

Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

May 1996



PASTORING IN A MULTICULTURAL SETTING

Proving more than intended

In insisting on a significant difference between Paul's culture and ours, did George Knight (March 1996) intend to prove that in such passages as 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34 that Paul was banning women in that culture from performing the functions of a prophet? Does not Paul's acknowledgment of women prophesying in 1 Cor. 11:5 show that the gift of prophecy was an exception to the rule regarding the "silence" of women?

A prophet's position is entirely different from that of a pastor or teacher. When a pastor speaks in the church he can do nothing but present his own studied understanding of truth. But a prophet's message is the very word of God, the human vessel itself claims no weight of authority whatsoever. Therefore the limitations expressed in those passages would not apply to prophets, either in Paul's day or in ours.—Ken LeBrun, Pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Measuring success in ministry and Searching for authentic ministry

Two of the articles in your January issue should be made required reading for every pastor: Steve Willsey's "Measuring success in ministry" and "Searching for authentic ministry" by Morris Venden. Both are masterful accounts of self-discovery and road maps for the wise.

From where I sit in the pew, the position of pastor is the highest possible calling. Pastors are those who

- do not insult my intelligence by serving up warmed-over seminary sermons,
- do not betray a lack of serious study by using sermon illustrations from popular TV shows,

- do not "wing it" for their sermons without preparation; but who, rather, reveal in their sermons a deep, personal, experiential relationship with God,
- make use of multiple versions of Scripture and many Bible dictionaries to convey just the right meanings and the background of each text, . . .
- spend at least 20 prayerful hours a week on their *principal* job: sermon preparation . . .
- realize that as pastors their sphere of influence is exponentially greater than that of an administrator.

Unfortunately, too many of our pastors today are converted to the *organization*, but not to the *message*. Thank you for your work to combat this trend.

PS: I first subscribed to *Ministry* nearly 40 years ago as a dean of girls in an Adventist academy. Now as a practicing attorney, member of the conference association board and many church committees. I find it is becoming more and more difficult to find a church pastor who is truly a scholar. My concern is that superficiality in sermons, mere *score-keeping* for membership quotas, are the norm—to the exclusion of *nurture* of the existing members, and true Christian scholarship. Thank you for your attempts to change this situation.—Catherine Lang Titus, Glendale, California.

Ghosts on the way to the pulpit

I commend authors Thomsen and Blackmon (January 1996) for their preparedness to discuss factors that generate exit from the Adventist ministry. Their discussion of psychological and emotional "ghosts" that shadow decisions to enter ministry,

which in time "undermine effectiveness" and "sabotage" the careers of ministers, is a timely one.

For a long time fallout from the ministry was a characteristic of main-line denominations, but in the light of what we have witnessed during the past 20 years one can argue with confidence that Adventism has come of age. During the 1980s and 1990s an equivalent of 40 percent of the present ministerial workforce in Australia and New Zealand left the ministry. In comparative terms the fallout is equivalent to four large conferences of pastors, and one of the highest rates of exit of any denomination in the world.

What has occurred in this division cannot be accounted for by attributing blame to the personal characteristics and psychological limitations of individual actors. Thomsen and Blackmon overlook the importance of structural-organizational factors. My doctoral research on pastors who left the Adventist ministry in the South Pacific Division during the 1980s revealed that institutional processes and leadership issues played a critical role in why pastors leave. The interviews revealed that the problem is systemic. Ex-pastors describe an organizational culture of secrecy, deception, and oppression as factors that eroded commitment to ministry and brought about their exit.

More than this, my research revealed that every Adventist pastor has the potential of becoming an ex-pastor and that any genuine effort to address fallout from the Adventist ministry must also focus the spotlight on the organization.—P. H. Ballis, Ph.D., lecturer in sociology, Monash University, Australia.

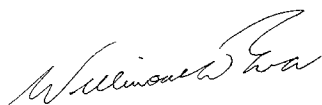
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It hardly needs to be said that at an ever increasing pace, pastors all over the world find themselves in the midst of dynamically changing situations. Without question, among the most forceful influences prompting this change is the moving and mixing of different peoples from almost every part of the world to almost every part of it. Caught up in this mixing, we ministers have felt the challenging demographic changes in our churches. Yet generally, we may not have come to see with clear focus that this restless migrating of people nationally and internationally is demanding great change in the church and changes in how ministry is to be done.

So far, much of our attempt to adjust to this new phenomenon has been quite limited. There seems to be a certain amount of ambivalence and guesswork that goes on among us as we try to deal with the new cultural diversity within our congregations. Further, pastoral training opportunities in this arena are rather sparse.

Because there is a significant felt need among pastors to handle these settings more constructively, we have taken a small step in addressing the matter of multicultural ministry by making it the theme of this month's issue. The articles by Lawrence Downing, Caleb Rosado, and Roland Smith each approach our theme from a different angle. Serious attempts were made without success to get non-North American perspectives.

The remaining articles in this issue are definitely outstanding in their quality. This edition is worth reading in depth.



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The intercultural imperative

Willmore D. Eva

I had just given myself the easy out of not editorializing on this month's sensitive theme, pastoring in a multicultural setting. Then it struck me soundly that if editing *Ministry* is not a thoroughly multicultural venture, then what is? Working with this journal may not be pastoring, but it certainly is multicultural ministry. At the same time I realized that in this shrinking, mobile planet of ours, rising numbers of us in the church will never again do ministry in simple monocultural settings. The more one senses the migratory trends of relocating peoples, the more one understands the critical nature of this multicultural theme.

Assorted cultures have always mixed with one another. For the past two or three centuries more and more human clusters, whose cultures are seriously diverse from one another, have been thrown together in all kinds of unprecedentedly complex combinations. And this prolific mixing is still in high gear all over the world. The relatively recent increased movement around the globe began with sailing vessels and stagecoaches, and has proliferated into the fastest and most sophisticated forms of effortless intercontinental transfer. And now significantly, there are not only jets and printed media, telephones and faxes that bring people together, but also a World-Wide-Web.

With the unanticipated mixtures of people at least two conflicting dynamics have presented themselves: The obvious essential of "getting along" with one another in some semblance of unity, and the powerful, on-the-rise desire to maintain our cultural, racial, national, religious, and other distinc-

tions. As we blend, we feel the need to get along. But the more we intermix, the more threatened are those cultural distinctives so deep in all of us. We must find a universal "language," and be able to speak together about relevant issues. But which language is it going to be and whose issues will we take up and who will do the talking and who the listening?

The active reality is that in this burgeoning international blending we will unavoidably be forced more and more to find ways of communicating meaningfully on a universal scale. In all this, I believe international media such as *Ministry* will have an increasingly important role to play. Thus the heart of the challenge to *Ministry* is at its core the same as the challenge to multicultural local congregations all over the world: How can we be fair and relevant to pastors in California, and at the same time speak meaningfully to those in Botswana?

A significant part of me says, "We must come to a point where each world division of the church produces its own *Ministry* edition, perhaps along with a centrally published cadre of truly international articles." Although this is already being done in one or two significant places, for many this possibility presents a formidable task. And in the long run, would this plan by itself do the job?

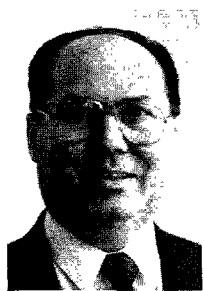
There are other possibilities that fascinate me with thoughts that are new. What if we embrace our multicultural internationalness? What if we look this vast world and all our differences and similarities squarely in the face and, seizing the visionary initiative, agree that we will intentionally begin to look

at one another and at the world as God looks at it. In the reality of things as they are developing on this planet, is this not the only viable path left open for us? And is it not the community of God, who in the light of the best New Testament tradition has the privilege of demonstrating that this sort of thing can at least be attempted with some success?

Is this starry-eyed idealism? Not really, if one looks thoughtfully at what actually happened on that particular day of Pentecost when everyone in multicultural, multilingual Jerusalem heard the message in their own language. Wasn't it something like this that Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and the others lived to bring to the first-century world church and were quite successful in doing? (See Acts 10 and 11, and references all through the Pauline letters.)

This matter was and is foundational to the Christian vision: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28, NIV). "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. . . . His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two [or the many]" (Eph. 2:14, 15, NIV). And if this is not done in the arenas of our practical daily ministry, then where will it be done? In being citizens of the Kingdom, are we not a new humanity clearly characterized by living our lives together as fellow subjects in Christ's ever new world community? For instance, I am no longer state-citizen White or provincial-citizen Black, but instead new earth-citizen White/Black or Black/White.

Continued on page 17



A house of worship for all people

Joel Sarli

Call it by any name or all its names but it is the single most disturbing issue of our time. Black and White, Hispanic and Asian, Bosnian and Serbian, Arab and Jew, Hindu and Muslim, Catholic and Protestant, Tutsi and Hutu. Only the geography is different—the tragedy remains the same: the passionate division of humanity into warring camps in the name of religion or tribe or ethnic origin.

Out of that tragedy arises a question for the church. How should the body of Jesus face ethnic diversity? There are those who argue for ethnic congregations in the name of the homogeneous principles of church growth. We say with some accuracy that church ties become stronger and their melding more natural and rapid when people of one ethnic group reach out to members of the same group. Christians who fully identify with the special social, linguistic, and cultural setting of a group can meet the needs of that group. And in meeting that need, there is a sense of mission accomplished.

To a point the argument for homogeneous congregation and witness can be justified. But at a deeper level, we need to raise another important question: the meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Is the establishment of ethnic congregations consistent with the gospel of reconciliation? Cannot people of many nations worship together and form one congregation united in Christ? Are cultural nuances stronger than the unifying and transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus? What is the motivation behind the existence of any

congregation—culture or Christian mission?

Intentional outreach

The church must be intentional in planning the outreach strategy of fulfilling its mission to people of diversity. That was the force behind the growth of the apostolic church: Pentecost drove the disciples to carry the gospel to every nation and tribe, crossing all the frontiers between people. The mission of Christ, not culture, was their driving force. Indeed the power of their Christ and His mission broke down all walls of partition and created one body in which the glory of the risen Lord could be witnessed.

How should the body of Jesus face ethnic diversity?

The gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't justify the creation of a local congregation on the basis of ethnic isolation or identity. Indeed, the assertion of such ethnic exclusivism is an insult to the reconciling genius of the gospel. If we worship the same Creator God, and if we believe in the same transforming Saviour, what prevents us from worshipping together under the same roof and sharing the oneness of fellowship? Isn't this the reason the apostle Paul argued for a reconciling and unifying ministry to the Christian church: "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of recon-

ciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

Where there is the ministry of reconciliation, the true body of Jesus triumphs. Antioch showed us the way. Made up of people from different ethnic origins, the body of Jesus emerged there under the name "Christian." Today's ethnic challenge to the Christian church is not to build separate churches to serve various ethnic groups, but to bring all ethnic groups under the overarching imperative of Christian proclamation and mission. Where the church is so intentionally united, there arises the motivation for evangelism and mission. Was this not the case in Antioch, where the Christian mission was born?

The Antioch effect can grip your church, if your church is intentionally multicultural in its fellowship, worship, and mission. The procedure, of course, is not easy. Pastors must take the lead and relate themselves to people of diversity. The worship service may need adjustments to include elements that would honor diversity while worshipping in a spirit of unity. Members may need to develop a spirit of unconditional acceptance. The entire church will need to yield itself to the movings of the Spirit in order to catch the vision of Isaiah: "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:7). ■

A multiethnic church: an intentional decision

**Lawrence G.
Downing**

**“An House of
Prayer for All
People” is more
than a slogan.**



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pastor of the Seventh-
day Adventist church,
Anaheim, California.*

Ethnic and cultural diversity have revolutionized how churches and pastors fulfill their ministry. We live in a global village. It is no longer necessary to go to foreign lands to find people of other cultures and races. They live next door. These population shifts bring fresh challenges and opportunities for ministry.

My wife and I came to the Gardena, California, Adventist Church in 1969. Gardena has the largest Japanese population of any American city. It is home to Japan Air Lines, Toyota, Datsun, Sony, and other Japanese corporations. The ethnic diversity of the city reflects in the Adventist church. It had 25 Japanese-speaking members meeting in the youth chapel. The Gardena church also served as a satellite campus for a Los Angeles Adventist Japanese language school. The church soon had its own language school, led by a husband-and-wife team invited from Japan.

The school became our most significant community outreach. With an enrollment of more than 350 students, it is one of two schools in America accredited by the Japanese Ministry of Education. Students come from the local community and from families of executives on assignment from Japan.

A further dynamic was added to the congregation when a Samoan group united with us. Two Samoan elders asked if they could join our congregation. I promised to get back with them after talking with church elders. I spoke individually with the elders from the Japanese and English language groups and found a positive response. We invited the Samoans to meet with the board of elders and the church board.

Soon the Samoan group became part of the Gardena congregation. We were becoming a mini United Nations.

The addition of the Samoan group to our congregation brought home a significant point: the pastor's attitude, behavior, and skills make a difference. People appreciate positive but realistic attitudes, and nothing substitutes for good communication.

Common problems

A routine problem in multiethnic, multilingual ministry is sharing the common facility. The person who functions best with clockwork precision may easily be frustrated when more than one group uses the same facility. It works well when the rule is followed that whoever is first on the church master calendar has priority. Problems arise when neither group has cleared its plans with the church office and both wish to use the church simultaneously. A well-orchestrated church master calendar is clearly an important part of multicultural church life.

A high-use facility will show wear. When pastors or other leaders observe this and make a habit of telling the board that “these people” do not supervise their children properly, and that “the kids are tearing up the building,” those who like to recall the days when the building was theirs alone arise to recall the days when. . . .

Rule: When a problem is presented, talk to leaders from the group tied to the problem and seek solutions there. Keep discussion of negative information on a need-to-know basis. Allow for extra costs when budgeting, and practice containment.

I encourage multicultural congregations to adopt a policy that any Adventist groups seeking to share church facilities will become members of the congregation and be governed equally by one board. This policy softens the "them versus us" mentality.

Functioning on a budget

Another policy that will minimize frustration and loss is for the church board to adopt a financial procedure that stipulates all money collected on the church property will be turned over to the church treasurer. The church board can consider requests to solicit funds for special projects.

This kind of voted annual budget avoids disputes over how much money is available for various projects, even if those projects are to be influenced by multicultural concerns. For example, Sabbath school leaders know how much money they have to buy rewards for those who come to Sabbath school on time. Youth leaders know exactly what they can spend on a recreational event. When a budget controls expenditures, each leader knows the amount available. When that amount is spent, the leader cannot expect the treasurer to find extra money without prior board approval. People come to understand and appreciate this policy.

Day-to-day ministry in the multicultural church

Not all groups view election to church office in the same way. With some groups the nominating committee has to beg and negotiate to fill offices. In other groups people politic and maneuver to gain election. They bring up erroneous or hurtful information to block the election of another. Pastors cannot take sides, but they can challenge hearsay and rumor. We can ask people to consider human frailty and the meaning of forgiveness. And there are times to take a stand, either for or against a position. When we do, however, we must make sure that we act justly and on the basis of correct information.

Various groups have differing

approaches to evangelism and mission. To some, public evangelism is important. Others emphasize personal and "web" evangelism. And there are those who work on the conversion of the leader of a family or clan with the hope that other family members will follow.

Each language or ethnic group within a congregation has its own particular needs and accepts certain traditions and customs as standard operating procedure. It is possible to circumvent these factors, but at a cost. For example, it might not be customary in a given ethnic group to permit non-Adventists to preach the Sabbath morning sermon. I may not agree with the custom, but it is so important to this group that it is not worth the emotional trauma to counter it. I might privately speak to the elders. If there is a change of opinion I will go ahead and arrange for the Sabbath sermon. Until then, however, no one but Adventists preach in that church.

Spending time with the elders and leaders of various groups is invaluable. They know the nuances that are part of each group's culture. They know what's going on with their group. The church elders belonging to non-American-born groups usually keep closer to their members than do leaders from among traditional American circles. When problems arise, talk first to the leaders and trust their advice.

It did not take me long to learn that people do not fit stereotypes. It takes time before the barriers that divide cultures and ethnic groups are lowered, but when we know and trust one another we begin to share life together.

Ethnic dynamics at work

It is important for the pastor to know the dynamics involved when cultures and ethnic groups meet. What at first appears on the surface may be appearance only. The significant realities lie deeper. A pastor needs to find that deeper level. For example, even though all speak the same language, they may not all think alike. Far from it! A Peruvian is not a Chilean; a Mexican is not an Argentinean; and yet they may all

speak the same language. A language or script will be one factor uniting a people, but many other factors may separate them. Understand each group from within its own ethos and relate to each one accordingly.

In a congregation that works well, each person perceives the other as an equal before the Lord. One way our church affirms equality is that we do not include any title in the printed bulletin. An illiterate person may share the platform with a person with doctoral degrees, and the bulletin does not reflect that fact.

The Anaheim story

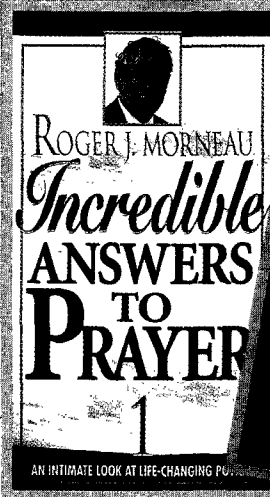
The Anaheim congregation I've pastored is a diverse community—ethnically, culturally, racially, and linguistically. On any given Sabbath the platform may be shared by a gardener and a physician, a woman from Colombia and a man from Oklahoma. At a recent fellowship meal 10 of us sat around a table. We represented eight countries.

In 1988 the congregation, upon a church board recommendation, approved the formation of a Spanish-language section within our parish. This, of course, did not happen overnight.

A year earlier two Spanish-speaking persons began attending the worship service. Each arrived late and left immediately after the closing hymn. One Sabbath I left the platform early to intercept one of them as he made his way to the parking lot. I introduced myself and asked his name. I said I would like to meet him for lunch the next week. He invited me to his office instead.

He told me he had been visiting area churches, ascertaining their various reactions to Spanish-speaking people. He had asked two pastors how they felt about starting a Spanish Sabbath school class. Neither approved the idea. He asked my opinion, and I asked him when he wanted to start. He laughed. He told me that he and his family had attended a Spanish church for many years, but now that his children were

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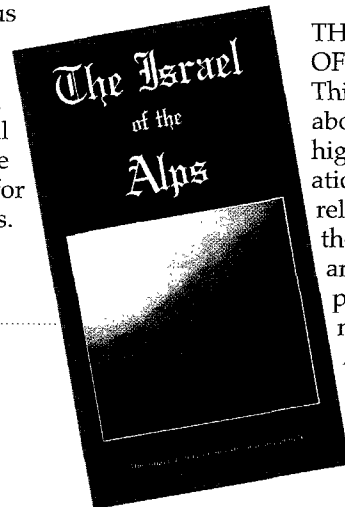
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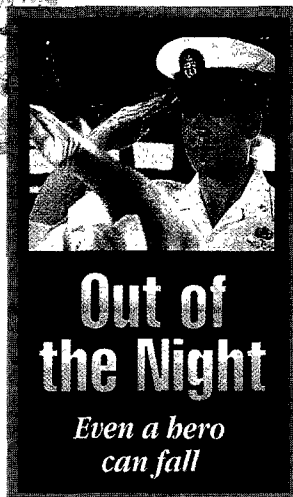
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starting academy, they wanted to go to an English Sabbath school. None were available in the Spanish churches. He further explained that he believed there was a need in the area for a church in which people had both English and Spanish services available. The older people and those new to North America like Spanish, but the young people in the same family may prefer English. If there were a congregation that offered both, such families could attend the same church together each week.

I told him I thought our church board would welcome an opportunity to fill this need. I told him I would meet with the Sabbath school leaders to confirm my invitation to begin a Spanish class as soon as possible; the children could attend the children's and youth divisions because they spoke English anyway.

The Sabbath school superintendent thought this was an excellent idea, and the Spanish class began. The class grew, and in a few weeks we started a full Spanish Sabbath school. Within a year the church business session appointed officers to be in charge of a Spanish worship service.

Not all the church members agreed that inviting another language group was beneficial or practical. A few expressed concerns about being taken over by the Spanish people. They worried that the English-speaking members would begin to leave, something that had happened at a nearby church a short time earlier. Others asked why we should start another Spanish congregation. Weren't there enough already? Pastors of Spanish congregations privately told me that the people who came to our group would likely be those who did not fit into the regular Spanish churches in the area. "Expect troublemakers," they warned.

I made a personal decision not to argue or debate with those who opposed establishing a new presence in the congregation. No one wins this kind of debate. I listened to what people said

and expressed concern for their opinions. I recognized their frustration and anger and acknowledged how they felt when they looked around and saw so many they did not know and heard a language they did not understand. Some people said they felt like strangers in their own home. They wondered if there were a place for them anymore. Some felt these things so strongly that they did, in fact, leave.

The feelings these people expressed are valid. One can predict that they will be present. But if a pastor wants a given multicultural project to fly, he or she must not agree or side with those who oppose the venture. If people see the pastor siding with those who want

Go where the people are. Attend their cultural celebrations. Find out their needs and seek ways to fill those needs.

to keep things as they are, or if you as pastor are not sold on the concept, pull the plug and save everyone the wasted energy! If you wish the project to succeed, it will.

Starting a multiethnic ministry

If your congregation does not have a multiethnic/multicultural ministry, do not conclude it is because people of diverse backgrounds are not there. To find out what groups live in your community, observe the children who come to the neighborhood schools. Go to city hall and examine recent demographic studies. Drive around your town and look at the church signs. Even small-town churches have foreign-language services. If you see signs in Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Romanian, or other languages, you know there is a potential group available for inclusion into your congregation. After you do a

brief community survey, you can move to the next step.

Talk to the members in your church who are interested in opening the doors to other people. Share what you have found. Remember the choice to welcome other people is an intentional decision. "An House of Prayer for All People" should be more than a slogan. Share your dream and listen to the response. If it is positive, move ahead to work through several main areas of concentration.

Language is one factor. If there is a member of your church who speaks the language of the target group, you already have a head start. However, a person does not have to understand a language before being accepted by other people, nor does one need to speak another's language to influence them. Interest in what others think or do opens many doors. Go where the people are. Attend their cultural celebrations. Find out their needs and seek ways to fill those needs. Expect a positive response. People new to a community welcome those who take an interest in their lives.

Establishing an English as a Second Language class is one way to meet a need. If you decide to begin classes, keep expectations realistic. Attendance will likely be small and spasmodic. People often work long and varied hours. Transportation and child care are problems, and there is little money available for class tuition.

It is important that the pastor or church leader spend time learning about people, their history and traditions, their religion and culture. People love to share this information with anyone who shows interest. Treat people and their backgrounds with respect.

Immigrant populations usually view pastors as authority figures. It is important to them that the pastor be seen at official functions and that he or she visit their worship services as often as possible. Church plays an important role

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The crisis of stress



Counseling
people in
crisis

Winton H. Beaven

Dealing with stress and burnout in caring professions

Stress is a fact of life. You are under stress when you drive to work, when you are late to work, when you receive unexpected company, when you chair a meeting, when your pet dies. Happiness, sadness, pain, trauma, cold, heat, worry, all produce the same symptoms of stress within the body. Stress affects all age levels. You may experience nausea, have a sudden headache, start to perspire, have an increased heart rate, feel tightening of the muscles in your back or around your forehead, burst into tears, or bite your nails. During stress your body works to readjust itself to normal functioning.

The relationship of stress to physical and mental health is a comparatively recent discovery and is ongoing. Hans Selye, the “father” of stress medicine, developed and popularized the term *stress* in 1946.¹ According to Selye, “stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it.”²

Stress-producing factors

Stress-producing factors are called “stressors.” They can be the desire to win a game, the necessity to perform well in a public place, or sympathizing with a person suffering great loss. They are all different, but they all elicit essentially the same biological response. Conceptualizing stress in biological terms, Selye developed the theory of general adaptation syndrome (GAS). GAS encompasses three stages: the alarm reaction, in which the body reacts to the stressor; resistance or adaptation; and exhaustion, when adaptation is lost.

Stress also has a psychological nature. It is a response state, the intensity of which is determined by individual perception and interpretation. People respond differently to the same stressors. A traffic jam may mildly irritate one person and completely traumatize another. The point to note is that the amount of stress cannot be determined by examining the stressors alone. The context in which the stress occurs and the previous experience of the individuals affected are also important. Furthermore, the threat of stress may produce the same effects as the stressor itself.

Stress is often associated with the unpleasant in life. This can lead to the view that if we avoid stressful situations, we will be better off. And indeed, in cases of severe stress with a known cause the temporary flight from this stress may be a necessary therapeutic approach. However, one cannot successfully flee from stress; that is achieved only with death.

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Manage or burnout

The bottom line is: we must manage stress, or else burn out. Burnout occurs when our adaptive energy is gone. Selye theorized that each of us has a reservoir of adaptive energy from which we can withdraw, but there is no proof we can also make deposits.³ We can squander our resources or we can learn to make this resource last by using it sparingly in worthwhile causes—if possible, in those that cause the least distress.

Symptoms of burnout vary, but there is a common core: loss of concern, loss of feeling, a feeling of detachment, a tendency to treat others in a dehumanized way. All this may end in a feeling of utter hopelessness.

How do we cope with stresses and avoid burnout? Of all the characteristics that humans have and animals do not, the one that stands out most is our ability to do something about our condition. "Learn to ignore what you can't control and learn to control what you can," writes Dr. Peter G. Hanson, author of *The Joy of Stress*, a best-seller. "Take an active role in your own management; do not be just a passive tourist through life."

Our goal, then, is to learn to manage stress so that it is not unduly destructive. But how do we do that?

Health and stress management

Dr. Robert Veninga, coauthor of *The Work-Stress Connection*, reported that in his research 19 out of 20 sufferers from burnout were physically unfit and were not following a healthful diet or exercising appropriately. The first line of defense against pressure is the confidence that comes from being vibrantly alive, physically and emotionally.

Thinking positively helps in accommodating stress. The most cheerful characters in any group of people are those who deal with life's tribulations most effectively. A cheerful mind can turn stress into a positive force.

A third ingredient in good stress management is spiritual health. Just as physical health requires a regimen of exercise and good health practices, so too, spiritual health requires regular study, devotions, and personal prayer.

Stress and helping professions

Anyone can burn out; it is not in and of itself an indication of personal weakness. Certain professions, however, seem to be more dangerous than others. These jobs can be called stress carriers and produce a higher level of stress than others. Noteworthy in this regard are all the helping professions. Pastors, physicians, counselors, teachers, nurses, social workers, and other similar caregivers are in this category. In addition, workers in heavily bureaucratic organizations and managers/executives in general have high levels of stress. Finally, women in the world of work have special problems unique in degree to their gender roles.

We shall focus on caregiver burnout. However, the prevention and treatment principles apply to any professional or work situation.

In high levels of burnout stress we often face the problem

of diagnosis. Most burnout symptoms are so generalized that pinpointing cause can be frustrating. In addition, there is no test with an established high validity that is very helpful. For emotional illness, several accepted diagnostic tests are available. No such tests have yet been developed for burnout. However, I have found two self-diagnostic instruments to be useful in preliminary diagnosis. The first and simplest self-instrument was developed by Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson.⁴ The second, slightly more comprehensive, appears in Beverly Potter's work. In diagnosis, of course, there is no good substitute for a skillful physician.

Coping with burnout

How, then, do we learn to cope effectively with stress in our lives, to prevent burnout or recover from burnout? The key word is *cop*ing! Coping refers to efforts to master conditions of harm or threat when an automatic response is not readily available.⁵ It is a continuous process with no foreseeable end. It focuses on dealing with chronic stresses inherent in everyday life.

Richard Lazarus⁶ has been a leader in stress research. In the course of his research he created a coping grid. This grid summarizes all the possible actions one can take in dealing with severe stress. It looks like this:

	ACTIVE	INACTIVE
DIRECT	Changing the source of stress Confronting source Adopting a positive attitude	Ignoring the source of stress Avoiding source Leaving
INDIRECT	Talking about source Changing self Getting involved in other activity	Alcohol/Drugs Getting ill Collapsing

To illustrate the application of the grid, let us assume that the source of the stress is a very difficult boss. What am I going to do about my high stress level precipitated by a paranoid boss? In looking at the grid, I choose "direct action." I try to change the boss. If this doesn't appear to be a good strategy, I can confront the boss. If either or both of these courses are unsuccessful, I can adopt an attitude that says that there are so many good features of my job that I'll develop a positive attitude toward the boss and live with the situation. This is direct coping strategy. It is applied externally to the environmental source of the stress.

Instead of a direct active strategy, I could choose an indirect active strategy, that is, a strategy applied internally to my behavior and emotions. I conclude that the effectiveness of attempting to confront or change the boss is a problematic choice. Thus I might join groups of other unhappy depart

mental colleagues in criticizing “the chief.” I participate in this frequently. I try to change my own behavior to reduce friction by involving myself in activity away from my direct workplace.

As time goes on—say, a period of three years—I come to the conclusion that I could not change the working conditions so that they are bearable. I slowly slide into the direct inactive mode. I avoid the department chair, and at the end of three years I resign. I do not adopt the indirect inactive choice, which is obviously destructive and futile.

The grid can be applied to any high-stress situation in which the source of stress is known and capable of confrontation/change.

Which strategy to adopt?

Is one strategy better than another so that one could generalize successfully? Hard data is scarce, but research reported by Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson indicates: “that active strategies were used most often to cope with burnout and were reported most successful. Inactive strategies were used less frequently and were reported least successful: the more frequent the use of active strategies, the less burnout; the more frequent the use of inactive strategies, the more burnout. An exception to this pattern was the direct inactive action of ignoring the source; this action was found more similar to the active strategies than to the passive ones.”⁷

One should not assume that in every case a particular coping strategy is most effective. On the contrary, every situation tends to have some uniqueness, and people may behave in accordance with their own temperament patterns in such a way as to make generalization hazardous. The best coping is done on a case-to-case basis, not by a formula approach.

Social support

Social support is another effective strategy. Social support is “information leading subjects to believe that they are cared for, loved, esteemed, and valued and that they belong to a network of support.”⁸ Research indicates that social support helps is effective in prevention of as well as in recovery from burnout.

What does social support provide?

The first need met by human supporters is “hand-holding.” Everyone needs one or more people who will actively listen to them without giving advice or making judgments. People need to be able to share joy and pain, success or failure, with a human being. Occasionally, under stress, people need to be able to “blow their tops” in a safe environment where a good listener is understanding and sympathetic.

Second, those in professional life in general, and in caregiving in particular, need to have people who can appreciate what they do from a knowledgeable point of view and understand the technical demands their work lays upon them. Most ministers, for example, are solo performers: one pastor, one church or church district. It is likely that there is no one available to give expert, honest feedback on their performance. To provide technical support, the individual must be competent

in the field and have integrity enough to be trusted. That person’s technical appreciation becomes a significant validation of the pastor’s ministry.

These two services performed by competent and trusted colleagues can be differentiated by a simple anatomical contrast. When we are doing well, we need someone to validate our efforts by a pat on the back. When we have gone stale, we need someone to apply more vigorous pressure about 18 inches lower on the back. Support or challenge!

Total personal support

Occasionally we need more than listening and hand-holding. We need a kind of support that can be called total personal support regardless of circumstances. In stressful times we need someone who is with us no matter what, who gives us total acceptance without regard to how we are performing.

When we are performing poorly or have “given up,” we may need emotional challenge. We may gradually build defense mechanisms that make it difficult for us to evaluate performance objectively. When we have been overcome by emotional stress, we may find it easy to wallow in our misery. At such times we need emotional challenge from someone we can trust.

Lifestyle and burnout

We experience burnout not as the result of a major stressor, but from an accumulation of minor stressors. If that is the case, an examination of one’s lifestyle is strongly indicated. If you are suffering high-level stress and have not yet pinpointed adequate cause, you might look at one or more of the following potential problems.

Poor time management is one of the most frequent causes of burnout. If you are continually running behind, you need to annotate every minute of waking time for at least two weeks. Such an exercise will reveal one or more of the following situations:

1. You do not have appropriate time controls on your activities. You do not keep appointments on schedule but continually run over.
2. You do things that you do not schedule and thus repeatedly are off schedule.
3. You do not allot enough time to do what you plan.

There are other possible scenarios. Do your two-week diary and diagnose the difficulties. Then plan your strategies for change, enlist the cooperation of spouse, children, and colleagues—and *change*. After an appropriate period, evaluate, adjust, and continue.

Another frequent problem is realistic goal setting. While attempting the difficult and stretching one’s capabilities is laudable, acknowledging one’s limitations is absolutely essential to maintain tolerable stress levels.

Strategies to reduce stress

Strategies for reducing stress in caregiving involves development of certain special skills. These skills help the

caregiver to survive in an atmosphere that requires dealing semi-continuously with persons who are under high levels of stress.

First, there is detached concern, a term coined by Harold Leif and Renee Fox in the context of medical care. "The empathetic physician is sufficiently detached or objective in his attitudes toward the patient to exercise sound medical judgment and keep his equanimity, yet he also has enough concern for the patient to give him sensitive and understanding care." In this way, "the patient, rather than just his liver, heart, or even psyche, is the concern of the physician."⁹

"Detached concern" applies not only to physicians but to all caregivers and most particularly to ministers, nurses, and other counselors. It is an attempt to find a middle road between being so concerned with the needs of the counselee that one loses objectivity and becomes less professionally capable, and becoming so self-protective that one has complete detachment and thus becomes dehumanized.

Another protective skill is the ability to separate one's life and work. This is particularly important for a minister, and at the same time extremely difficult. But it can be done! One should have a life outside of work.

Use of decompression techniques is another skill that helps avoid or reduce unduly high stress levels. Decompression is an escape valve involving a general slowdown; a time to be quiet, meditate, exercise, or relax. In high-tension work situations decompression techniques may need to be followed several times a day. The greatest need for decompression is at the end of the workday.

The two hours after work are the hours that pose the greatest domestic hazards caused by job stress; this is especially true in a two-parent working family. The wife comes home to face husband, children, and new role stressors with little relief. The husband comes home seeking a little peace and rest as he peruses the paper. Both greet each other at the door unloading the day or calling each other to home duties with no respite. Home, instead of a haven, becomes a new stress threat.

Some of this can be avoided by accepting the reality and by careful planning to share the burdens and use decompression techniques. You can agree not to deal with family discipline until *after* the meal. You can agree not to deal with major problems until a measure of quiet and relaxation has been achieved. You can alternate roles—both parents and children—to provide variety and share both stress and relaxation.

In the professional work world a relatively new stress factor has been added in recent years. It is called the power lunch. Working hours are not enough—we must work through lunch. If you do this and do not take other "breaks," you have created for yourself a workday without major relief. Remember, our premise is preventing burnout. *It is not stress that is the problem; it is unrelieved stress.*

"And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?" (Matt. 6:27, RSV). ■

CONTINUING EDUCATION EXERCISE

The crisis of stress

1. Acknowledgment. Do you have one or more major stressors that are causing pain or undue tension?

2. Description. Describe *one*. How long has it been operative? Is there a foreseeable terminal point to this high-level stress?

3. Treatment. What remedies have you tried in the past? Did any improve conditions? Have you neglected doing something because of fear or timidity?

4. Prescription. Among the strategies suggested for dealing with this stressor, which one (or ones) have you not tried? Choose one that might help.

5. Implementation. After appropriate time, evaluate, adjust, or change.

Suggested reading

Freudenberger, H. J., and G. North. *Women's Burnout*. New York: Penguin Books, 1986. The best look at this topic.

Pines, Ayala, and Elliot Aronson. *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*. New York: Free Press, 1988. The best single volume on the general topic of stress.

Potter, Beverly A. *Beating Job Burnout*. San Francisco: Harbour Publishing, 1980. A thorough look on job burnout.

Sanford, John A. *Ministry Burnout*. New York: Paulist Press, 1982. No single volume on ministry burnout tells it all. This is a good one.

Selye, Hans. *The Stress of Life*, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978. A classic, and still the best overall treatment of the subject.

¹ H. Selye, "The General Adaptation Syndrome and the Disease of Adaptation," *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology* 6 (1947): pp. 117-130.

² ———, *Stress Without Distress* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1974), pp. 27, 28.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See A. Pines and E. Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures* (New York: Free Press, 1988).

⁵ See A. Monat and R. S. Lazarus, *Stress and Coping* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Pines and Aronson, p. 146.

⁸ S. Cobb, "Social Support as a Moderator of Life Stress," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 5, No. 38: 300-314.

⁹ H. I. Lief and R. C. Fox, "Training for 'Detached Concern' in Medical Students," *The Psychological Basis of Medical Practice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

Coming in June

Crisis ministry to the terminally ill

Pastors' kids: in and out

**Carole Brousson
Anderson**

**What makes them
stay in the church?
What makes them
leave?**



Carole Brousson Anderson, Ph.D., is a practicing psychologist and pastor's wife in British Columbia, Canada.

Not all children of pastors choose to remain in the church.

To find out why, I sent a survey to more than 900 adults who were pastors' kids (PKs). Six hundred responded. I divided these responses into two groups: one group that did not want to identify themselves as Adventists, even though some of them called themselves Christians; another group that still remained part of the Adventist Church. I analyzed the responses to identify possible themes that would help us understand why some PKs leave and others stay in the church.

Interestingly, the themes had more to do with the children's perception of their parents and their child-rearing practices rather than with the church as a whole.

The PKs that stayed: parental strengths

How did PKs who stayed in the church perceive their parents? My survey revealed five general perceptions. These are by no means exhaustive.

Parental love and support. When asked what they thought had influenced their religious choices the most, parental love and support came out on the top. One PK mentioned: "My mother and I seldom saw eye-to-eye. But I was important enough to her that she kept working on our relationship even when I was too stubborn or too immature. Finally my mother won the battle, and we are now closer than ever. If my mother wouldn't give up hope in me, neither would God." Here is a person who could transfer parental love and patience to her understanding of God.

Parental love and support can be expressed in many ways. One is spending time together. One father made it a priority to be home in the mornings to play with his preschool children. Another made breakfast a special family time during which the family was always together. Still others had special family vacations that everyone looked forward to.

Freedom to choose. A second factor cited for staying in the church is the freedom that clergy parents gave their children to make choices. Without forcing their opinions or ideas, but gently guiding them where necessary, parents encouraged their children to be themselves, make choices, and develop their own personal relationship with Jesus. One young man said, "My parents were wonderful and consistent role models. They allowed me to make my choices while providing strong guidance. Their approach was firm but gentle. I never felt the need to rebel because their beliefs were not forced on me. I have been able to develop my own relationship with God and recognize the value in the way I was raised."

Building self-esteem is another significant factor cited by PKs who stayed in the church. "My parents are not perfect," said one, "but I know I could count on them. They always made me feel wanted and more important than anything else, including church programs. My father spent time with me. Such acts gave me a good picture of God as my heavenly Father. I love them both." These parents were able to draw a definite line between work and home. Church demands did not come

in the way of communicating and being with their children.

Modeling. PKs who expressed positive feelings toward the church remembered their parents as models of a genuine, vibrant, and growing relationship with God. They sensed that their parents' religion was not a put-on, and realized that their parents practiced what they preached. There was no hypocrisy in their faith, and their life was not a facade. It was for real. Even when things were rough and not all was perfect in the church, these parents admitted the shortcomings and encouraged the children to focus on Christ.

One PK related how his father finally found the gospel. The boy was 16. He watched his father change and grow in a grace relationship with God. His father's openness to change and growth had a positive and transforming experience on his teenage son.

Another PK was thankful for her father's prayers and her mother's consistency. "My dad," she says, "spent hours praying for me. When I was tempted to do wrong, I couldn't because I knew my father was praying for me. I found strength in that. My mother was a consistent person. Together they showed me a genuine, real, and working religion."

Open communication helped in appreciating religious values. "We talked a lot," says one PK who continues to love the church. "As a family we discussed all sorts of things. During meal times, play times, worship times, any time, there was open communication in our home. That facilitated our appreciation for religious values my father was preaching." Another PK, in describing what made her home positive, said, "The fact that I could talk to my father any time, and he was never too busy to listen to my concerns. He even turned down some calls because of us in the family." Communication breaks down barriers and builds positive relationships.

PKs that left: parental shortcomings

What were some of the perceptions

of PKs who chose not to be part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in which they grew up? Five perceptions were most common. And again these reflect more on their parents than on the church.

Expectations. PKs who left the church often mentioned the extra expectations placed upon them by their parents and the congregation. This expectation was usually coupled with an overly strict home in which religion was forced and in which there was very little freedom. The family was built around outward behavior.

One PK evaluated his father thus: "My dad was too rigid—we couldn't even visit another SDA church in the area with our friends unless it was a school requirement. He was also too strict—we were 'the example.' He made all our choices for us, stifling my own growth toward independence and confidence." Another PK wished that her parents had eased up on her. "I was a straight-A student. I never got into trouble. But whenever I did something they didn't approve of, they came down heavy on me. I was not given a chance to discover God. Religion was forced upon me till I couldn't tell the difference between believing and pretending."

Authoritarianism. The extra expectations and perfect performance required of these PKs made them feel as if God wouldn't accept them, love them, or save them if their behavior was not up to par. "I just couldn't take it," says one PK. "It was the harsh, dictatorial manner in which every 'right' was enforced and every *perceived* 'wrong' punished. I know God isn't a dictator trying to catch you in the wrong." Another says, "I grew up with authoritarianism. A black cloud hung over me every second. Each moment was to count for eternity, and I was deadly conscious of my life each moment. My view of God was that He would accept me only when I behaved in a specific way."

Lack of priorities. Most PKs who left the church perceived that their parents placed higher priority on their work than on the home. There was very little family time. Children were made to feel

that the church should come first. One PK says, "I hardly ever saw my dad, and when he finally did come home his role was to punish me for what I did several hours before. I wish my father had placed our family on an equal basis with the church. I never knew my father, and I still don't."

Hypocrisy. PKs who left the church perceived their parents' religion as hypocritical. One PK said that when his father was in front of church members or potential church members he was the model Christian—kind and loving. However, when he dealt with his wife and sons he was impatient, unforgiving, and cruel.

Abuse. Physical or mental abuse in childhood by pastoral parents was cited as a factor why some children chose to leave the church. Some cited disappointing experiences with church members and leaders as well.

A lesson to learn

These stories seem bitter, but they reflect a real situation in our homes and churches. They can be helpful for pastoral families in relating to their children and for congregations in dealing with the children of the church. Although the PK cannot be shielded from all the pressures and negative experiences inherent in pastoring, these can be minimized and the positives accentuated. According to many PKs, parental commitment to develop a strong relationship with them is highly significant. That commitment means pastors should let the children know that despite the busyness and unpredictability of pastoring, they will make time for their children, placing them first in their order of priorities.

Parents should not relate their children's behavior to pastoral roles, reputation, or even the availability of God's love. A home open to free communication, discussion, and exploration of ideas and beliefs, giving children the freedom to learn about themselves and make appropriate choices, increases the possibility of PKs making religious and life decisions similar to those of their parents. ■

But for the grace of God

Loren Seibold

**The poor you have
always . . . at the
church door.**



*Loren Seibold is pastor
of the Palo Alto
Adventist Church in
California.*

It happened again. During the service I saw them come in. I just kept preaching, but inside I groaned a little. I knew they would wait for me.

And they did. After nearly everyone else had shaken my hand and left, they approached me. But I became absorbed in the needs of the last remaining church member, hoping they would lose patience and go away. But they were a patient lot. And they were persistent. They came near me, eyes locked with mine, right hands extended. The overpowering odor of alcohol mingled with even less pleasant smells stifled whatever compassion I had. But I felt trapped. I had to listen.

They had a story. (They always have one.) How they lost their jobs, got sick, were suddenly homeless. Now they were on their way from Chicago to a generous relative in Seattle, but through a series of fantastic events ended up in the San Francisco Bay Area, accompanied, naturally, by the worst luck any human being had ever experienced.

It was a weak story line. To accept the story demanded more faith than I could muster. They gave me little reason to trust them. The tears that accompanied the story didn't help either. I had seen them too often.

I got the distinct feeling that I was watching a little play—one that had been practiced many times, but still wasn't very good. I endured the entire first act, even though I knew how it would end. It always ended the same way.

They asked for money.

"We always work through Urban Ministries of Palo Alto to aid those in need," I replied.

Predictably, they almost spat in anger. Just to be on the safe side, I took

a step back. "Those people are no good. They won't help us."

Seeing act two of the drama start, I finally broke in. "I trust the people at Urban Ministries," I said. "If they can't help you, I can't either."

"I'm a Christian," he shouted, pointing one soiled, long-nailed finger a bit too close to my face. "I know what the Bible says about helping those in need."

Ah, there it was. I did expect it. My own material turned against me.

It was their best argument. And what was worse, it never failed to hit hard. The truth is, it is hard to know exactly what Jesus meant when He told us to help those in need.

His example doesn't always clarify. After all, maybe Jesus would simply have healed them, body, mind, and spirit; with a mere touch, or word.

I wished I could do that too.

Also, Jesus seemed often to find people to help who wanted a chance. The "deserving poor." At least, that's what happened in most of the stories that are recorded. Jesus said too little about how to be a genuine help to those who lie to you, who have made indigence a way of life, who waste their money on crack cocaine, and who exercise their intelligence in trying to manipulate you.

But neither did He teach us how to judge motives accurately. In fact, He said we shouldn't judge at all.

Yet I couldn't see what choice I had in this situation. I had to make a judgment.

I sent them away.

As they descended the church steps, they cursed me, and scattered in small pieces across the church lawn the map I gave them to the Urban Ministries food closet.

Looking at my unwelcome visitors, I understood their need. I even sympathized. There was no question that these people were in real need. Were they really sick? Almost certainly. Mentally, if not physically. Couldn't find a job? True too. Who would hire them? I wouldn't. Couldn't help themselves? That too was understandable. Handicapped by alcohol or drugs or mental illness, or by a tragic past and few natural gifts. They were perhaps trapped.

On the one hand, I wanted to do something that would force upon them a more wholesome perspective. I wanted to push them toward responsibility, set things up so that they wouldn't remain where they were.

On the other hand, I didn't believe that life as they lived it was so rewarding anyway, or that they had many resources to help them change.

Perhaps helping some people to continue to exist is all we can do for them. Not because it gives them such a good existence, but because the alternative is cruel.

While it doesn't answer all the biblical questions, working through an agency such as Urban Ministries has given me some peace of mind. Before we started this interdenominational distribution program, indigent people methodically worked every church in the city. For some it was almost a small business. At least now I have the assurance that the means available will be distributed more fairly than I was able to do at the church door.

I also have some assurance that people are getting what they need to live, not merely indulging a harmful addiction. Although I have some qualms about turning people away from the church door empty-handed, I make no apologies for not wanting to see church money support alcohol or illegal drug use.

Unfortunately, though, nothing any of us has done seems to bring us nearer a comprehensive solution. One of the most enduring truths spoken by Jesus is "The poor will always be with you" (see Matt. 26:11). And so they are. It is sad that the best we seem able to do is drive the problem some place where we

are not; where our tender eyes don't have to see them as often, or our tender noses smell them.

"There, but for the grace of God, go I," said John Bradford, watching a group of criminals being led to execution. This is truth: the wall between a life of success and a life of failure is very thin. What makes you and me who we are is at least partially a series of apparent coincidences of genetics, birth, and upbringing for which we can take little credit or blame. By the same token, we are but a car accident, a disease, a biochemical change, a market shift, a temptation, away from tragedy.

Perhaps it is to remind us of such things that God sends poor people to our church door. ■

The intercultural imperative

continued from page 4

Even though we will always struggle to understand and embrace one another, being genuinely inclusive is our inevitable imperative. One way we can actually practice this is through the pages of *Ministry*. The days of nationalistic, materialistic parochial separatism have passed. Through *Ministry*, and in other ways, it is ours to take up the challenge of at least one part of this fabulous struggle. From an editorial perspective we will try to include more contributions from every part of this wonderfully diversified world. This will be successful as we universally relish this fabulous all-nations challenge. We will be vastly enriched as we put aside our prides and prejudices, our superiorities and inferiorities, along with the cramping, suspicious preconception that we cannot learn anything from one another because we are at different developmental points, or because we are "just so different." Then by God's great grace we will become both a symbol and a practical unveiling of who God's new community actually is in Christ. ■



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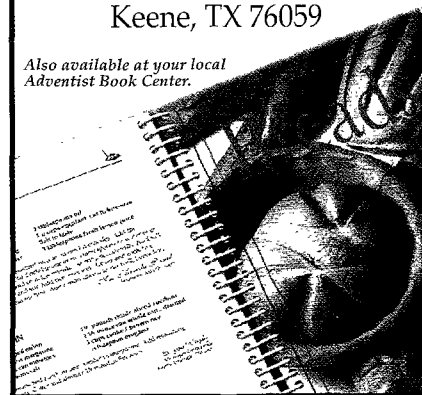
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This church just does not feel like home

Roland M. Smith

A case study in Appalachia confirms the need for cultural sensitivity in evangelism and nurture.



Roland M. Smith, D.Min., lives in Columbia, Maryland.

It happened almost 10 years ago, but the memories are vivid and troubling. As a pastor in Appalachia, I was happy when 59 persons were baptized at the conclusion of evangelistic series in my churches in West Virginia. Half of them had not experienced previous contact with our church. It was these 30 new members who had extreme difficulty adjusting to Adventism. Two years later only three of the 30 continued to attend church. My joy turned into concern and serious reflection.

The size of this loss was extremely troubling. At first I blamed myself and wondered where I had failed. Had I not visited faithfully or taught well? Were my actions inept or my words offensive? Perhaps I failed to establish adequate relationships. But the problem seemed wider and deeper, leading me to focus on the climate of friendship and acceptance the new members might have felt as they came into our local churches. Yes, we had a few members who were more inclined to drive people away than to make them feel welcome, and there were those who were better at pointing out faults than building friendships. We even had a few extremists who believed that only they were living up to the standards of truth and right. Did these Adventists have a hand in driving away the new members?

I wanted to find out firsthand. Purposely I visited those who had withdrawn. As I listened, they did not point to any specific factor, as I was expecting them to do. Rather, they spoke of a broader and more diffuse element. Again and again I heard one common reflection: "This church just does not feel like home." Along with this, some

spoke of family pressure to leave the Adventist "cult."

The interviews, instead of providing a solution, increased my puzzlement. Why had so many of these people failed to make the transition into our church? Could it be that the style of doing things and the pattern of relationships fostered in the Adventist church in Appalachia were just too unusual and demanding for them to adjust to? Was it possible that the Adventist churches in this area had slowly absorbed the wider American Adventist culture, and that this had resulted over time in a cultural distance from the people of Appalachia? These were only hunches based on limited experience and a relatively small sample population.

There was one factor that reinforced my conviction that cultural incompatibility could be a reason for the new members not staying in the church: Two of the pastoral families who left Appalachia during this time mentioned the culture shock of working in Appalachia as the reason for their departure.

If, in fact, there was fairly wide cultural incompatibility, then the church had challenges to face at two levels: first, making the church community one in which new converts could feel at home; and second, assisting ministers entering Appalachia from the wider American culture to understand and adapt to the social structures of the area.

The study

Shortly after this experience I left for the seminary and turned the problem into a Doctor of Ministry research project.¹ A literature survey showed recurring evidence of distinctive Appa-

lachian traits, such as individualism, traditionalism, fatalism, fundamentalist religious beliefs, family coherence, and small home-based churches.

Such distinct characteristics define a group's culture. Not only do people eat, dress, act, and speak distinctively, but they also have unique basic assumptions about the world. Failure to recognize these cultural differences inevitably leads to misunderstandings in cross-cultural relationships. The natural reaction to the differences of others is to judge their customs and ways as odd or inferior, and the church worker is not immune to this ethnocentric judgmentalism. The problem is actually enlarged, for the Christian worker is inclined to elevate his or her cultural values and traditions to the level of religious rules and standards and these may constitute false barriers to people's acceptance of the gospel and entrance into the "body of Christ."

Were cultural factors responsible for the disappointing experience of my evangelism? I sent out a survey instrument to 210 randomly selected members who had lived at the same address for at least seven years and to the 32 Adventist church workers of the Mountain View Conference, a conference wholly within Appalachia. The instrument consisted of 65 statements, clustered around six distinctive Appalachian cultural traits. The survey was intended to yield a general comparison of the cultural attitudes of the members with corresponding features of Appalachian culture and to provide a rough guide to the degree of cultural compatibility between established Adventists and typical Appalachians. It would also provide a comparison of the attitudes of members and of pastoral workers toward Appalachian cultural values.

This instrument was administered in 1989. Although all 32 church workers responded, only 41 percent of the Adventist members responded. An analysis of the responses indicated that there were significant attitudinal differences between members and church workers, but because of the inadequate percentage of responses from members, the

project was temporarily shelved.

I returned to the project in 1994. The questionnaire was abbreviated, reworked, and pretested. I began with a listing of members with telephones. After some 547 telephone conversations, I compiled a list of 301 persons who had agreed to respond to the survey. These persons were not as randomly selected as the first group. Consequently the results would tend to skew away from what is typically Appalachian in favor of the broader culture. In addition, the conference working force had undergone changes during the interim between the two surveys. Twenty of the 28 workers had an Appalachian background. Thus, while I was now reasonably sure of obtaining an adequate response, I was afraid that the very things I was testing for were less likely to appear. The response rate achieved within the allotted deadline was 86 percent from members and 93 percent for workers.

Responses were compared using t-tests and correlation analysis to note statistical significance at the .05 significance level. In the first survey responses to 27 of the 65 statements revealed statistically significant cultural differences between members and workers. In the second survey, 10 of 21 statements revealed significant differences. The results of both surveys thus confirmed that even though Adventist church members in the Mountain View Conference are not characteristically Appalachian, there is yet much that is Appalachian about them, and that there are significant cultural differences between them and the church workers in the conference. Findings from each of the key clusters are summarized below.

Education

Both surveys revealed that workers, more than the members, felt Appalachians placed a low value on education. Members thought Appalachians learned quickly, whereas workers thought they learned slowly. Both groups agreed that Appalachians are more likely to react on the basis of preconceived belief than on objective facts.

Independence and self-reliance

There was general agreement that Appalachians would do everything possible to defend their liberty and maintain their independence; however, workers thought that Appalachians were inclined to depend on the government, whereas members thought of themselves as self-reliant.

Family cohesiveness and relationships

Responses were generally similar; however, workers showed a somewhat negative attitude toward the weight of family cohesiveness in Appalachian society.

Patriotic fervor

Both groups agreed that Appalachians were willing to fight to preserve the freedoms of America, and that they tended not to be political activists.

Religion

Respondents were again specifically requested to give the response of an "average Appalachian mountaineer." Both groups agreed that Appalachians are inclined to be superstitious and fatalistic; however, members gave "spiritual fervor" a significantly higher rating than did workers.

Ranking true religion	Workers	Members
61 Providing for the hungry	4	3
62 Experiencing the power	3	1
63 Having the truth	2	4
64 Worshiping God	1	2

1=highest, 4=lowest.

The table above reveals a wide difference in the ranking of "true religion" between workers and members. The workers' response is a typical Adventist response. Truth, the intellectual content of religion, is accorded high status. Members, on the other hand, accorded first place to "experiencing the power." This is in harmony with

their high rating of "spiritual fervor," and their lowest ranking of truth and doctrine.

Here is an ample possibility for cultural dissonance. Whether workers are unaware of the contours of typical Appalachian religion or are unable to step outside of themselves to give it recognition does not matter. The difference is the same. If workers exert a dominant influence in giving shape to the religion practiced in Adventist churches in Appalachia, and if this is coupled with wider cultural differences, then it is easy to understand why some Appalachians "just do not feel at home" in the Adventist Church. Or maybe one could say the Adventist intellectualist approach to religion does not adequately fulfill the felt needs engendered by an earlier more expressive religious experience.

Lifestyle

Twelve statements were clustered to investigate differences in lifestyle. Differences emerged in the perceptions between members and workers at every point, some wider, some narrower. The widest difference related to self-respect and feeling good about oneself. Members gave a positive response,

whereas workers felt that Appalachians did not have a high estimate of themselves. Quite understandably the gap is narrower in the second survey, but it still remained.

General analysis

Overall analysis of the surveys indicates that workers tend toward a negative evaluation of Appalachian ways. The first survey response was 41.5 percent, and the second survey response was 47.6 percent, which revealed a statistically significant difference between members and workers.

Members' responses were fairly consistent in both surveys. The workers' responses revealed greater change, the second group being more positive about Appalachian ways. What was surprising to me, however, was the lack of adjustment to and appreciation of, Appalachians over time by the workers. Apparently once a worker formed an opinion, that opinion endured. What was also surprising was that the negative responses came not only from workers new to the area, but also came from workers who were native.

This lack of knowledge of Appalachians and of their felt needs manifests itself in the difficulty the

Adventist Church in general has experienced in the retention of new members. It is at this point that cultural understanding becomes most critical. New members experiencing the tension of a radical reorientation of religious experience and lifestyle require sensitive understanding, support, and guidance. They may leave the church if they feel misunderstood and in addition feel subjected to the pressures of an "alien culture." This new culture may become all the more questionable to them when after a time the changes that seem to be required of them appear unnecessary and illogical, bringing significant tension into many of their most important relationships. Pressures to leave the church from their close-knit circle of family, friends, and old religious and cultural associates are often considerably stronger than is normally experienced elsewhere. The Adventist Church may ask them to give up practices deeply ingrained in the social life of Appalachia, and so they may easily come to feel they are unable to live up to expectations that now seem all the more foreign to their traditions. They may then leave the church, even though a wonderful religious experience and strong conviction has brought them into it.

This study points to areas of cultural misfit and establishes the hypothesis that a significant cultural gap exists between workers and members in Appalachia, but it does not go on to develop solutions to these problems. Much can be done to foster cultural understanding and sensitivity—particularly if the worker is motivated to do so. Most successful missionaries undergo what is called a cultural conversion—a process by which they come to understand and react to people and circumstances from the bottom up—i.e., from the point of view of their host society. What is true of the missionary situation is also true of all ministry. A difficulty, however, is that in subcultures such as Appalachia, cultural differences are more subtle than in the missionary situation and lack a distinctive profile. Hence, it is not easy to recognize and

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provide for these cultural differences unless workers conscientiously attempt to understand them.²

Practical implications of the study

How can workers be enabled to reach a level of sensitivity that makes them understanding leaders? Our conferences could make available to workers a collection of the most important publications on their field and their culture. Incoming workers should be alerted to the characteristics of given cultures and inducted into some kind of information and sensitivity-generating program. This could be done partly in seminars in cross-cultural ministry at ministers' meetings.

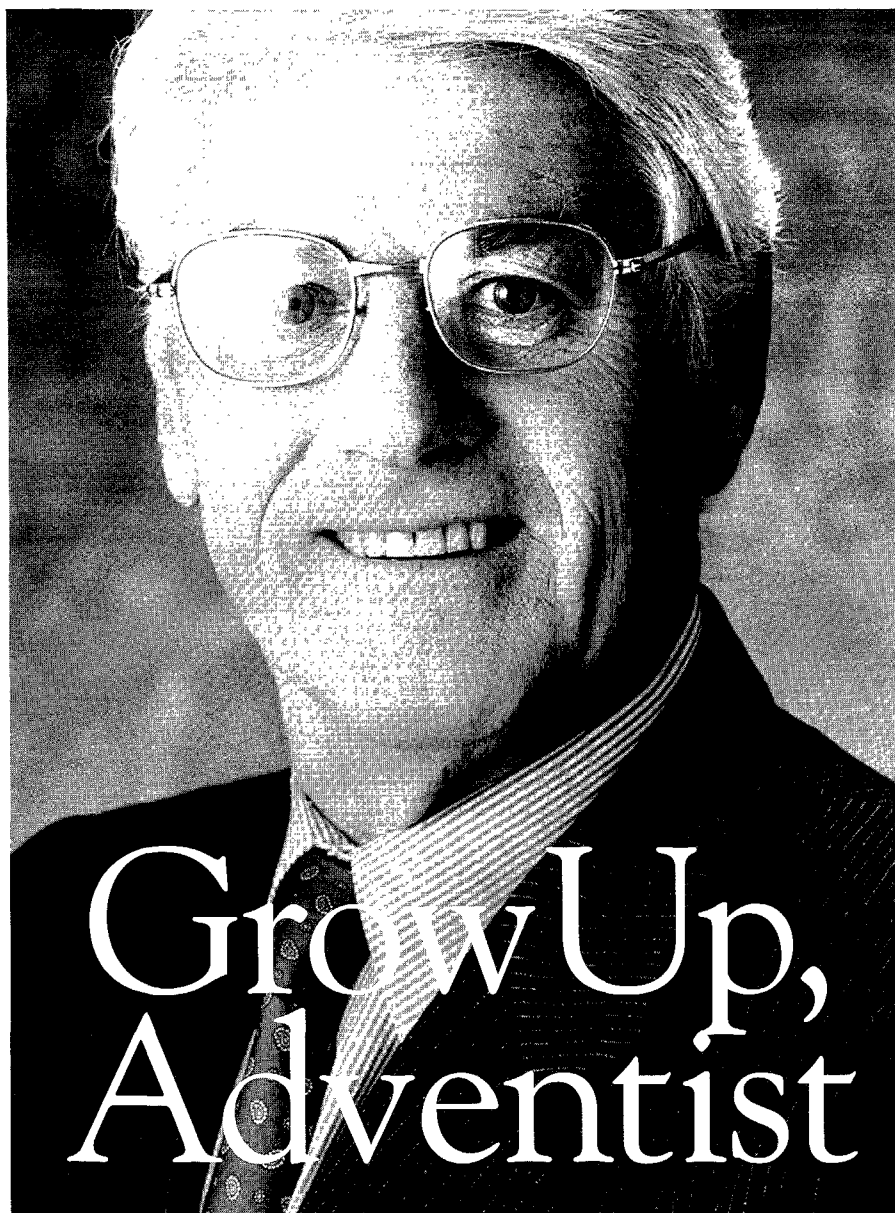
The truth is, however, that there is no substitute for patiently exposing oneself as completely as possible to the actual life of the people. Immersing oneself with acceptance, appreciation, and love into the daily world of the people one is serving will go far in changing the sense of strangeness the people might feel in their new church.

Although successful evangelism and retention of new members is possible only through the working of the Holy Spirit, this Appalachian study illustrates the need for ministers and long-time members to understand cultural issues as they care for new members everywhere. Christ-centered truth and Christ-centered relationships must both be present in order for us to be successful not only in bringing in new members, but in retaining them. ■

The author acknowledges the assistance of Russell Staples in the preparation of this article.

¹ "A Project to Design, Administer, and Analyze an Instrument to Test for Cultural Awareness of Pastors Working in an Appalachian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," D.Min. dissertation, Berrien Springs, MI: James White Library, Andrews University, 1995.

² *Ibid.* pp. 138-155.



I can't remember when I haven't taught a weekly Sabbath School lesson. Even back when there were only about four of us in the class. But now my church is larger and its membership more diverse. The group has changed, and I guess I've changed, too. But one thing hasn't changed: We still come together each week. We still open our Bibles. We still seek the guidance of the Spirit. And we are always blessed.

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Multicultural ministry

Caleb Rosado

The frontier of mission for the twenty-first century



Caleb Rosado, Ph.D., is a professor of sociology at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, the frontier of mission for the church is multicultural ministry. Multicultural ministry is a *pro-active* model of ministry, not a reactive forced integration. It is an indispensable vision for the church in the multicultural society of the third millennium.

Multicultural ministry (MM) is the development and implementation of varied models of communicating the gospel through beliefs and behaviors that are sensitive to the needs of a culturally diverse population. MM creates a community that celebrates unity in diversity in Christ.

While people should be free to choose where they desire to worship, MM suggests a diversity of worshipers and worship experiences within the united body of Christ. Even in what appears to be a homogeneous congregation there is diversity. Age, gender, class, occupation, values, interests, and status identify only some of the factors that create diversity within the most homogeneous congregations. A multicultural church is sensitive to these differences and others, and shows a respect for people and what they bring to the altar to present before God.

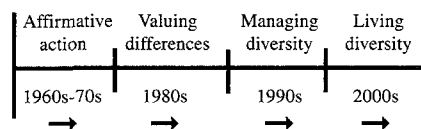
The key dynamic for an effective multicultural ministry is to keep the two dimensions of "unity in diversity" in balanced tension, without erring to either side. This is possible only "in Christ" (Gal. 3:28), for it is "in Christ" that the estranged parties are reconciled into one (Eph. 2:13-19). Erring on the side of unity results in uniformity at the expense of our human uniqueness and distinctiveness. Erring on the side of diversity magnifies differences at

the expense of our common, shared humanity. Unity is not synonymous with uniformity; neither is diversity synonymous with separation. The solution to the tension is to respect and value diversity while working for unity.

What makes a church multicultural?

The mere presence of an ethnically and racially diverse membership in the pews, whether resulting from legal, moral, or social obligations, does not in itself make a church multicultural. Such a mixture of people may be simply the result of a kind of affirmative action—something similar to what some governments do to encourage favorable treatment to socially disadvantaged minority groups. The church and its various institutions and organizations have to get beyond "affirmative action." Affirmative action was the main accomplishment of the 1960s and 1970s, giving people access to systems. In the 1980s the concern was with "valuing differences." In the 1990s the push is for "managing diversity." But in the twenty-first century the focus of the church's behavior will be on "living diversity."

The process of change



What, then, makes a church authentically multicultural? The answer depends upon whether a congregation can use its significant resources to achieve the four imperatives listed in the diagram. The resources are what I label

as the five P's: *perspectives, policies, programs, personnel, and practices*. These five P's should be involved to (1) reflect the diversity of the church; (2) be sensitive to the needs of the various groups; (3) incorporate their contributions to facilitate the overall mission of the church; and (4) create a cultural and social climate that is inclusive and empowers all groups.

Thus, at the heart of what makes a church multicultural lies the proper management of diversity for the balanced empowerment of all groups, which includes changing mind-sets as well as the underlying culture of the church, especially if this culture is what is impeding constructive change in a multicultural direction. When that happens, the church begins *living diversity* so as to accomplish its mission more effectively. How does one go about accomplishing this?

A model of multicultural ministry

Consider the experience of the All Nations church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where I served as the founding pastor from 1979 to 1987. It was a first of its kind, one that touched more than 65 different ethnic groups comprising the church's membership. Though mistakes were inevitable, much was learned.

The All Nations church started as a new congregation and therefore did not need to undergo the challenge of transforming an already established congregation. Also, it was set in an academic environment, which is generally more open to change. Although its charter members, desiring change, came from other area congregations, much can be learned from their real church-life situation without "reinventing the wheel."

We began MM by focusing on the five P's and the four imperatives. We asked the question How do each of the five P's affect these imperatives?

But first there was an additional "P"—the pastor.

The Pastor

The pastor is key to the effective

implementation of MM. Two reasons make this true. First, MM is a recent, innovative method entering uncharted waters. All Nations was the first Seventh-day Adventist church *deliberately* established to reach out across cultures with an inclusive mode of ministry. There were no known models to follow. Second, such newness cannot be left to chance; strong leadership is needed to give the burgeoning multicultural church direction and focus.

What kind of pastor will give that kind of leadership? First, one who has experienced a *paradigm shift*—from exclusion to inclusion, from uniformity to diversity, from inequality to equality, from the practice of targeting only certain demographic sectors of the surrounding society to taking the risk of including all kinds of people. MM is "new wine" that requires new wine-skins in terms of structure, mind-set, methodology, mission, and message. It must be plainly stated. The pastor cannot be racist, classist, sexist (Gal. 3:28), or ageist. He or she needs an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach to ministry that cuts across all levels of human need.

Second, the pastor should be *open to change*. As Steve Wilstein says: "It's dangerous to believe you will remain successful simply by doing the same things that once brought success. *That will be true only if the world doesn't change*. To be successful over the long haul, you need to change before it stops working."¹

Third, the pastor must be *willing to share power*. A pastor who hoards power or shares it selectively is taking a quick, short step to destroying any kind of effective ministry. MM empowers all members, not just a select few.

Fourth, the pastor must have a *positive image of self in terms of ethnic identity*. This is a most vital quality, since a pastor who has a poor sense of self-acceptance with regard to his or her racial or ethnic identity may have a difficult time accepting others who might be different or similar to him or her. When such a person is placed in charge of a multicultural church, problems such

as ethnocentrism, exclusion, and subtle racism will emerge. The pastor who is still struggling with his or her own identity as a result of racism will not be of much value to the many members who may be struggling with similar concerns.

Fifth, the pastor must *understand the sociocultural realities* undergirding ministry in today's society. The contemporary pastor needs to be as informed about issues having to do with the psychological and sociological dynamics of his or her congregation as he or she is with the fundamental issues of theology, biblical studies, preaching, and ecclesiology. If this multidimensional outlook is not present, the pastor's knowledge and functional base can be skewed and unbalanced. An understanding of inter-human relations, especially across gender, race, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, is increasingly imperative in pastoral ministry. It is indispensable if a full-blown multicultural ministry is entered into.

With these qualities in hand, how does a pastor practice MM? The answer is the five P's.

The five P's

Perspective. The first step in developing an effective MM is gaining a *perspective*—grasping a vision, a clear sense of direction, or destination for the congregation. Vision is the bifocal ability to see what lies ahead while one also perceives the various impediments in the present and how to avoid them in order to arrive at the future. This vision must be bifocal because focus on the future at the expense of the present, or vice versa, will result in loss and in a costly detour in the mission of the church. This kind of vision also entails having an understanding of where society is headed, how our cities are changing, the demographic shifts in the neighborhood, the membership shifts in the Adventist Church, both locally and globally.

In order for the church to operate effectively in a rapidly changing society, it needs to formulate vision, values, and mission statements. A vision statement addresses *where* an organization

is headed—its direction, perspective, and paradigms. A values statement addresses *what* the church is becoming—the end-goal behaviors reflective of the values of the kingdom here and now. A mission statement addresses *why* an organization exists and clearly identifies the direction to be taken.

Without a commitment to such vision, values, and mission, a multicultural congregation different from the exclusive and exploitative values of society is virtually impossible to maintain over an extended period of time. This is because groups differ in their interests. When the differences result from cultural, racial, and socioeconomic variation, there is always a greater potential for antagonism within a group. This is why the McGavran School of Church Growth has advocated the homogeneous unit principle: “Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.”² Thus it is true that a racially and culturally homogeneous group is a potentially less conflictive group than a heterogeneous one.

Advocates of the homogeneous unit principle are really operating on the basis of a “separate but equal” principle, in which the emphasis is more on the separate than on the equal. They may claim that they are living the gospel while working only for “our kind of people.”³ God’s ideal must become the practice of the church. Thus a new *modus operandi* needs to be reflected in the church: the heterogeneous unit principle. *The gospel challenges and empowers people to accept Christ across all social barriers.* We cannot accept Christ and still continue in our old selective, exclusive modes of behavior.

A church without vision, values, and mission is like a ship without a rudder, tossed here and there by the sociocultural forces in society. Vision gives the church direction, values give character, and mission keeps the church on course.

Policy. The second factor in effective MM is *policies* that take into account the four imperatives. The reason is clear:

the church must make a *conscious and deliberate* effort to be inclusive in its approach to ministry. Such efforts cannot be left to chance, for the societal influences of unconscious prejudice, discrimination, and subtle-but-persistent racism and sexism are simply too strong. Thus, while some members may not see themselves as prejudiced, others who are sensitive to these issues will surely pick up on such attitudes. It is not that members may discriminate consciously. It’s just that such behavior is so much a part of the social fabric of our society and of church life that most people discriminate without even realizing it. Thus, an inclusive church must deliberately be sensitive in all its actions, until such time as the principles of God’s kingdom have been internalized within the body of believers so that their actions reflect the practice and attitudes of the kingdom.

To bring this about requires certain policy actions. First, it involves guidelines that govern the selection of committees. When the first committee to select the nominating committee was chosen at All Nations church, I told the members that the nominating committee should reflect the church in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and social class. If committees are to represent the thinking of the church, they should be a microcosm of the church. A board of elders all male and White, for example, is not a reflection of any church except a monastic order. Thus, the nominating committee of the church should not only be multicultural, but also should see to it that people from different age, ethnic, and gender groups are placed in the various offices and departments of the church.

Second, a structure needs to be inaugurated involving no stratified divisions between clergy and laity that result in *status positions*. Rather, distinct *role functions* based on an egalitarian unity in diversity need to be implemented. What this means is that titles, such as doctor or elder, etc., should be discarded in much the way Jesus advocated (Matt. 23:8-12). In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, status is

often achieved through education and position. And around academic communities, people like to brandish their degrees and titles. At All Nations the people were told to leave their egos and degrees in the parking lot, for inside the church we were one family.

Programs. The third factor in MM is *programs* that implement all four imperatives. The worship service should be sensitive to different cultural expressions and styles—in music, in people praying in their own languages, and in preaching. An inclusive ministry will reflect in the morning worship service the heterogeneity of the body across boundaries of sex, class, gender, race, and age. At All Nations we had a Sabbath evening vespers service each month when we celebrated the cultures of all nations, a different one each month.

The Sabbath *morning sermon* in a multicultural church is a special occasion to instruct the church in the basic principles of the gospel. A series of sermons on the themes of tearing down the dividing walls of hostility between disparate peoples, thereby giving the gospel a new dimension, is crucial in any MM, as it was in the first-century Christian church. The result will be a new understanding of the mission and ministry of Jesus.

Because of the strength of the social forces of prejudice, racism, and sexism in the larger society, the clear mission of what a multicultural church needs to be like should constantly be kept before the people. Otherwise, the old biases will take over.

Because of this potential for intercultural conflict in a multicultural congregation, a church ought to set up a human relations council, which will deal with problems as needed. Workshops on nonracist and intercultural approaches involving early childhood, youth, and adult education should be designed to educate departmental leaders and church officers for a better understanding of one another.

Personnel. The fourth factor in MM is *personnel*. An inclusive ministry will

have leaders who cut across class, gender, race, age, and socioeconomic levels in the various departments and positions. In MM one cannot be selective. The All Nations church first ordained women elders in 1979. We began using inclusive language. Children, youth, the disabled, and the elderly were all given a part to play in the various committees, leading out in worship, and contributing to the overall success of the church.

Practice. The fifth factor in MM is *practice*, the most crucial of the five P's, for it is here where everything comes together or falls apart. One way of doing this, in addition to the above, is to incorporate into the very structure of church life and worship the experience of fellowship. Worship in a multicultural congregation should be structured around the concept of "one family."

When one belongs to a congregation that is racially, culturally, socially, and

educationally diverse, worship must be sensitive to the needs of the worshipers. All Nations made fellowship an integral part of the worship experience by:

1. Emphasizing the concept of "family."
2. Placing before the people a written program that gives a "we" emphasis to the service—we gather, we praise, we proclaim, we respond, we fellowship, we believe.
3. Treating all visitors as friends about to be initiated into the family.
4. Giving, at the beginning of the worship service, the entire congregation the opportunity to greet each other as family.
5. Spontaneous singing during offering collection and prior to the children's story.
6. Encouraging members to fellowship with each other at the close of the service.
7. Addressing each other on a first-name basis.

Such a deliberate structuring of fellowship into the worship experience creates the basis for Christian service in the community.

When MM permeates a congregation, people move out through the doors of the church to serve the community in a "natural" way. This is so because the members have just experienced a worship service where real needs were met in a multicultural setting, in harmony with the Gospel message. The opportunity to model this message through multicultural ministry comprises the new vision of mission for the twenty-first century. May the church have the courage to enter this new frontier. ■

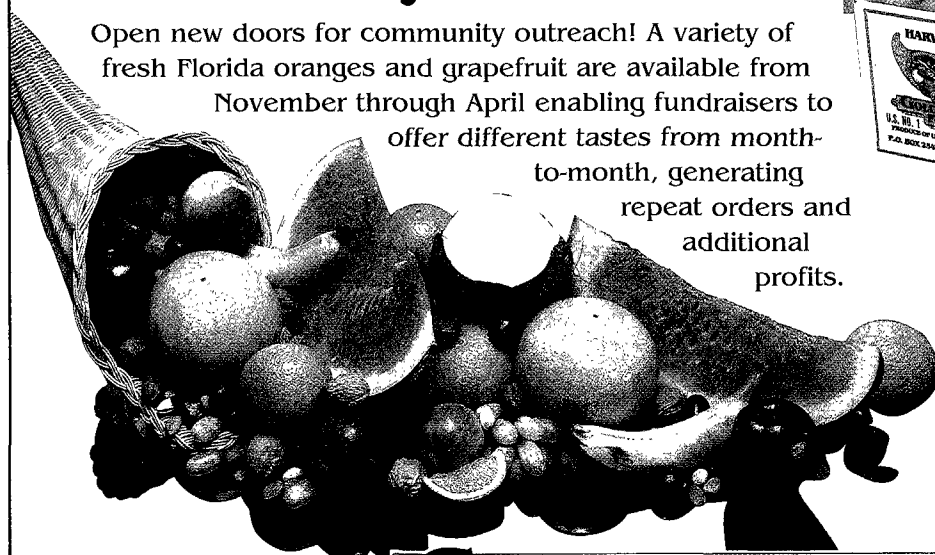
¹ Steve Wilstein, "Getting What It Takes to Win," *Hemispheres*, June 1994.

² Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 198.

³ See C. Peter Wagner, *Our Kind of People* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979).

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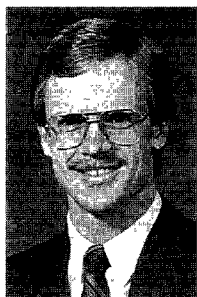
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Mark Bresee is pastor of the Hamilton Community Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Pastors and church leaders are committed to advancing God's kingdom. When new technology, such as radio, television, satellite, and Internet, comes along, we try to take advantage of the opportunities these media provide. However, is it possible that we are neglecting to use one of the oldest and best church growth methodologies?

Paul spent much of his time planting new churches. Church growth expert Peter Wagner believes this is still the way to go: "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches."¹ Lyle Schaller, after extensive research on the correlation between church planting and church growth, says: "The first priority in any denominational strategy should be on organizing new congregations."²

Research done among Adventist congregations in North America in the 1980s indicates that church planting effectively advances God's kingdom. Roger Dudley and Clarence Gruesbeck note that "between the years 1977 and 1984, the average annual growth rate of all the [Adventist] churches in North America, including new ones, was 2.8 percent. During the same period the average annual growth rate of the new congregations was 31.2 percent."³

If this is the case, why is church planting not high on the agenda of most church leaders? Four reasons may be noted.

Church planting and pastoral unawareness

First, most pastors and church leaders are not aware of the potential growth opportunities newly planted churches provide. However, in recent

years, books, articles, and seminars have been creating a new awareness of the church growth potential in newly planted churches. I became involved in church planting partially as a result of reading Dudley and Gruesbeck's work. I was inspired when I read about the potential new churches had in reaching people. In fact, the North American Division, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and the North American Division Evangelism Institute have united to conduct a church planting summit called *Seeds '96*, to be held June 12-15, 1996, at Andrews University. (For further information call 1-800-ALL-PLNT.)

Church planting and finance

A second reason church planting is not popular among us is the stress it adds to conference budgets. In an era of cutbacks and downsizing, how can we afford new churches? I believe, however, that the real question is Can we afford not to plant new churches? I have served on our conference committees and understand the financial pressures many experience. If we had more churches growing at 30 percent per year, we would have more tithe income to pay pastors' salaries.

Four years ago we planted the Hamilton Community church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Our annual tithe income now is nearly \$400,000. Some of that comes from people who were already attending other Adventist churches in our area. However, a significant portion comes from people who were not in church prior to the establishment of our congregation. New churches bring new money.

Further, should we expect conferences to provide paid staffing for very small churches that show little or no potential for growth? Many churches have plateaued at fewer than 20 members. Lay leaders should run these churches. No one should be critical of the faithful pastors and members who have worked for many years to try to move these churches forward, but should we continue to allocate resources where little is happening? We not only need a strategic plan for planting new churches; we also need a workable policy for dysfunctional and dying congregations.

Another way to finance church planting is to start it with someone who is willing to have two vocations for a time. When the Hamilton Community church near Southern College was started, the conference had no pastoral salary to cover the church. However, I was invited to teach in the Religion Department at the college. I did this for a year while we got the church going. Fulfilling both roles was difficult, but it was definitely worth it. When you believe strongly in something, you will do whatever it takes to get the job done.

The truth is we usually have money for what we consider important. Funds to support NET '95 were found. Several church members made some large donations, conference-held resources were made available, and churches pitched in to make it happen. Even more will be spent on NET '96. If church planting was seen to be absolutely essential, our members, churches, and conferences would find the funds to do it.

Our conference leaders have caught this vision and given approval to a seminary student's dream of planting a church in Atlanta to reach unchurched young adults. These leaders have already given approval to this extra salary in next year's budget. To help get it going they will provide some financial support from conference evangelism funds. Other young adults from across the country are being recruited to move to Atlanta to be a part of this project. Several of us are serving on a "wisdom committee" to guide this exciting ven-

ture. This kind of planning and support needs to be taking place in every major metropolitan area around the world.

Church planting and slow results

The third reason some leaders hesitate to become involved in church planting is the slow rate of growth as compared with traditional evangelism. A problem here is the measuring stick. If baptismal numbers are the only measurement by which an endeavor is evaluated, then church planting may not always give the fastest rate of return. Church planting has other significant benefits worth noting.

One is that we can reach certain groups through new churches. For example, the church in the developing countries is experiencing very little success in reaching the unchurched. The reason is the existence of a significant gap between the popular secular culture and our Adventist subculture. Communication experts tell us that in order to communicate effectively, we must do accurate audience analysis and adapt our presentation to that particular group. We have not done that very well in relationship to the unchurched.

A certain segment of the population responds well to our prophetic and apocalyptic evangelistic presentations. We should continue to pursue that group. We are struggling to reach the much larger portion that is uninterested in at best, and totally repulsed by at worst, beasts and dragons and an emphasis on the end of time.

Simply changing our advertising, however, will not solve our problem. If the unchurched were to show up at our church services, many of them would be turned off by the way we worship and relate to one another. In too many cases our services are primarily intellectual events and our relationships tend to be superficial. The unchurched would like to build relationships with people who are transparent, open, and honest about their fears and failures and about who they really are.

Making significant changes in worship, evangelism, and relationship patterns within most established

Seventh-day Adventist churches is extremely difficult. Some have succeeded, but many pastors and churches have gone through bitter and painful experiences as a result of trying to change too much. I am one of them. Before we started Hamilton, I tried making some alterations in a downtown traditional church, but found it very difficult.

Jesus said it is unwise to put new wine into old wineskins. It is unwise and unfair to ask established churches to make the dramatic changes that may be required to reach certain people groups. *Our best chance for making significant progress in reaching the unchurched is through the establishment of new churches specifically designed to reach them.*

New congregations can not only be more effective in reaching specific people groups outside the walls of our churches, but also add life to those on the inside. Some members are present "in body, but not in spirit" in their local churches. This is particularly true of many of our youth and young adults. For a variety of reasons their spiritual needs are not being met in the churches they are attending, and they would welcome a new church with a different approach to ministry. This has certainly proved true for us at Hamilton. We have many young adults involved in our ministry who just did not seem to fit in other area churches. Church planting may not always give the fastest baptismal rate, but there are benefits that make it a profitable kingdom investment, especially in the long run.

Negative experiences

The fourth reason some are hesitant about church planting arises because of past negative experiences. For instance, new churches have sometimes been "planted" because a few unhappy people have pulled out and started their own church. Such situations engender friction with conference leaders, leaving negative associations in people's minds about new congregations. Or, when a few families in a remote rural area get together and want a church and a pastor, this adds stress to



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the conference budget because there is little potential for future growth. These situations, however, highlight our need to be proactive rather than reactive.

We would do well to prayerfully choose the areas in which there is the greatest need for the gospel and the greatest potential for growth. If this is done, it is much easier for us to be involved in choosing leaders of new groups and negotiating the design of the church's ministry in advance. A few strategically planted churches with excellent potential for kingdom advancement will accomplish more than many haphazard groups coming into existence for questionable reasons.

Large cities should receive top priority. They have not only a population base for future growth, but also some Adventist churches from which to form a nucleus. Dudley and Gruesbeck found that churches planted within 10 miles of another Adventist congregation have a much better chance of succeeding than those planted 25 miles or more away from sister congregations.⁴

Church planting: what should be done

If you want to plant a church or churches, what should you do?

Church administrators should consider making church planting an intentional priority in the field under their supervision. This, of course, needs prayerful thought, even if only one new church is planted every couple years. But whatever one thinks of doing, something should be done.

Pastors may not feel led to launch a new church, but no one should be threatened by the possibility that a church may be planted near them. If we will learn to cooperate rather than compete, much more will be achieved and we will all be stronger in the long run.

If a pastor has a burning desire to begin something new, that desire needs to be nurtured. It must be warmed before God in prayer. If the Holy Spirit nudges us to move forward, we can write up a detailed proposal with our vision of what could be, and share it with a representative group of our

church members. If they get excited about it, the proposal can be taken to conference leadership, where the dream can be further shared. We need not be discouraged if we are turned down at first. Some have submitted proposals more than once to conference leaders before being approved.

Fiscal concerns will probably challenge all the creativity we possess, but we should not allow that to stop us from being as creative as we need to be in financing the venture. Here it is especially true that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and He can open the way.

Once we get the green light, it is advisable to try to get at least 50 people in the core group before opening up to the public. The more there are in the core group, the greater the chance of success. Up to a year may be needed to share the vision and recruit enough people to make it happen. We should try not to recruit too many of the core for the new group from surrounding churches with less than 150 in attendance; they are not large enough to comfortably lose significant numbers from their congregation.

Finally, we just need to do it. Step up and venture out. Give it all we've got, and watch God work. It will be one of the hardest, most rewarding adventures that life could possibly give us. ■

¹ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1990), p. 11.

² Lyle E. Schaller, *Growing Plans* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 165.

³ Roger L. Dudley and Clarence B. Gruesbeck, *Plant a Church, Reap a Harvest* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1989), p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Louis and Carol Torres NET '96 Lay Evangelism Training Schedule

Date	Location
June 7-15	Dakota Conference
June 28-July 6	N. New England
August 4-11	Mt. Aetna, MD
August 25-31	Spokane, WA
September 6-28	Black Hills, SD

Presentations at these locations are in English.

For information: Tel/Fax (301) 293-9527
Pager: 1 (800) 546-2958

A multiethnic church

Continued from page 9

in their lives. Sabbath is a full day. After church there will frequently be a shared meal, a youth meeting, and an evening service. Food, talk, and fun are part of church life.

Learn as much of the language as possible. People appreciate the interest shown in an attempt to speak their language. It also gives a good laugh when we butcher words and phrases.

No formula will assure success when diverse people are brought together in one location for a common purpose. Expect and prepare for resistance from those who once were the ethnic majority. Some members will leave or, perhaps worse, remain to oppose the changes taking place. There will come times when you wonder whether it is worth the emotional energy expended to bring together people who do not naturally fit together.

We who work with people will make mistakes and errors in judgment that we have to live with. This is part of life and an occupational hazard. Through our mistakes we learn about hope, forgiveness, mercy, and love. We learn to have faith that God will open a way through those situations that take us beyond our own abilities. The person who pastors in a multiethnic/multicultural congregation will understand what I mean.

I encourage my colleagues to be open to the possibilities available in a multicultural/multiethnic ministry. Trial, error, and common sense are good teaching tools. For those of us who have this experience, I put out a call to communicate with one another. We can share on the Internet what we learn or what we would like to learn (my CompuServe number is 74617,1313). I would like to see us come together for a three- or four-day conference to explore the theme "Ministry Within the Multiethnic/Multicultural Congregation." This could be an exciting and worthwhile venture! ■

At the seminary, a new day for youth ministry

Benjamin D. Schoun

On April 13 the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary opened the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE). Its mission is "to develop and provide the methods, resources, and leadership necessary to train young people in effective youth-to-youth evangelism."

Under the directorship of Randal Wisbey, assistant professor of youth ministry, CYE envisions a rich variety of services geared to pastors, youth leaders, conference youth directors, and young people. One such service is the Giraffe Society, a network of individuals (557 so far), who are willing to stick their necks out for young people. These "giraffes" stand as advocates for youth, resisting all "forms of negligence such as inadequate financial support, guarded self-interest, and perhaps most of all, noninvolvement." The Giraffe Society publishes *Giraffe News*, a quarterly filled with insights, inspiration, and ideas for working with youth.

The CYE has also set up an on-line *speakers' bureau* through their new World Wide Web site. Speakers, musicians, and other resource personnel for various age groups can be located easily. CYE conducts *Youth Summit*, an energetic Sabbath happening where teenagers learn through active participation, and experience God in new and interesting ways. More than 8,500 young people have already participated in one of these programs. *Kids' Summit* is a Sabbath worship experience for children between 6 and 10 years of age. The CYE is an active partner in the North American Division's new youth enterprise, *YouthNet*, that challenges

Benjamin D. Schoun, D.Min., is associate dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

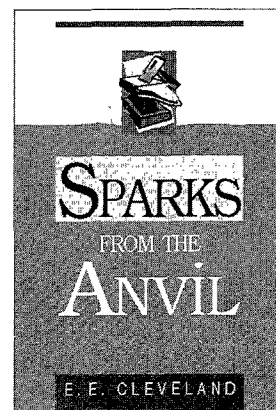
youth and young adults to become an integral part of the soul-winning efforts of our churches.

The CYE also acts as a research center and a laboratory that will enrich the seminary's new one-year M.A. in Religion program, that provides a concentration in youth studies. Other graduate programs can be customized to include youth ministry emphases. CYE is involved in preparing manuals for youth evangelism, coordinating and writing NAD's youth ministry catalogue, and conducting research on secular campus ministry models.

For further information: Phone: 1-800-YOUTH-2-U or 616-471-3628; Fax: 616-471-6202; E-mail: cye@andrews.edu; World Wide Web Home Page: <http://www.andrews.edu/CYE>. ■

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Experiencing the blessed hope now!

James A. Cress

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is entering a new and exciting ministry of rekindling the hope that Jesus brings. Ray Dabrowski, director of communication for our world church, says, "In 1996 Seventh-day Adventists will embark upon a new phase of our journey. This will be a time of confession, renewal, and an open-mindedness to learn again the ways of Christ, the hope of the world."

In fact, the Communication Strategy Task Force of our church has issued a strategic statement that will become the theme of this emphasis: *Seventh-day Adventists will communicate hope by focusing on the quality of life that is complete in Christ.*

Hope in Christ includes experiencing abundant life today.

Hope that is limited to the future tends toward a "pie in the sky by and by" mentality that divorces the impact of the gospel from present reality. Of course, every believer can hope for the imminent return of our Lord, but we must also experience the reality of His abundant life now and here. The power of God makes us complete in Christ now and offers a place in God's glorious future. Now, that is the blessed hope!

Hope becomes real when it is shared with others. Every believer—minister or layperson—in every church can become part of the excitement of bringing hope in Christ to our churches and to the world. As Dabrowski says: "If we do this, we will be communicating what Christ wants

us to communicate before He returns!"

The first focus of this overall strategy is appropriately aimed at the local congregation where hope and whole-person development are best provided to the community of believers as well as to the world. Members who are experiencing the abundance of Christ's life in their own are the most effective communicators of hope to those they influence.

Seventh-day Adventists will communicate hope by focusing on the quality of life that is complete in Christ!

Hope-based evangelism builds the kingdom. A felt-needs approach should govern our evangelism. When people find answers to their need in Jesus' way and Jesus' words, then the message that we communicate fulfills His mission of meeting people's needs through a personal and growing relationship between sinner and Saviour. As trained ministers and members communicate the gospel with consideration of felt needs, they will create hope in Jesus Christ.

As a communication strategy, such a process creates cohesion of image perception. The church becomes known in a positive way and is better accepted in the public. Beyond just a public relations activity, however, this improved image of the church enables it to fulfill its mission more effectively.

Your congregation can spread hope to your community. You can provide your church family with a basis for starting a hope-filled ministry. Begin with a dynamic video presentation and study guide (see box). This resource is economically priced and attractively produced to guide your church through discussion points that will help launch an effective strategy for communicating hope.

This program is designed to lead your audience through the transition. It begins by reminding Christians that we too, like our neighbors, are beset with the foibles of a human, mistake-ridden shell. Unlike our neighbors who may not have been touched by the power of the gospel, we have hope, or more pointedly, *we should have hope!*

Through the use of parody and storytelling, the video demonstrates how, without hope in Jesus as our core motivator, we make foolish mistakes, misjudge, miscommunicate, and mislead each other and our neighbors.

The powerful conclusion leads viewers to see the potential of connecting with others on the basis of a common hope! I encourage you to try this visionary strategy in your congregation! ■

To order your copy of the
Hope Video and Study Guide
send US\$5 to:

GC Communication Department
12501 Old Columbia Pike
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Florida Conference affirms pastoral families

The Florida Conference (NAD) has instituted an innovative way of affirming pastoral families while providing them a break from their heavy schedules. Any full-time pastor is provided a complimentary two-night stay at a resort hotel on the Gulf of Mexico. Up to four pastoral families per month can take advantage of this offer, which allows for a three-day holiday by providing free lodging at the beach for two nights. The conference also offers the same option at its own Camp Kulaqua.—Noel Shanko, Orlando, Florida.

Weekend family retreat

Periodically the pastor needs a weekend retreat with the family to relax! Try visiting a neighboring town, seaside, mountain, waterfall, historic building, museum, or festival. Get involved in your favorite pastime or just take it easy and watch the sunset. Do things you never have time to do. If you have trained talented lay members to share your ministry responsibilities, you can occasionally relax for a retreat with full confidence that church responsibilities are in capable hands.—Kutan Oli, Suva, Fiji.

Sunshine Committee

My ministry became less stressful and more effective when Polly, a parishioner, told me, "I sold my restaurant, and I want to help in the church now." I told her to invite her friend Sue and anyone else who might share a likewise interest to a meeting at 11:30 on Tuesday.

About 10 members met for lunch, fun, and prayer. Grouping them two by two, I gave each team two cards with names and addresses of people needing visits, mainly shut-ins. This group continued meeting every Tuesday, then visiting folk. Later they returned the cards to me with information about the needs of each one.

Our "sunshine committee" needed a place to serve, and lonely, sick, and new people needed their visits. Through the years thousands of lonely people were ministered to, and this pastor was blessed with more help and less stress. The sunshine committee was a blessing to all.—James H. Curtis, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

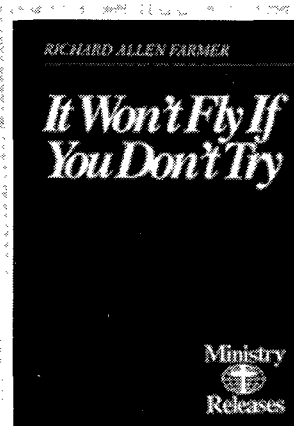
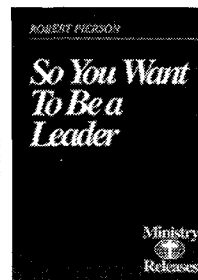
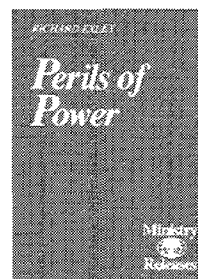
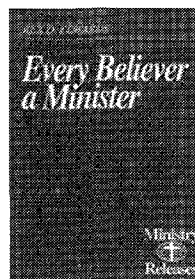
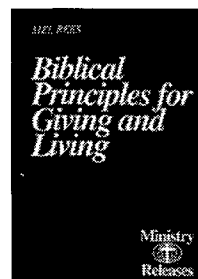
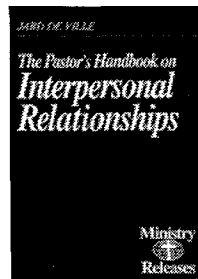
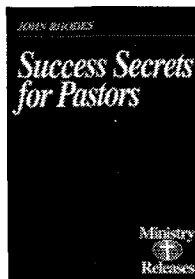
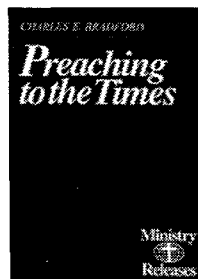
Annual training cycle

Effective ministry requires the selection and training of talented lay members. Three months of intensive focus on this sets the stage for church activities the rest of the year. Here's how we do it:

Following the election of local church officers in October, we devote November and December to training them. In January we mobilize them and stabilize their skills in various areas of service such as evangelism, youth ministry, and community service.

With this done, pastors have accomplished much of their task for the year, except for the supervision of those whom they have set ablaze in service for Christ. Training, more than anything else, is the measure of a pastor's success.—Simon Hargreaves, Wani, Jinja, Uganda.

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