaching. However, because of their popularity, many churches never really learned or used the heritage of evangelical worship hymns that belongs to them, historically and theologically.

Models of worship based on evangelistic purpose

Not all of today's winds of liturgical change are blowing in the same direction, and not all the resultant worship and music concepts are really new. Certain churches have been committed to "revivalist worship" throughout much of their history. For them the "worship service" has been an opportunity to evangelize the unsaved or to recruit church members. Their service structure and style resembles that of the evangelistic crusade, with emphasis on the sermon and its call to an initial commitment to Christ, or to service in the local church. The "preliminaries" in those services consist of an exciting and captivating period of music and witness, directed by attractive and gifted musicians and service leaders.

Many of today's revivalist churches have decided to recast their traditional format according to television's example. Now the audience numbers several thousand people, with as many as 500 in the choir, a full orchestra, and several soloists who can sing the stirring arrangements written for today's media and concert stars. Today's megachurch has other attractions for the uncommitted as well—perhaps an Olympic-size swimming pool and

adjoining saunas and a full schedule of athletic and social, as well as more overtly spiritual activities for all age groups. Church growth experts have reminded pastors that today's Christians have grown up in a consumer culture in which folk are expecting to make choices. Evidently many churches are prepared to create a "Christian shopping center" where all those desires will be met, even though the costs may be considerable.

Other church leaders, perhaps those who lose members to the competition of the megachurch, may point out that "revivalist worship" is not a full, mature worship experience for all who attend. While, like a crusade, it may be successful evangelism, for the longtime believer it tends to be at best a reminder of their own initial step of faith and an opportunity for recommitment to Christ, and at worst an experience of preevangelism entertainment followed by an evangelistic sermon directed to somebody else.

Worship planners for the megachurch

are convinced that they must plan programs to attract the unchurched, with performances that are as professionally executed and emotionally stimulating as those of secular show business. If one asked why all the solos and choral works in church had to have goose bump-raising climaxes, the answer would be that they are competing with the sense-bombarding decibels of contemporary, popular music. Kenneth A. Myers, former editor of *Eternity* magazine and author of *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes*,¹ would not be impressed with the explanation. He contends that modern evangelicalism has identified itself rather completely with today's popular culture, a culture of diversion whose two symbols are rock music and television, a culture which is characterized by a quest for novelty, and a desire for instant gratification of its desires.

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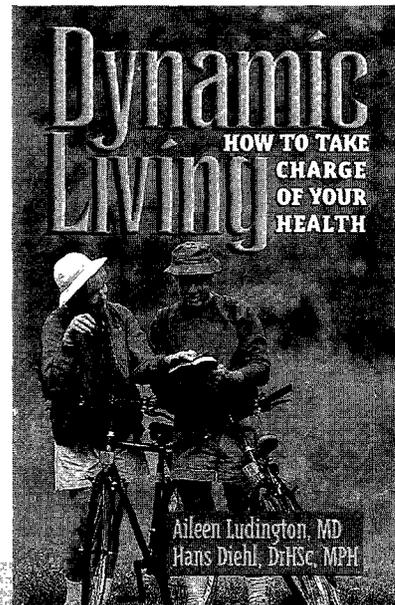
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in suburban Chicago may be both more honest and more successful as a means of genuine evangelism on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings. They are not announced as worship, only as "events" where seekers may hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to their sponsors, the weekend presentations are planned for people who are turned off by the traditional church "because it is constantly asking for money" or "because the worship forms are meaningless" or "because the preaching is not related to life."

For these reasons, people are invited to come to Willow Creek to listen and enjoy; they are not expected to "dress like Sunday," to sing, or to give money at the time of the offering. The setting is an auditorium with a stage. The presermon performance is professional quality activity by a stage orchestra, excellent singers, and a dramatic presentation to "set up" the sermon by showing its relationship to real-life

situations. The central feature is a non-emotional, not highly biblical or theological, but carefully reasoned sermon that sets forth the supreme relevance of the Christian faith in contemporary life.

Willow Creek Church explains that the Saturday/Sunday services are not for mature believers. For them—"the New Community"—significant activities are offered in Wednesday and Thursday evening services, and in the small cell groups organized for all those who are members of the church.

But certain questions remain unanswered. Some folk believe that too many of the 15,000 people who attend Willow Creek on weekends are not really unchurched, but rather longtime Christians who may be hiding from their discipleship responsibility in the anonymity of the large crowd.

Charismatic worship

The one group in contemporary church life that is sure that a spiritual springtime has already arrived are the charismatics. Without question, these

glossolalic evangelicals have developed a full practice of worship within their own theology and scriptural exegesis. At the same time, they and their more historical counterparts, the Pentecostals, have an enviable track record in evangelism. Furthermore, charismatics have exerted extraordinary, and, I believe, unwarranted influence on noncharismatic worship and music, partly because they have produced most of the new, popular

they depart from typical evangelical thought and affect the use of music in services.

Praise and worship music

For charismatics, praise and worship are different entities.³ For them, "worship" occurs only in a transcendent, often glossolalic experience in which a believer enters a spiritual "Holy of Holies" in God's very presence. The approach to

this intimate, ecstatic experience is through the "Holy Place": here the would-be worshiper sings only songs of praise, "expressions of God's attributes or of God's biblical names." In this approach the worship leader is all-important. That person (backed up by other singers and a "stage band" with lots of percussion instruments) leads from chorus to chorus according to a well-planned but seemingly spontaneous progression, encouraging folk to

"abandon themselves to the Spirit" in singing, clapping, and dancing. Finally, all the protracted, exciting songs of pure praise give way to the hush of awe, in silence or in quiet song, as believers enter the holy presence of God, where they are free to express their worship in any way they choose: speaking or singing in tongues ("in the Spirit"), in interpretation, in prophecy, or otherwise.

The loss of "performance music"

Noncharismatics should applaud and imitate their more emotional friends in their emphasis on congregational participation above that of soloists and choirs. At the same time, for many people there is a distinct sense of loss in which there is no opportunity for music that has more substance, more melodic and harmonic identity, more development of text, more craftsmanship in design and more artistry in performance. They would remind charismatics that there is emotion expressed in more sophisticated musical expressions. They might even question if the exclusive use of Christian mantras ca-

Evidently many churches are prepared to create a "Christian shopping center" where all those desires will be met, even though the costs may be considerable.

congregational music and partly because they have successfully communicated their worship rationale.

Charismatics understand that the transcendent God is truly present in worship, and they expect to experience a dramatic encounter with God that produces both miracles and great enjoyment. At the same time, many of them abhor performance "entertainment" in worship, so they eliminate most solos and especially choral music in favor of total congregational participation. Personal involvement and enjoyment in worship is enhanced by symbols and acts that involve the whole person; banners and especially bodily action—raising the hands, clapping, embracing and dancing—are very significant in services. However, the cognitive experience tends to be emphasized only in the sermon.

A full understanding of charismatic services can best be gained from one of their own representatives, Graham Kendrick. Every student of liturgical practice could agree with much of what he says in his *Learning to Worship*.² However, certain concepts must be noted, since

ters to the modern preoccupation with instant gratification, and whether there is not an added, and possibly richer, experience in the imagination-stimulating, delayed response that comes from other music. For many evangelicals the training and use of youth, children, and adult singers in solo, small group, and choral or instrumental performance is a positive response to the command to be good stewards of God-given musical talents, and to the challenge to offer to God our best "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15). While congregational singing should be central in worship, listening to performed music provides an additional, different experience, which could be more cognitive (especially if the words are printed in the bulletin), since the worshipers are not faced with the challenge to understand the words while singing them. The Old Testament certainly endorses "performance music"; the most profoundly moving account of musical worship in the Old Testament is recorded in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14, where, coincident with the music of priestly choirs and instrumentalists, "the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."

The basis of charismatic praise

*The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*⁴ lists "praise" (evoking the praise of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ) as one of nine unique emphases of this transdenominational movement. Terry Law, one of the leading exponents of this idea, speaks of praise in almost sacramental terms: "Praise silences the devil. Praise is a garment of the Spirit. Praise leads the believer into the triumph of Christ. Praise brings revelation. Praise prepares us for miracles. Praise is the way into God's presence. God inhabits our praises (Ps. 22:3)."⁵ As Law expresses it, preparation for praise in the holy place begins in the temple's outer court, where the congregation sings songs of thanksgiving for God's mighty deeds; once they are in the holy place, the songs must be *pure praise*, free of self-centered thanksgiving. The scriptural support for this is Psalm 100:4: "Enter

his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." However, in practical experience, charismatics (and their imitators) rarely sing of God's acts; the choruses speak only of God's person.

In this type of worship there is no room for songs that are didactic, penitential, confessional, petitionary, or narrative of Christian experience. However, it should be noted that no complete Old Testament psalm is "pure praise"; each mentions God's deeds on behalf of His people, and together they voice all the above-mentioned modes of prayer.

The idea that the "worth" of God should be the basis for Christian worship has often been mentioned in explaining that our word "worship" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "weorth-scipe" (ascribing worth), and that God is worthy of our worship. It is true that Isaiah 6 speaks of God as holy (the angel's song), mighty (the posts of the door moved), and surrounded with mystery (the house was filled with smoke), but it also speaks of His love as expressed in actions of cleansing and redemption.

Paul Waitman Hoon has pointed out that the concept of God's worth should not be the primary "point of departure" in expressing motivation for worship, because "the category of value in biblical thought is secondary to the categories of being, decision and action."⁶ Besides, he says, it is not a distinctively Christian idea, since it is shared by other religions and philosophies. Finally, it denies the transcendence of God because it implies that the "initiative to worship lies with man...who 'recognizes' and 'ascribes worth.'"

A better New Testament standard for worship music

While charismatics use Old Testament images in developing a worship rationale, they apparently ignore the full implications in the New Testament report that the early church sang "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Spiritual songs are claimed by charismatics to be their unique expression of glossalalic singing, and there is no reason to quarrel with that identification.

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However, Paul also identified "psalms and hymns" as being sung by the early church. Psalms contain much more than praise. Every form of prayer is there, including thanksgiving, confession, petition, submission, even lament. Hymns, many believe, were created to meet the early church's need to express understanding of, and faith in, Christ. Many examples of early Christian hymns are found in the Epistles. For instance, 1 Timothy 3:16: "He [Christ] was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory" (RSV).

Note the comprehensive character of New Testament song. Psalms were scriptural, historic, and classic in nature. Hymns were poetic, theological expressions. Spiritual songs were spontaneous outbursts of song. There's even a Trinitarian outline here: psalms were prayers to YHWH; hymns expressed the truth that Jesus was God's Son, our Redeemer; and spiritual songs were a gift of the Creator Spirit.

Much has been made of the new custom of discarding the hymnal in favor of words projected on an overhead screen. It is argued that the practice helps the service "to flow," since no one needs to thumb through a book to find the hymns. It centers everyone's attention at one place, thus uniting the congregation. It enables hands to be free, so they may clap or be raised to God.

There are also some negatives. The overhead screen does not contain any music notation, so the music must be very simple—a tune that really doesn't need learning, but just "sings itself." Also, worshipers can't sing harmony parts from a screen, only melody.

Moreover, the use of a hymnal is a reminder that ours is a historic faith, because our God is God of history. We confirm the continuity of the church and the perpetuity of God's covenants, and we preserve the church's memory and its literature when we sing the hymns of Ambrose, Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Cluny, Martin Luther,

Clement Marot, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, and Fanny Jane Crosby.

Quasirevivalist or quasicharismatic worship

Since the almost universal passion today is for change in worship and music style and structure, it seems reasonably safe to assume that change is needed. But what kinds of change are needed, and on what biblical, historical, theological bases should these changes be made? Since most evangelicals are not accustomed to approaching worship in those terms, the tendency is simply to copy those techniques that seem to be popular in other churches. One congregation may want to celebrate God's acts in redemption, but in a much fuller sense than the revivalist church understands. Nevertheless, they adopt the entertaining, personality-centered, performance style of the crusade or the megachurch that robs the congregation of its rights as believer/priests to express fully its worship of God.

Another church may become convinced that its traditional mode of worship is outworn and meaningless for this generation, and that a "celebration experience" is a must. To achieve this, they may adopt the "praise singing" diet of the charismatics, though they have no desire to follow them into their "Holy of Holies," and even though that single form falls short of the Pauline standard of worship song. The investigation of such a congregation does not include such questions as "Should we have more Scripture reading, more prayer in worship?" Rather the goal seems to be merely to add some emotional stimulation to their earlier worship outline—a format based on the use of controlled informality and sensory surprises that often results in "emotion for emotion's sake."

In any worship change we want to make, it is proper to ask how such a change measures up to a full New Testament standard. Jesus' challenge to worship God in truth (John 4:24) affirms that worship should be sincere.

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Above all, worship must express the submission of the human heart to the will of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ and in the Written Word. It also means that worship should conform to the truth of God, especially His saving acts through Jesus Christ, as each congregation or confessional group understands that truth. The sermons, Scripture selections, hymns, and prayers should express fully who God is and what God has said and done, and provide for a full human response to that revelation. Finally, it should do this in forms that speak to the whole contemporary person, both intellectually and emotionally. Genuine emotional expression, for the clarifying and intensifying of truth, is a must. But emotional expression for emotion's sake leads to "praising praise" and "worshipping worship."

Is a spiritual springtime coming?

Is it possible that all the turmoil and conflict surrounding contemporary worship style signals a truly spiritual springtime in the church? Maybe so. There is some evidence that what is going on is a fairly long-term, wide-spread movement. The celebration idea began around 1960, perhaps with Geoffrey Beaumont's *20th Century Folk Mass* in the Anglican church. The idea propounded at that time was that worship should be more than correct and proper; it should also be *pastoral*. At just about the same time in history, praise choruses appeared, a contribution of the Charismatic Renewal movement. I have little doubt that many individuals and congregations in this tradition have been truly renewed, especially those in liturgical churches, where the church's memory and literature have not been lost. But it is not evident that the whole church is experiencing genuine revival.

Historically, new worship forms,

and the accompanying painful and regrettable loss of the old, have often been the *result* of the strong winds of revival from God's Spirit. By contrast, today's noncharismatic churches seem to be hoping to *achieve renewal* by borrowing new methods and forms that may not measure up to their own theology and their own understanding of Scripture.

**“Praise silences the devil.
Praise is a garment
of the Spirit.
Praise leads the believer
into the triumph of Christ.
Praise brings revelation.
Praise prepares us
for miracles.
Praise is the way into
God's presence.
God inhabits our praises.”**

Even if it is possible to develop bigger churches by following prescribed formulas, it will still be pointless to attempt to program a truly renewing work of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual renewal does not come according to human timetables and does not depend on human forms, traditional or contemporary. Graham Kendrick makes it clear that true spiritual worship is total obedience to God, becoming “living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (Rom. 12:1, NIV).

Springtime in an individual church

Nevertheless, it is possible that an individual church may be dissatisfied with all the more popular modern approaches to worship, and may experience the guidance of the Spirit in developing services that are fully biblical, pleasing to God, and edifying to human beings.

Few churches will want to ignore

the “praise and worship” choruses, since they have become the symbol, if not the reality, of renewal; besides, the scriptural items are excellent worship material. But even charismatic songwriters, like Graham Kendrick and Jack Hayford, have proved that more complete, more theological musical expressions of Christian truth are still welcome in

their services. If our church music leaders would give more attention to music education than to managing concert performances, congregations would again revel in the joy of singing God's praise in tunes as difficult as CORONATION (“All hail the power of Jesus' name”) and SAGINA (“And it can be that I should gain”).

This quality of local church worship renewal must be based on a study of the scriptural basis, the theology, and the historic practice of worship that is at least as thorough as that undertaken by both liturgical commissions and the charismatics.

Once convictions are developed, they should be taught clearly and tirelessly to the whole congregation, both within and outside the actual experience of worship. ■

Condensed from an original article that appeared in *Crux* 28, No. 4 (December 1992). Used by permission.

¹Kenneth A. Myers, *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1989).

²Graham Kendrick, *Learning to Worship* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984).

³See Paul Wohlgenuth, “Praise Singing,” *The Hymn*, January 1987, pp. 18-23.

⁴Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), p. 156.

⁵Terry Law, *The Power of Praise and Worship* (Tulsa, Okla.: Victory House Publishers), pp. 143-158.

⁶Paul W. Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 91-94.



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Are you an active listener?

Richard G. Ensman, Jr.

Are you an active listener? Or more specifically, when you're engrossed in conversation, do you simply hear words, phrases, and sentences? Or do you hear underlying ideas, feelings, and concerns?

Active listening involves much more than simple hearing. Active listeners use a variety of sensory skills—sight, sound, even gestures and facial expressions—to deepen the communication process.

When you are conversing with another person—a colleague, a subordinate, a business acquaintance—do you listen with your whole body and mind? Do you *actively* listen? Take the simple self-scoring quiz on the following page to help find out.

Score yourself on the 25 active listening skills that are in the box. If you *usually* practice the skill in question, score yourself with a 2. If you *sometimes* practice the skill, score yourself with a 1, and if you *seldom* practice the skill, give yourself a 0. And remember: be brutally honest with yourself; no one is looking over your shoulder.

Now, total your score. If your total score is 40 or above, congratulations. You're a good conversation partner and practice active listening skills quite effectively. If your total score is between 30 and 39, you're probably familiar with active listening techniques—and you may well use them—but additional practice of these all-important communication skills won't hurt. If your total score is below 30, don't fret. You *can* increase your awareness of communication techniques, as well as your ability to be an effective listener. Read some of the excellent material on active listening that's out on the market, take a workshop on listening skills, and practice your listening techniques every opportunity you get.

Next time you are involved in a conversation, remember that active listening places the focus of conversation on the person you're speaking with—not yourself. Active listening places your conversation partner in the role of primary speaker and you in the role of listener.

Focus intently on your conversation partners “with your words, your gestures, your feelings, and your thoughts” and you'll make best use of your active listening skills. More important, you'll notice an increase in the satisfaction and morale of the people around you.

Richard G. Ensman, Jr., is a syndicated columnist and writes from Rochester, New York.

Active Listener

1. Before I begin a sensitive discussion, I make at least one "clearing the decks" gesture, such as removing the papers I'm working on from my desk. 2 1 0
2. If I expect the conversation to be lengthy, I offer coffee or water to my discussion partner. 2 1 0
3. I sit in close proximity to the speaker and directly face him or her. 2 1 0
4. I listen for subtle changes in inflection and tone of voice in an effort to understand the speaker's feelings. 2 1 0
5. I gaze at my partner during discussion, but avoid impersonal or "cold" staring. 2 1 0
6. I don't offer opinions or judgments on the issues at hand, at least until the discussion is over. 2 1 0
7. I use gestures of understanding—nods of the head, for instance—when my partner makes points that seem particularly important. 2 1 0
8. I don't succumb to distractions, such as ringing telephones or activity in the hallway, while listening. 2 1 0
9. I maintain a relaxed posture during the conversation, regardless of the content of the discussion. 2 1 0
10. Although I might jot down an occasional word or phrase, I avoid writing extensive notes during the conversation. 2 1 0
11. I restate the speaker's key thoughts in my own words from time to time. 2 1 0
12. I ask questions to clarify facts and understand the feelings of the speakers. 2 1 0
13. I avoid expressing irritation at any poor speech patterns or hesitancy the speaker might exhibit. 2 1 0
14. I use the speaker's name occasionally. 2 1 0
15. I let the speaker "get off the topic" during a sensitive discussion if he or she wishes. 2 1 0
16. I listen carefully for signs of emotion in the speaker's voice. 2 1 0
17. My demeanor appropriately complements the speaker's demeanor; for instance, if the speaker is upset, my posture and gestures are reassuring. 2 1 0
18. I resist the temptation to finish the speaker's sentences or draw out conclusions before he or she offers them. 2 1 0
19. I speak slowly and in a relaxed manner. 2 1 0
20. I avoid distracting gestures, such as looking at my watch or at papers piled on a nearby table. 2 1 0
21. I acknowledge the speaker's feelings and thank him or her for sharing them. 2 1 0
22. If the speaker asks me a question, I answer simply, directly, and nonjudgmentally. 2 1 0
23. If I can't offer a firm answer to a problem or question, I'm not afraid to say "I don't know." 2 1 0

God sent me a husband, a friend, a pastor

Stephanie Weems

**Claiming God's
promise is still the
way of fulfillment.**



*Stephanie Weems
works as a nurse/health
educator in Uniondale,
New York.*

One day a coworker and I discussed how God answers certain prayers and wishes. As I listened, she said, "In my teenage years I prayed to God to give me a husband to follow." She continued, "And following was just what I did. He always walked ahead of me, and I followed behind."

The divorced mother of five children said, "I guess I rushed into things immaturely, for I wanted my parents off my back. I realize I did not ask God in the right way for the right thing. I should have asked for a husband to walk beside me and love me."

Often it is said, "Be careful what you ask of God. He might give it to you." Whether or not people possess the right conception of God and the right prayer motive depends on each individual.

From a very young age I dreamed and prayed that I would become a missionary in Africa, and the wife of a minister who truly loves the Lord. I continued to claim God's promise "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

As I shared my hopes with some friends, they did not believe it possible. All they could say was "You can't even sing or play the piano. What help can you be to a pastor?" Though I did not possess such talents, I did choose to believe in God's promises. I knew God could fulfill them for me.

In 1980, at the completion of my studies, and with much prayer for the Lord's guidance, I felt the urge to talk with the conference president. As we discussed the possibilities of being a missionary, a desperate phone call from the General Conference interrupted:

"We need a French-speaking secretary in West Africa immediately. Can you help us?" My heart rejoiced, Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

Upon returning from Africa, I attended Oakwood College. I searched, waited, and prayed. I wondered often about the desires of my heart. One night I talked to God as a close friend about the matter. I told God how disappointed I was with the different young men coming my way. I foresaw problems in committing myself to a serious relationship. I told Him that I knew it was not His will for His children to marry individuals whom we know will not make us happy. I placed the physical appearance, educational achievements, and spiritual aspects with God.

I fell asleep feeling sad. Yet I woke up feeling great. A friend rushed to my room: "Steph, go canvassing with us. Our leader is Howard Weems, a nice spiritual guy." I recall telling her, "I don't want to go! Whether his name is Howard Weems, Beams, or Deems, I'm not interested." She left my room looking sad. Moments later the still, peaceful voice of the Holy Spirit convinced me to go. To my amazement, I learned that Howard Weems not only was a literature evangelist, but also was studying to become a minister.

My dreams and prayers came into focus. God revealed to me that when I first asked for a minister husband, Howard Weems had not made his commitment to God. God is so good! He planned the details of my request, choosing the right individual with the proper requirements. God wanted me to learn that it is He who made the promise to give, and my part was to ask, believe, and patiently wait.

After 10 years of marriage I still thank God for considering my prayers. I recently asked my husband, "Are you happily married?" He confirmed, "God has blessed me with the desires of my heart."

Are we perfect? No! We engage in disagreements, but these do not override or cause us not to appreciate that God has given us each other.

Howard my true friend. We confide in each other our secrets, feelings, and emotions. He has created time for us despite his responsibilities. He pays attention to me when in need of a listening ear. When the inner child within often comes out, we play, exercise, and laugh with each other. He draws me close, and we reminisce about almost everything.

Howard a devoted husband. He continues to show love, respect, and commitment. He treats me as a woman. He shows much interest in and understanding of my femininity. He remembers special occasions. He is concerned with the health of the family. We share the household duties equally, for I believe he acknowledges that we must work together as "help meet" and not as "just help me."

Howard a committed pastor. He recognizes his own spiritual need and takes time to meditate daily on the Word of God. He also cares for the family's spiritual need. Whatever message he feeds the church family, the same goes for his family. To that effect I know he practices what he preaches. His favorite saying is "God is so good!"

Amazing, God remains the same in His dealings with one generation of people to another. "Ask and believe." I believe that we all receive from God depending on the type of relationship we have with Him. However, many times without realizing it, we set limits on God's capabilities with our doubts. Receiving what we ask depends also on when and for how long we want it. Should we ask God only for things to satisfy our instant self-gratifications, or should we also ask God for our long-term needs and desires? ■

Welcome Baby welcomes families to church

Kay Kuzma

A social support program for new parents that is winning friends for the church.



Kay Kuzma, Ed.D., is the founder and president of Family Matters in Cleveland, Tennessee.

It was front-page news in my town. "12-year-old girl found lying in her own feces, locked in closet for years." I couldn't believe it! Maybe things like this happened 20 years ago, but not in the nineties. Maybe it happened in other towns, but not where I lived. Yet the pictures and the headlines weren't lying. It was terribly true.

The most surprising part of all was that the family, guilty of this most revolting type of abuse, had been thought of as good, quiet neighbors. Their other four children, all younger, had been seen playing outside, so no one suspected there was a fifth one being starved, beaten, and imprisoned within that little white frame house.

As I read the article, I wondered, "How different might that little girl's life have been if, at her birth, someone would have sent a Welcome Baby card to the family and visited them monthly for the first year, making friends and meeting their needs?" The statistics are clear: abusing parents are often isolated people—no phone calls, no friends, no extended family. The frustration of parenting becomes more than they can bear, and they take it out on their children.

Being our neighbor's keeper

In the early seventies I read about an experimental program in Denver, Colorado, that sent nonprofessional women to visit high-risk families. The rates of child abuse were significantly lowered by periodic visits. Now this study has been replicated in Hawaii with the same finding: abuse is almost nonexistent among families who are visited regularly. These are modern-day illustrations of

the truth of the biblical concept that we should be our neighbor's keepers. For the children's sake, we must be involved in the lives of others. It's our Christian duty to help meet the needs of young families and care about what happens to them.

For 20 years the idea has been in my mind to develop a set of monthly newsletters that church members could deliver to parents of newborns, offering them a social network of support, information, and resources to meet their needs. Now it's time for the harvest. I call this program Welcome Baby. But reducing the rate of child abuse in your community is not the only reason for your church to implement this program of sending a Welcome Baby card and hand-delivering 12 monthly newsletters to the parents of newborns.

If you look around your church or community, you'll discover that those whom you consider to be the best parents, don't parent alone. They have a good support system of friends and relatives to help and encourage them when the going gets tough.

It sometimes takes years for couples to build this supportive network in the transient society in which we live. The ironic thing is that the very time that a support network is most needed—at the birth of a baby—may be the time it is most lacking. Young families chasing the rainbow of economic security may have moved hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles from their families of origin. High school and college friends are left behind. Many have no church home. With both husband and wife driving in opposite directions to full-time jobs, they have precious little time to make friends with the people in the next apartment, and there is certainly no time to visit over the back fence.

Social support system

Most couples don't realize the importance of a social support system until a baby is born. I love the little note a new grandmother showed me that her son wrote to her when their first child was born.

"Dear Mom, you asked me how we are enjoying parenthood. Well, we can

honestly say that after two weeks the baby is... that we are... things aren't... Mom, could you possibly come out for a while? Love, Bill."

This expresses the need quite well! But what if a mom can't come out for a while? Where can that young couple reach out for help?

In Hickman, Nebraska, where a strong Welcome Baby program is developing, one of the families visited, Jeff and Barb Peas, had just had their fifth child. Neither of them had any family in the area, and shortly after the birth of the baby, Barb became ill and had to be taken to the hospital. It was snowing that evening, and the driving conditions were certainly not normal. A quick call to Jani Rexinger brought the Welcome Baby volunteer to their home to watch the children while Jeff took his wife to the hospital.

An entry point

There's more to the Welcome Baby program than just the card and 12 newsletters. The *Welcome Baby Resource Manual* offers hundreds of ideas that can be implemented at your church to make your church family-friendly. Each newsletter has an article that is written to be used as an entry point to mention various church and community resources. For example, when handing out the first newsletter, you can mention newborn support groups or lactation consultants that are available in your church. Newsletter 4 has an article about the importance of baby dedications, number 7 about cradleroll, number 8 about nutrition programs and cooking schools, and number 12 about spiritual values.

My husband and I selected three families with babies born on our birthdays. One of the fathers, Joe Kinser, developed a serious heart condition, and since his father died young with the same problem, Joe suddenly became very interested in a healthy lifestyle. This gave us the opportunity to invite Joe to Health-Fest, a week-long outreach program in Chattanooga during which he was introduced to the Adventist lifestyle and was our guest at a vegetarian banquet at which Dr. Ben Carson spoke.

In Sidney, British Columbia, the church planned a Christmas party and invited all 31 of the Welcome Baby families they had been visiting. Twenty-nine entire families—mother, father, children, and babies—responded and are eager to attend other church events.

"Traditional methods of evangelism have not effectively reached young families," says Roy Caughron, director of evangelism for the Seventh-day Adventist Georgia-Cumberland Conference. "That's why our conference has adopted the Welcome Baby program as a major evangelistic thrust to be carried out in our churches." Roy recently visited a church of 40 members on the day their Welcome Baby coordinator announced that they had eight new births in their town in the past few weeks. Eight members eagerly took the packets of Welcome Baby materials, wondering who the Lord had brought their way. Many small churches have vowed, "We're going to grow our own church with the Welcome Baby program."

It's true, you don't know who the Lord is preparing for a friendly Christlike contact. In Bennet, Nebraska, the church members make handmade quilts to take as a gift at the first Welcome Baby visit. Can you imagine how shocked these families are that someone would take such an interest in them? After the first visit to a mother whose name was found in the paper, the mother was so overwhelmed she called the Welcome Baby visitor. "I didn't have a chance to tell you about my birth and delivery. I almost died, and so did my baby. I prayed to live, promising the Lord that I would find a church to raise my baby in, get involved, and make some Christian friends. You were the first people who visited me since I've been home. I think the Lord is telling me something!"

Monte Sahlin, a vice president of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is excited about this project. "We must find ways to meet the needs of the baby boomer population, and I believe the Welcome Baby program is on the right track."

When the Welcome Baby materials were first introduced at an Association

of Self-supporting Industries meeting, Arden and Yvonne Brion took home a newsletter packet and visited a couple who had just had a baby and who had once been interested in their church but had become discouraged because of some criticism. They showed Craig and Beth the Welcome Baby newsletters and gave them the entire package. Arden wrote, "They were impressed! Your program gave us the opportunity to invite them back to church with their baby . . . and they accepted!"

Ramona Perez Greek, who is actively involved in the North American Division women's ministries work, promotes the Welcome Baby program as an evangelistic program especially suited for women's ministries! Through her leadership, along with Norma Alban Lowry, an Andrews University doctoral candidate in religious education, and Carlos Pardeiro, president of Creation Enterprises, the Welcome Baby program is being produced in Spanish. Special thanks goes to Manuel Vasquez, vice president for special ministries and director of multilingual ministries for the North American Division, for the funding that made this possible. Ramona Greek states, "There is a tremendous need in every culture for the information provided in the Welcome Baby newsletters and seminars, and for the support church members can offer these young families."

The Welcome Baby program is so simple and nonthreatening that every church member can be involved. Edwin Martin, a retired but very active layperson in the Cleveland, Tennessee, area and board chair of Family Matters, said, "I'm not one for knocking on people's doors, but even I could take a special newsletter out to a family and say, 'I just heard you had a new baby, and I have something special for you.' And it wouldn't be difficult for me to invite them to a seminar that I knew would really be meaningful to their family, or tell them about some other church resource that I think they might benefit from."

Reclaiming all of God's children

The Welcome Baby program is effective

because it meets the felt needs of young families at a time in life when they are most willing to make lifestyle changes. They feel, "Nothing is too good for my baby!" This is the time when many young families remember their childhood church experience and decide to give the church a second chance. There are thousands of "lost" members who have grown up, married, moved away from their childhood church, and been too busy establishing their own careers and homes to become involved in a new church. Most have left their memberships on the church books back home with their parents. There is no better time to reclaim these families than when they have a baby. I know a number of new grandparents who have written to the churches close to where their "lost" children are living, pleading, "My son and his wife just had a baby. Could you please send someone to visit them with the Welcome Baby program?" It's time to reclaim all of God's children. I believe the Welcome Baby program has been developed for such a time as this.

Your church members can help prevent child abuse. Your members can offer friendship and church resources to parents when they need it most. And once they begin to make friends with the families in your community, the next step is to share with them the greatest gift of all—the gift of salvation and the fellowship of your church family.

"Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening all around us, and are ready now for reaping" (John 4:35, TLB). Charles Bradford, former North American Division president, makes this comment: "Ellen White has written about a great reform movement she saw among God's people, where hundreds and thousands of church members were visiting families and opening before them the Word of God.* I often wondered how God planned to fulfill that. But with the Welcome Baby program, I can see how it can happen. I'm looking forward to visiting some families myself. Won't you join me?" ■

*See Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 126.

"Major questions must be dealt with: Where do I go from here? How do I get there? Who needs to be told? Should I leave the ministry?" Later on he says: "You need to consider the best results for yourself, your family, and your ministry."

Why is there no mention of the woman who also has been hurt? It is especially serious if the woman is a parishioner; in such a case the pastor has violated his sacred duty and higher responsibility to respect the boundaries, not only of marriage, but also of professional responsibility. Whether or not a parishioner attempts to sexualize a professional relationship, it is always the duty of the pastor to observe the boundaries and not to take advantage of a trusting person for whom he is God's representative.—Rev. Jeanne Devine Bonner, Hyde Park United Methodist Church, Wichita, Kansas.

Portrait of Jesus

Timothy P. Nixon's letter (May 1995) on the portrait of Jesus makes a number of erroneous statements intended to prove that early portraits of Jesus show Him as a Black African and that Flavius Josephus describes Him as having a "dark skin."

There are many reproductions of early Christian pictures and statues of Jesus showing Him with Caucasian features and a skin that is commonly called that of a White man. See, for example, F. van der Meer, *Early Christian Art* (University of Chicago Press, 1959).

Josephus in the only passage of his writings in which he refers to Jesus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (18.3.3), says nothing about the color of His skin.

The Gospels say that Jesus was the Son of God, but everything indicates that He looked like a person of His community. If He had looked different from His Jewish contemporaries, it is impossible that the Gospel writers would not have mentioned this. His enemies would have had something to say about it too.

The appearance of Jesus is not important. What we must believe is that He was God incarnate, but also truly human. In other words, He was the God-man. Christians must reject Black or White racism.—Stephen M. Reynolds, Glenside, Pennsylvania.

Hospitality: our contract with Jesus

Mary Barrett

By being hospitable, our churches can be the warm, loving, and caring families they are meant to be.



Mary Barrett is a pastor's wife, homemaker, mother of two daughters, and is very active in her local church.

When they first invited us for supper my initial reaction was to say No! It had been a long day at church, and I was tired. Spondylitis had made my neck painful and stiff. All I wanted was a hot bath and bed!

Our two daughters wanted to go. And after all, he was my husband's new ministerial colleague. So reluctantly I agreed.

I'm so glad I did! As we walked through their front door we were embraced by their warm friendship. I was given a pair of slippers to wear and told not to concern myself with my children getting too excited as they enthusiastically ran about with their new friends. The wife understood their need for "freedom" after sitting in church for several hours.

With supper on the stove, the four of us joked and laughed. We felt so much at ease that Jonathan lounged on the floor and curled up in an easy chair. We were also able to share our frustrations, hopes, and dreams as ministerial families.

Our hosts asked if we would like to spend the night, as it was a long journey home. Even though their home was small, they assured us that they would love to have us stay. Early-morning commitments the next day made us decline the offer.

However, before we left, the wife gave my neck a massage, as she was concerned about my discomfort. Her husband lent me his heat lamp. Even though he regularly used it for a back problem, it was mine as long as I needed it.

We left their home that evening refreshed, renewed, and revived. They had shown us true hospitality by welcoming us into their home and making our needs and comfort their priority.

Hospitality in the Bible

Hospitality permeates God's Word. The Bible is full of stories of people who shared their food, home, and possessions with others.

As ministers' spouses we need to extend hospitality to those with whom we

come in contact. Hospitality is not an option. We cannot say "Let someone else do it," because God asks each one of us to be selfless in giving. By opening our homes we can reach others for Christ. Let's consider some biblical passages that focus on hospitality.

Isaiah 58:5-11. Here God tells us what true religion is. It is not just adhering to some beliefs or practicing certain routines. God expects religion to be practical: "to loose the bonds of injustice"; "to break every yoke"; "to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them."* When we thus open ourselves and our homes to the needs of others, our Christian experience becomes real, strong, fulfilling, and satisfying. Otherwise our relationship with God is just empty and barren.

1 Peter 4:9,10. Hospitality is not a matter of routine duty, but a result of a love relationship that the gospel creates in us. "Be hospitable," says Peter, "to one another without complaining." The apostle wrote this at a time when Christians were persecuted, and caring for Christian refugees was expensive and risky. Yet hospitality flourished. Lack of resources does not exempt us from sharing what we have. Ellen White says that if we share what we have, God will take care of the expense.¹ "Like good stewards . . ." Peter commands, "serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." A saving relationship with Jesus will drive us to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God," extending genuine hospitality wherever needed.

Romans 12:13. Paul provides a double thrust to the meaning of Christian hospitality: "Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." The apostle wants to make sure that the Christian virtue of caring and sharing is not limited to the community of believers, but extended toward strangers. Extending a wholehearted welcome and hospitality to visitors to our worship ser-

vices may by itself become an evangelistic endeavor.

Acts 2:46, 47. The early Christians emphasized both worship and fellowship: "Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home." Meeting in one another's homes, studying the Word, breaking bread, and fellowshiping together enhanced the family feeling of those early Christians. Consequently, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slaves and free lived in a harmonious community. "And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

When we share oneness and open our hearts and homes to everyone, there is little possibility for power struggles and personality differences to interfere in Christian fellowship. It is extremely difficult to think badly of fellow believers when they invite you to their homes and tend to your needs. Real hospitality offers a genuine remedy to feelings of disharmony and division.

But what is hospitality?

What is hospitality?

In Webster's dictionary, the word "hospitable" is wedged in between "hospice," which means shelter, and "hospital," which means a center of healing. Hospitality suggests, then, both a place of shelter and healing. Ideally, hospitality means to make individuals a part of your family, to make them aware that you accept them totally and are concerned about their needs and difficulties.

Hospitality must not be confused with entertaining, which is Satan's counterfeit. Entertaining says, "Come to my house, admire my possessions, see the beautiful way the table is laid. Enjoy the scrumptious food that has taken me all week to prepare. See how perfectly neat and tidy and clean my house is. Come and listen to my views and thoughts."

Entertaining is hard, stressful, because through it we perpetuate the myth that we are perfect. We put up a facade saying that we manage our lives perfectly and that our children are perfectly disciplined and obedient.

Hospitality is totally different. We do not seek to portray a "perfect" image, so people can love us in our weakness, relax with us, and enjoy our company.

Hospitality says "Come to my house and be a part of my family. My house isn't 100 percent tidy. There's dust on the mantelpiece. The furniture isn't perfectly coordinated, and the food is simple. The children's toys are scattered on the floor, and I haven't had time to clean the breakfast dishes, but you are still welcome!"

Hospitality further says, "I don't want to talk about myself, but I'd love to listen to you, to learn about you, to share your problems. I want to be your friend. Perhaps we can talk to the Lord together." Hospitality seeks to serve others. It does not desire to impress others with our importance; it only shows true concern.

Hospitality is not easy

Putting hospitality into practice is not always easy. It involves giving ourselves. We may find numerous excuses not to take up the responsibility. We are busy. Children, outside employment, housework, and church offices push us to the limit, and one more responsibility such as hospitality will be the last straw.

We feel our talents lie elsewhere. We feel that God has called us to minister in a different way. We feel uncomfortable with having to minister to people on a one-to-one basis in our home.

We are shy. We find it difficult to communicate with others. We feel we may run out of questions to ask!

We may be in poor health, which may make hospitality an enormous task!

We may lack cooking skills. Or we may be living too far from our churches to have people home for lunch.

All these reasons for not opening our homes to the needs of others are legitimate and valid, but the problem is that if each one of us accepted these reasons, no one would practice hospitality! When you choose to be hospitable, you will find a way.

What then do we do?

Ask God to show you how you can be hospitable despite the pressures that you face. Ask Him specifically to show you how to open your homes to others. If you are really sincere about this, God will show you the way. He never asks us to do anything without supplying the energy and strength to do it. In doing this,

He will also give you the satisfaction that comes with serving others.

Deal with your limitations. If you are a busy mother or suffer from poor health, then make your Sabbath hospitality as simple as possible. Do not be afraid to serve a simple meal, perhaps just soup and bread. Alternatively, ask someone to pop in just for a hot drink, a biscuit, and a chat! Our self-esteem is based in Jesus, not in the opinions of others. As long as we want to minister and meet the needs of others, we need not be too perturbed about their thoughts concerning us.

If you are shy, invite small groups of people to your home rather than one or two individuals. Do not be embarrassed if after eating one slice of your chocolate cake your guests decline a second! Make friends with a good cook in the church and ask her for some recipes that never fail! Have potluck lunches instead of you providing all the food.

If you live too far from your church to invite members home or you really are uncomfortable with having people in your home, look for other ways to show people you care. Make a cake for a church member or contact. If that's not feasible, then how about sharing passages of Scripture, lending a musical tape, or giving some flowers to someone going through a difficult time?

A contract with Jesus

In her book *Open Heart, Open Home* Karen Mains tells us that when we kneel before the cross of Jesus and accept His sacrifice for our sins, we make a contract with Him.² That contract is to live our lives totally, utterly, and completely for Him. We give Him not only our very beings, but every possession, every talent we have to be used in His ministry.

As ministers' wives let's ask God to help us fulfill that contract by being hospitable. It may catch on, and our churches can become the warm, loving, vibrant places that God wants them to be. ■

*All Scripture passages are from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), pp. 450, 451.

²Karen Burton Mains, *Open Heart, Open Home* (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Pub. Co., 1976), p. 58.

Sometimes God does a better job without us

Steve Allen Wright

How a pastoral couple let God do the job.

*Steve Allen Wright
is a pseudonym.
This is a true story;
however, only names,
places, and settings
have been changed.*

As far back as I can remember, I've always wanted to be a missionary. But when the opportunity came, I felt less than enthusiastic.

Ann and I liked our two-church district, and looked forward to several more years there. Then we saw an ad in the *Adventist Review* for a pastor willing to serve two years in remote Jandaug in Upper Krinnaria. The small Adventist community there dwelt in high, rugged mountains, and had no airstrip. They could contact the outside world only through amateur radio, and an occasional mule caravan sent by the government.

I showed the ad to Ann.

"What do you think?" she asked.

"I suppose we should be willing to go," I gulped. Things happened fast, and within six weeks we flew off to our new assignment.

Getting to Jandaug proved difficult. We spent several weeks at union headquarters, awaiting transportation.

I awoke one night filled with awe. I'd heard no voice; I'd seen no vision. But at that moment I knew the problem we'd face at Jandaug: people who'd been hand-fed by missionaries and had never learned to think or study the Bible for themselves.

Our duty seemed clear: find an antidote for their spiritual dependency, teach them how to think as individuals, how to question life and each other, how to find their answers from the Bible. Without depending on the pastor.

Outlaws to Adventists

During our four months' waiting for transportation, we learned about the people of Jandaug. Their ancestors had been

outlaws who preyed on caravan routes far to the south. They'd discovered this mountain refuge—safe from the law. As time passed, the original band fought among themselves. Nearly all died violently.

Then a Bible entered the community. The survivors found spiritual peace, and left their lives of crime. In the late 1800s a Seventh-day Adventist layman learned of the colony's existence, and put forth near-superhuman effort to reach them. He stayed only a short time, but convinced everyone to keep the Sabbath. Several years later he brought an ordained minister, who baptized every adult and organized a church.

Faith on the skids

Our caravan jogged into the village after eight days of brain-jarring, narrow mountain trails. Nearly a century had passed since the Advent message had arrived, and the purity of faith no longer flowed through their Laodicean hearts.

Why did faith go on the skids?

I found several clues. The isolated community had one church—Seventh-day Adventist—and the members seldom had opportunity for outreach. Faith fights uphill under "secure" circumstances. Faith degenerates into mere custom habits practiced by the group with little thought of origin or meaning.

My worst fears proved true. Religion had become merely the thing to do—to the point of boredom. Few gave any thought to a personal relationship with God. They'd learned to use foul language, and their moral conduct hung by a thread. Adultery, cheating, and lying had become a way of life to some. The only real question seemed to be: "What

does the pastor think?"

I eventually realized that these people didn't differ at all from others I'd pastored. But the isolation of this group, and the tiny size of the community made it possible for me to see their experience more clearly than I had elsewhere.

Great White Father syndrome

The saddest thing I witnessed involved their desire to have the pastor make all their spiritual decisions for them. Every week one person or another asked me: "What should I do in this situation?" "Is so and so doing right or wrong?" "Since God will forgive me when I ask Him, wouldn't it be all right to sin, and then ask for God's forgiveness?"

I tried to encourage them to find answers in the Bible, or reason it out for themselves. But repeatedly I saw frustration in their faces. "But Pastor," they whined, "you tell us what to do and we'll do it—as with all the other pastors."

It seemed they'd never learn the joy

of freedom to think and act through God's grace. I began to realize how easy it would be to give in to the "Great White Father" trap. In my isolated post, filled with zeal to save "my" people, how easy to render them spiritual slaves.

I'm sure pastors don't decide to enslave their churches. But by giving pat answers instead of teaching people to think and study Scripture for themselves, we often lead people to depend upon us instead of God.

This pastor-god complex led to a lot of confusion at Jandaug, especially in areas of practical Christianity, sometimes lumped under the term *standards*.

For instance: The social committee showed movies twice a week in the town hall. Since mail came only four or five times a year, film rental companies hesitated to tie up good films. So they sent only castoffs—the dregs of the industry. But the committee provided no alternative, and the community watched.

How did pastors relate? One condemned all movies as sinful, and refused

to attend. (He showed Adventist movies at prayer meetings that confused the "pillars." "If movies are wrong," one observed, "they're wrong all the way.")

Another pastor attended when he felt the movie passed biblical standards. Others attended almost all movies.

Even worse, none of the pastors took the time to explain how to distinguish an acceptable movie from an objectionable one.

Teaching people to think

Before arriving at the village, Ann and I discussed my midnight impressions of Jandaug's major spiritual problem and how we might change it. We decided that our first step should be to teach them to think for themselves. Then we'd show them how to search the Bible for answers to their questions.

We chose the Sabbath school as our launching pad. We'd heard that public discussion during Sabbath school class had all but disappeared. The class had become just another sermon—"usually

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taught by the pastor.”

I politely refused. “I’m not good at teaching,” I replied, truthfully. “Ann’s much better. Ask her.” They had no idea what we’d planned for them.

“I’m a teacher, not a preacher,” Ann explained at the first class. “And in order for me to teach, you’ll have to study the lesson and be prepared to answer my questions.”

Ann’s questions called for information—who, what, when, where, why, how—not just a yes or no. Then she waited quietly until someone answered.

At first more than half of the class period passed in silence while Ann waited for people to answer questions. She’d often rephrase her inquiries to make sure the class understood. But again she’d quietly wait while restless members tried to think of something to say to break the embarrassing silence.

Months passed. “I don’t think they’ll ever learn,” Ann wailed. But by the end of her first year we began to see results. The mountaineers were starting to answer her questions and occasionally add comments of their own.

While Ann taught the class she also instructed me in how to teach. So at the end of our first year I took the class to give it a different voice. Ann counseled me how to continue her teaching plan. Discussion became livelier. At times villagers asked their own questions—which I reflected back for the class to answer. People read their Bibles with new understanding—because they were now thinking about what they read and applying it to their own lives.

Teaching people to teach

The second step in our “think for yourself” plan involved training the mountaineers to teach the class themselves. We knew this might prove difficult, because they often shied away from public exposure.

God’s Spirit impressed three women to teach, but they agreed to teach only on a rotating basis. They wanted me to

teach three Sabbaths, and then one of them would take the fourth. Then I’d teach three more, and the second would take her turn.

Not much, I felt. Each teacher had only one class a quarter. But it was progress.

We planned to meet every Thursday at my house for teachers’ class. The person scheduled to teach on Sabbath would lead the discussion, and the others would help plan the presentation.

I had been ill for two months, and the small dispensary at Jandaug lacked the lab equipment to make an accurate

plied. “Give me time to get settled.”

On Sabbath the woman taught with grace as if she’d been teaching all her life. I could scarcely contain my joy! I soon discovered that the others had developed equally.

“What happened?” I wondered. But I knew the answer already. *God accomplished in my absence what might never have happened had I remained.* Those people had depended so much on their pastor that God needed to remove him so they’d realize He could work through them, too.

God may not be able to do all He wants to do in our presence. He may have to remove us from the scene in order to accomplish His will.

diagnosis. So mission headquarters decided to search for a caravan to take me out for hospital treatment.

On Friday morning, after our first teachers’ class, an unannounced caravan hobbled into town. The lead driver agreed to take me out, but he couldn’t stay long. “Every minute of idle time costs me dearly,” he said.

As our string of animals wound around the last curve, I wondered, “Lord, why am I leaving now, just when we’re beginning to see fruitage?”

I did not return for four months. During that time little news leaked out, and none of it mentioned Sabbath school. So when a caravan finally returned me to the village, as I embraced Ann I asked: “What about the class?”

“Wait and see,” she said, a twinkle in her eye.

One of the teachers approached me as villagers unloaded cargo. “Will you be wanting to teach this Sabbath?”

I guessed she had the job. “No,” I re-

Hard lessons

I learned three humbling but important lessons during my short term among those gentle people:

1. If people depend on their pastor to identify right and wrong without studying Scripture and praying for themselves, then they worship the pastor rather than God. And pastors make a god of themselves when they fail to show their people how to establish a personal relation-

ship with God.

2. God works in ways of which we’d never dream. We often magnify our importance in the missions to which God calls us. But our presence and work may be for our benefit—or merely circumstantial.

3. Further, God may not be able to do all He wants to do in our presence. He may have to remove us from the scene in order to accomplish His will.

A pastor’s prayer

So whatever position we hold in God’s vineyard, we need to pray daily, hourly:

*Lord,
May I be
willing to work,
willing to be used—even
willing to sit on the sidelines.
Whatever will bring Jesus back . . .
Soon . . .*

*Lord,
May I be
willing to do it.*

■

The cross contradicts evolution

J. David Newman

Results from the Hubble telescope in space are causing scientists to revise their thinking regarding the age of the universe. One result in particular has scientists scratching their heads. It seems that the universe is only about 8 to 10 billion years old, while the stars are from 12 to 14 billion. Obviously the stars cannot be older than the universe, yet scientists have no explanation for the contrary evidence.

Science has been like that through the ages. Each time scholars thought they had established truth, along came something else that overthrew their nicely packaged theories. On the other hand, the Bible for the past 3,500 years has been saying the same thing. It declares that "in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day" (Ex. 20:11).*

Many people have tried to reconcile the account of earth's origins as recorded in Genesis with the accounts from science. Evolutionary science suggests that the earth and life upon it took millions of years to evolve. The Bible tells us that life was created fully mature only a few thousand years ago. I will not become involved in the debate as to

whether that was 6,000 years or more ago except to say that we now know that Ussher's chronology was faulty and that the Bible does not tell us that the earth was created in 4004 B.C.



J. David Newman, D.Min.,
is editor of Ministry.

There are gaps in the genealogies. We could extend the time back by several thousand years more. However, even if we do that, it will not satisfy the evolutionary hypothesis, which demands millions of years.

In this short article I would like to focus on a theological reason for a short chronology and a special creation. Let me state my thesis boldly: The cross contradicts evolution. You cannot believe in evolution and in the cross of Christ at the same time. The same science that seeks to disprove Creation also seeks to disprove resurrections. Arguments employed for jettisoning Creation are the same arguments used to do away with the cross and the historical Jesus. But the cross and Creation are inextricably joined.

Evolution and sin

Witness Paul's argument: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Evolution cannot account for the origin of sin and of death. Evolution teaches that death is a normal occurrence and process. The Bible teaches that death is an enemy, an intruder. The Bible teaches that humans began perfect. Evolution teaches that humans gradually develop and become perfect. Yet without an understanding of the origin of sin, we cannot understand the need for a Saviour.

The Bible tells us: "Death reigned from the time of Adam . . . Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (verses 14-19). Jesus came to live and die for us because one man, Adam, sinned and brought death to all of us. We became sinners because of one man. We are saved because of one Man. If Adam had not sinned, then there would be no need for Jesus to come and die for us. There would be no need for the cross. Adam is a historical person; so is Jesus. It is like two parts of an equation. You cannot have one part without the other. We cannot hold on to the cross while at the same time denying the historical record that explains why we need the cross.

Jesus did not come just to reveal God's love, important as that is. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (verse 8). The text says that Christ died for us, not for God. If God was simply seeking to demonstrate His love, then Christ would have died for God, for God's glory; He would not have died for us. But He died for us as our substitute because His death needed to take the place of the death we deserved to die since the wages of sin is death (see Rom. 6:23). Christ came as a "sacrifice of atonement" (Rom. 3:25) for us. He came to live the life that Adam should have lived. Jesus became the Second Adam in more than just a figurative sense. Just as all are lost in Adam so all are saved in Christ, that is, those who accept His gracious offer of salvation (Rom. 5:18).

The scientific evidence regarding origins can be interpreted to support a special creation within the past few thousand years as well as interpreted to support long ages. But since the Bible ties the cross of Christ and salvation to a special creation I must let special revelation determine how I will understand natural revelation. That is why the cross must contradict evolution. ■

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

Helping men mourn

Victor M. Parachin

Twelve steps to help men whose emotional turmoil conflicts with the male stereotype to be stoic



Victor M. Parachin is a minister and counselor in Norfolk, Virginia.

Sixteen-year-old Naja was killed in an auto accident. When the news reached her father, actor Ben Vereen, he was simply shattered. "It was like someone had reached in and just ripped my heart out," Vereen recalls. Desperate to ease the pain, he turned to alcohol and drugs. "I plunged into self-destruction, physically, mentally, and spiritually. I just went on a death spiral and didn't care to get out of it," he says sadly.

Although Vereen's situation may be extreme, the fact is many men do not know how to grieve in healthy ways. They are brought up to be socially strong, to be in full control of themselves, and never to respond emotionally. Studies show that because of this social compulsion, there is an increase in depression, alcoholism, mental health problems, and risk of heart disease. "A suppressed grief," said Ovid, the first-century Roman poet, "chokes and seethes within, multiplying its strength."

Men today, more than ever, desperately need the ministry of comfort and healing. The Bible clearly calls Christians to this task: The Lord "comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Cor. 1:4).^{*} Here are 12 ways for clergy and other Christian leaders to help men mourn.

1. Understand the male predicament. When someone they love has died, men are under great tension and pressure. Their emotional turmoil comes in conflict with the male social image to be strong and in control. Frank, 65, widowed after 38 years of marriage, says: "It's not easy to be a man. If I express my grief, I lose because I violate the male stereotype of the strong man who shows no emotions. I also lose if I do not express the pain of grief, because suppressing my feelings will bring me more problems. I'm in a no-win situation."

2. Politely discount men's protests.

When a man is asked how he is doing after a loss, often the reply will take on these variants: "I'm doing well"; "I don't feel like talking"; "I can handle this myself." Such statements should be treated with respectful skepticism. In their book *Silent Grief*, Christopher Lukas and Henry M. Seiden observe: "In actual fact, the 'I'm all right, I don't need to talk' approach is often not a sign that a man is doing fine but a cover-up for his inability to express painful feelings." Anyone, male or female, who experiences a profound loss such as death is hurting, suffering, and can use the kind and compassionate friendship of another person, able to empathize with love and sensitivity.

3. Encourage mourning. As odd as it sounds, some men need approval from another significant person to mourn. Such approval can take several forms, such as: "It's OK to cry."

"You should share your feelings rather than keeping them bottled up inside."

"It's natural to feel depressed after a loss like yours."

"People who lose a loved one to death often feel anxious and agitated."

"I don't blame you for feeling angry."

4. Make men aware that grief feelings are normal. Let men know that emotions connected with grief and loss are natural, normal, and universal. Emotions are not feminine; they are human. Thus, when death strikes, crying, anger, and a feeling of loneliness and depression are quite normal and should not be confused with weakness of will and character.

To help in the process of grieving healthfully, point to biblical examples of men who experienced the full emotional range of bereavement. For example, when Ephraim's sons were killed, his grief was so acute that his marriage was in jeopardy. It was only after Ephraim's brothers came bringing comfort and consolation that his grief was relieved and his marriage restored (see 1 Chron. 7:21ff.).

5. Respect emotional patterns. No one should be expected to grieve the way

another person would. For example, women cry more easily and more naturally than men. A man who does not get torn apart over other traumas need not be expected to do so over death. One who does not cry easily can be encouraged to express feelings through other means, such as talking or writing about them.

6. Encourage reading on grief recovery. All public libraries carry a variety of books on bereavement and grief, ranging from academic treatment to personal stories. Reading how others have overcome grief will help the bereaved to come to terms with their own feelings.

Some particularly good books for men include: *Lament for a Son*, by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987); *What Helped Me When My Loved One Died*, edited by Earl A. Grollman (Beacon Press, 1981); *O Susan*, by James W. Angell (Hope Publishing, 1990); and *A Grief Observed*, by C. S. Lewis (Seabury Press, 1963).

7. Support a man in his unique mourning pattern. Besides providing opportunities for a man to cry and talk about the loss, look for other comfortable mourning patterns. One man, 32, whose wife was killed in an automobile accident, says: "Although I had one friend I felt comfortable enough with to talk about my feelings, the most therapeutic activity for me was painting. I had done watercolors while in college, and now I resumed painting. I always felt better after doing some painting." Another man engaged in chopping and stacking wood as a physical way of venting his feelings.

8. Suggest a support group. A support group provides a safe setting to listen to others and express one's own feelings. Meeting others recovering from loss provides good role models for recovery.

9. Do not attempt to turn men into women. Dr. Therese Rando, a psychologist and author of *Grieving: How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies*, writes: "Do not try to remake males into female mourners. This is unrealistic. Men may never cry as frequently as women do, but this does not mean they cannot express their sadness in other ways. For example, they can think about, verbalize, or in other ways give vent to their sadness, and they can

do things in memory of their loved one. But they do not have to do it in exactly the same ways as women."

10. Nurture the spiritual. "Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always," says the psalmist (Ps. 105:4). Grieving men need gentle reminders to turn to God for comfort and guidance. While family and friends can help to soften the blow of grief, it is God who transforms fear into faith and despair into hope. Encourage the bereaved to find strength in worship, prayer, and the study of God's Word. Nurturing the spiritual makes way for peace of mind and gives courage to go on.

Turning to God in faith is what ultimately restored actor Ben Vereen. After hitting rock bottom and knowing that he would soon self-destruct, Vereen found out the need for the spiritual. "I reconnected," he says, "with my spirituality. I realized that it had never turned from me. I had turned from it. It motivated me and became my rock."

11. Provide help with sensitivity. Offer support without making the be-

reaved feel weak or incompetent to handle their loss. Every attempt to help should be done thoughtfully, carefully, compassionately, and sensitively. The journey through bereavement is often filled with confusion and self-doubt. After his wife died, C. S. Lewis wrote: "In grief nothing 'stays put.' One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral?"

12. Recommend professional help. Some men may need crisis intervention. Generally professional help from a skilled, experienced grief counselor such as a psychologist, social worker, or psychiatrist is indicated if:

- there is evidence of alcohol or drug abuse,
- suicidal thoughts are constant and recurring,
- there is near total withdrawal from family, friends, and colleagues,
- depression becomes clinical. ■

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

Ministry Report

Bombay '95 wins 191, forms four new congregations

May 1 to June 3, 1995 witnessed a new type of evangelism in Bombay. Planned a year ago with the sponsorship of Quiet Hour, Global Mission, and the General Conference Ministerial Association, the Bombay '95 evangelism team sought to reach various language groups in the city. With Jim Zachary and John Fowler from the Ministerial Association and Malkia Perus from Wildwood Hospital, Wildwood, Georgia, the team joined forces with local workers and laypersons to probe linguistic groups in Bombay with a view to establish house churches. The five week campaign yielded 191 baptisms, and for the first time the city will have six worshipping communities, including the two already in existence. Plans are underway to purchase four apartments to house the new congregations in different parts of the city. Before the end of 1995 trained laypersons will run these churches, while workers will be freed for full-time evangelism in the formidable megalopolis of 13 million people.—John M. Fowler.

People lining up for baptism in Bombay receive final instructions.





Beware of spiritual child abuse

James A. Cress

"Much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour" (1 Cor. 12:22, 23).

As a PK (preacher's kid), I moved several times during a school term. I feel sorry for students who must transfer in the middle of the year. Being the "new kid" on the block in a classroom full of "regulars" is not always easy. Sometimes it's downright painful.

Transferees must face new situations that other students seem easily able to navigate. In addition to learning new names, they must learn new rules and pay proper respect to the "pecking order." Furthermore, unwritten codes and expectations are often more vital and more difficult to comprehend than published procedures.

A similar fate awaits new members. As you struggle with the pastoral challenges that converts bring when they are added to your church, please remember that they are forced to face even greater problems and often must cope with these challenging encounters in full view of suspicious members who appear just to be waiting for these "new kids" to fail.

It should not surprise us that new members usually face a spiritual crisis immediately after they come to the Saviour. Our Lord's own example is instructive. Immediately following His baptism in Jordan, Jesus was led into the wilderness temptation experience. Perhaps this example of severe temptations

immediately following baptism is more than coincidental. Perhaps we should begin helping our new members prepare for Satan's onslaughts as well as the suspicions of other members even as we prepare them for baptism into the family.

At the same time, there is an urgent work for us to accomplish in teaching our members how to deal with newborns and what to expect of those feeble ones who have just grasped the faith. It is help-

To explore this analogy further, I find it useful to point out the extra care that hospitals give premature babies. Medical institutions invest large sums of money to save a premature birth, and all possible resources are centered on rescuing just one problem birth.

Church members too often discard a new member with problems just after birth. Concluding that this is another convert turned bad or unprepared for life in the church family, we discard those who

most urgently require our concern and support. Such attitudes are nothing less than child abuse!

We must care for new believers, enlist the assistance of all active laity, and train them for service in our Saviour's global mission. Anything less is neglectful child abuse.

Encouraging their zeal

Then there is the challenge of helping new members utilize their zealous enthusiasm for witnessing at the very time that their lifestyle might not yet demonstrate the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Although justification has done its marvelous regenerative work,

sanctification involves a process of time. Rather than stifling the instinct to revel in God's love and share His abundant mercies, we should provide training, encouragement, and a safe place to experiment with witnessing techniques that will both impress those who are contacted and strengthen the new member who reaches out to others.

Our pastoral privilege is also our responsibility. We must care for new believers, enlist the assistance of all active laity, protect them from predatory elements that would discourage or destroy, and train them for service in our Saviour's global mission. Anything less is neglectful child abuse. ■

ful to remember that Jesus chose "new birth" as the terminology to describe the experience of new believers.

Expectations for newborns

Expectations for newborns should be different than expectations of those who are more mature. New family members rightfully demand much more attention, nurture, and training than those who have grown and been around for a while. Just as an infant needs a special diet, constant monitoring, and extra loving care, so new members need repeated doses of basic biblical messages, ongoing attention from more mature members, and lots of love and affection from family members.

Shop Talk

Zip + 4

Churches in the United States that maintain member or interest lists on computer may save money by adding the extra four zip code digits. If you do much mailing and your post office has automated sorting equipment, you may qualify for a lower rate. (Further reductions can come from adding the postal bar code. Some software with mail merge can program the ordinary computer to produce labels with bar codes directly on envelopes.)

Beyond saving money, Zip + 4 organizes names for visitation. We recently received many responses to an evangelistic mailout, and by referencing the Zip + 4 codes we could easily sort them geographically.

Converting to Zip + 4 no longer requires trips to the post office. One CD-ROM disk, "USA Unzipped," does it all. And it costs only about \$25, tax-deductible. Contact CD Light, 8861 S. Silverstone Way, Sandy, Utah 84093-1679. Phone: 801-943-0162.—Jim Hoffer, St. Joseph, Michigan.

Funeral sermons

Pastors sometimes don't know much about church members they bury, particularly in a large parish. For the funeral message to be as personal as possible, one must know more than the family tree, birthplace, occupation, and faith. To help me paint living pictures of the deceased, I compile little notes on index cards about their favorite Bible text, songs they love, their special experiences, hopes and wishes.

At one recent funeral I mentioned that the fondest wish of the deceased mother was that her son would find Jesus. His hardened heart broke, and he became a loving Christian and church member.—S. Wittwer, Darmstadt, Germany.

Yearly theme banner

You might stimulate spiritual interest and morale in your congregation by unveiling a theme banner at the beginning of each year. In my church we select a theme phrase such as "1995: Our Year of Discovery" and inscribe it in felt letters at the top of the banner. During the next 12 months we record what God is doing among us by placing symbols on the banner. Every significant event that takes place in the life of the church family is recorded on the banner.

Baptisms are symbolized by white doves, baby dedications by baby shoes, an evangelistic series by an open Bible, a Breathe Free program with a broken cigarette. Finally, on the last Sabbath of the year we look back and recount how God has blessed us. Some members stand and share a testimony as to how they see themselves symbolized on the banner.

Our annual theme banner is a tremendous adult visual aid that fosters praise to God.—David Jamieson, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Ideas for stress without distress

Take a "minute vacation" . . . and remember a happy time. When things pile up—take one at a time.

Share your love with someone.

Have a good laugh.

Smile.

Sort out the possible from the impossible.

Share a dream with a friend.

Give yourself a pat on the back.

Give someone else a pat on the back.

—Dan Tohline, Jonesboro, Louisiana.

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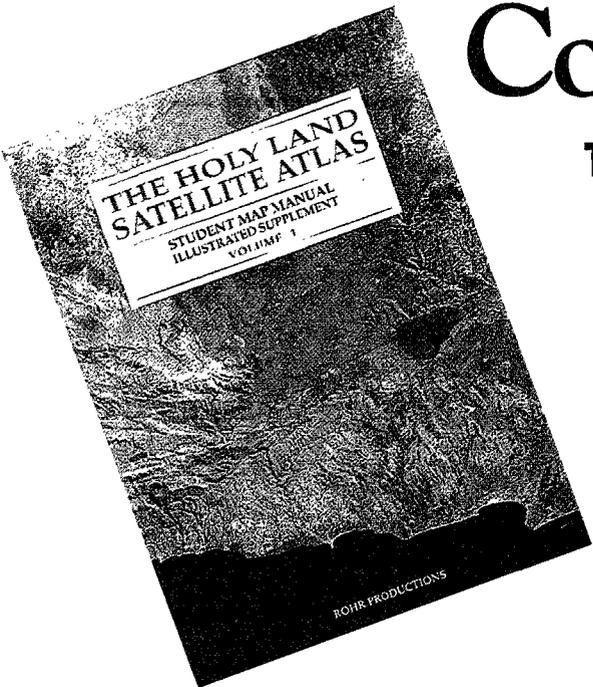
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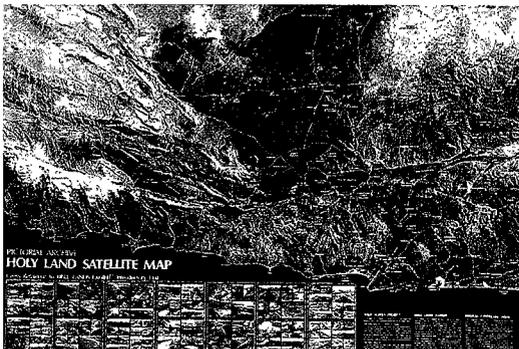
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