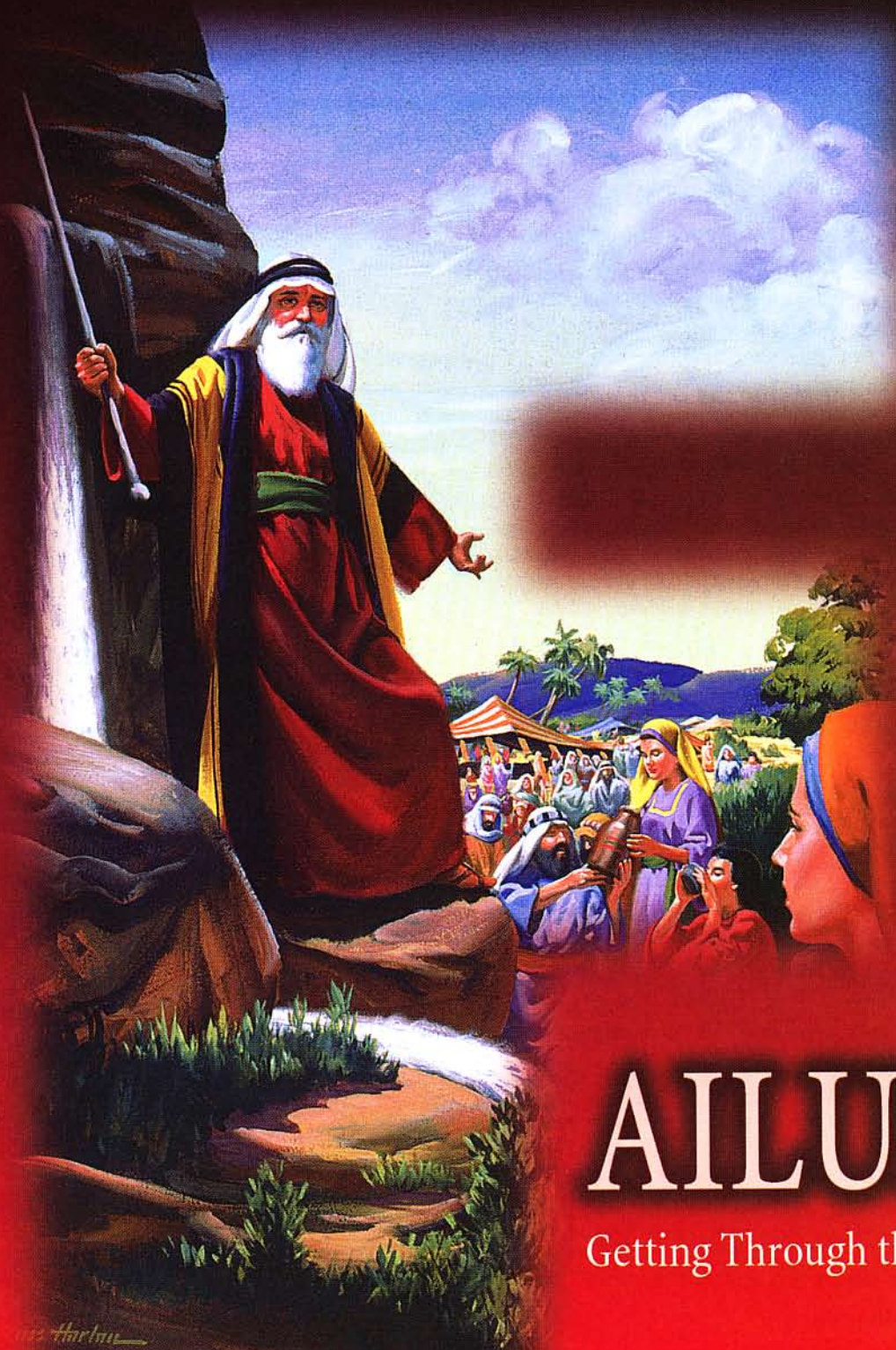


Ministry

International Journal for Pastors September 1998



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Getting Through the Inevitable

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Selective disobedience

I have just read the May and June *Ministry* magazines from cover to cover. I always look forward to the last page to hear what the Pastor's Pastor has to say. James Cress always has something to say that is very practical since it comes from the hand-to-hand combat of his pastoral and evangelistic ministry.

When I began to read "Selective Disobedience," I thought, How timely with the new retirement plan that will soon be adopted. As I came to the second page I was thankful for his courage! The reason the brethren make this kind of mistake is that they develop policies based on their personal experience in the ministry. The problem being that their wives have been near enough to an SDA institution to get a job and generate a second income, as well as having the assurance of a retirement plan check on their own, and their own social security income. They have never worn the shoes of a pastor whose wife has spent 40 years supporting his pastoral and/or evangelistic ministry; has never worked; or has worked only part-time to keep the wolf away from the door; and therefore has no pension, and only minimal social security. How unjust if that couple does not receive a "spouse allowance" as he so clearly pointed out in his article.

It would probably take Solomon to work out a plan with some type of equity for every worker's family. How do you factor in pastors' wives who have worked in all kinds of different situations: those who have never worked with their husbands, or have not been paid for X number of years' work with their husbands, or have only worked part-time for the church, or have worked full-time in the conference office for X number of years since the time their husbands became departmental leaders or administrators? These situations should all be studied and factored in. Once you do that,

how do you get pastors and their wives to understand what is being done. As you know, the current plan disallows a spouse allowance for a minister's wife who has her own pension from working full-time and that pension is more than the spouse allowance. To some that seems fair, to those who do not get the spouse allowance it seems unfair. I'm sure you will see why a descendant of Solomon will need to solve this.

At any rate, I hope the article (which I'm sure was approved by the GC president and treasurer) will stir things up. As it should!—Dan Guild, Newbury Park, California.

● Praise God for taking the bushel off the light! Referring to James Cress' article in the June 1998 *Ministry*, this issue of disregarding plain remuneration instruction is critical! Obviously E. G. White was indignant, being moved to divert even her sacred tithe monies in order to rectify the neglect/abuse of gospel teammates. Let us cherish every ray of light on a corporate level as well as individually so as to invite and enable God to pour the Holy Spirit upon the Gospel Work. We can't stretch our tithe dollars that far, but God can! He can send much additional tithe money besides effecting courage and confidence in our valuable sisters of the ministry. Why not put god to the test per both Malachi's and Cress' challenge? This issue has been bantered about through the years, but only wives of larger churches, it seems, have been so recognized and paid for their labors in the Gospel. Isn't it time we lifted the pall from the Church and the disillusionment from the ministers' wives who have invested so much of their lives? They have exercised faith that they would be taken care of (and now even retirement benefits are being withdrawn!). As we a church of faith or merely a church of

pragmatism?—Jim Ferguson, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The Bible: Inspiration and authority

I applaud Tim Crosby's search for a common ground on biblical "inspiration and authority" (May 1998). Two points in response:

1. Critical analysis versus mysteries of love: a helpful distinction, but the two are not at war. The same Word awakens love and sanctifies reason.

2. Ellen White belongs to the discussion—kudos. Was it love or reason that led her to exclaim that the Bible "is not God's mode of thought and expression"; that "God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible" (*Selected Messages*, book 1:21). Her person-centered approach to inspiration (God inspired "men," not "words") means that there are no "problems" in the Bible that we must defend, harmonize, or explain away. Paul's logic is always Paul's, not God's. Yet the Bible is "perfect . . . in its simplicity," and every word is a precious illustration of the "imperfect speech" God uses to touch the "degenerate senses" of "fallen human beings" (22).

If our understanding of inspiration is guided by the Spirit, shaped by the plain reading of the text, and informed by *all* of Scripture and *all* the writings of Ellen White, we can't go far wrong.—Alden Thompson, College Place, Washington. ■

Error in August issue

Due to a computer disk glitch in transferring data, last month's issue contained contradictory and confusing information in the lead article by Del Johnson, "Changes in the North American Retirement Plan." For this reason, Figures 3-7 will be clarified and reprinted in the October issue of *Ministry*.

Free Subscription

If you're receiving *Ministry* bimonthly and haven't paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 *Ministry* has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. We believe, however, that the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share our aspirations and faith in a way that will provide inspiration and help to you as clergy. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulder, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you can't use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Requests should be on church letterhead and addressed to the editorial office.



One of the most crippling incapacities to strike the leader of any group or organization is the loss of a clear sense of vision. With the loss of one's

vision to be someone, and to actually do something consistent with that vision, comes the corresponding involuntary loss of direction, motivation, and the deep sense of enthusiasm and loyalty once felt for the mission that grew out of the vision. Besides these losses, something even more basic dissolves: one's essential sense of the "meaning" so inevitably associated with a worthy vision. The loss of vision in the leader inevitably affects the everyday outlook of the people of the organization being led, until life within the organization dwindles into a state of hand to mouth existence, with organizational death knocking more and more insistently and unabashedly on the front door.

The word *vision* was a religious word long before it was surrounded with its contemporary secular meanings and connotations. Yet in recent years the church has adopted the strong tendency to take on the worthy, yet limited notion of secular corporations, that "vision" is simply an inspiring sense of where a person or enterprise should go. It is in tending to adopt this limited view of visioning that the thrust of what is indisputably a spiritual organism—the church—has begun to lose its sense of direction, destiny, meaning, and mission. There is among many Christian leaders the uneasy and unfocused feeling that a *vision* that seeks to have significantly transcendent or spiritual underpinnings is not practical enough and is not congruous with what is politically correct among the corporate pundits who have designed the latest in prevailing state-of-the-art visionary leadership and management. This uncomfortable sensation is seldom openly articulated among us but shows itself most often in our neglect, as

Visioning: Secular and spiritual

W I L L E V A

Christian leaders, of a thoroughgoing visioning process in the church, which embraces a careful and meaningful encounter with God, as crucial to the visioning process. We seem to feel that such dynamics are fruitless, theoretical, and the worst sin of all, "impractical."

We live in an age that inappropriately lauds the practical. We do this even as our humanity cries out for something that will feed its starving, materialized spirit. It seems to me that much of this penchant for the practical grows out of the contemporary materialistic, rationalistic, humanistic view we hold of life and reality. Consistent with this, financial and political dynamics are seriously overvalued, even in the church. Ecclesiastical political process and financial consideration absorb the visioning process of the church from top to bottom. We are so oriented to these dynamics that any supernaturally transcendent reality has a difficult time actually influencing, to any determinative extent, the direction or action of the church. The church simply can no longer afford to imitate the limited notions of vision and visioning that may be ample in a business environment but are not adequate in the light of the ultimate understandings of reality with which God has illuminated the church.

Although I am all for the practical, a worthy vision of biblical quality always springs up and out of what is transcendently spiritual. This should certainly be uniquely and particularly true of Christian visioning. The visioning of the church is not something that is first born into consciousness on the winds of human need, crucial as human need is. It is not even something that, first of all,

grows out of the challenge to baptize X number of people—worthy as that challenge is. Authentic Christian visioning occurs when we fully embrace the definitive presence and direction of God in our life, personal and corporate.

Paul talked of the guiding vision of his life as being a "heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19), and the way he received that vision was certainly transcendent (Acts 9:3-9). All of the guiding visions of the Old Testament prophets, which escorted the practical movements of ancient Israel, are clearly identified as coming fresh and substantive from God through prophets (and as pastors, ours is distinctly a prophetic role). Moses' terribly practical vision for Israel in Egypt was one he received in the throes of a transcendent rendezvous with God Himself at the burning bush. Isaiah's vision (Isaiah 6) was bathed in spectacularly Divine revelations, yet it resulted in tangible, practical behavior in Isaiah's life.

There are no shortcuts in our journey to discover an authentic Christian vision. Excellent as many of our "visioning" techniques are and unbecomingly impractical and over-spiritual as conventional secular influence among us may pigeonhole such concerns, they are by Christian definition crucial to real life, meaning, and the ultimate fulfillment of the mission of the church.

We can no longer afford to neglect the grandeur and functional power in this kind of "visioning." We need clear conceptions of our marching orders from God. We cannot dismiss this concern as empty and impractical simply because we have been unsuccessful in storming the battlements of heaven with the ineffective attempts of the past, or because no one seems able to definitively describe in everyday terms exactly how such storming is to be done.

As we pray and work toward a clearer vision for this magazine, please join us. I would invite you also to join in praying and working toward and within a clearer Christocentric vision for our churches and for our church as a whole. ■

FAILURE:

Getting through the inevitable

While browsing in the self-improvement section of a bookstore, I came across a rather odd sight: a solitary book on failure, placed right in the center of a vast array of books on success. The title was provocative: *When Smart People Fail.*¹



*Fredrick A. Russell is
the pastor of the
Miracle Temple
Seventh-day
Adventist Church in
Baltimore, Maryland.*

Soon after arriving home, I delved into the book. And there they were, scattered like windswept debris over the pages, deeply painful stories of sharp, brilliant, and gifted people who had failed. I trudged through the book, searching expectantly for a neatly wrapped package of “seven secrets” for avoiding failure. It wasn’t there. Instead, what emerged was a disturbing message that failure is neither avoidable nor discriminatory. It’s going to happen sooner or later to everyone.

Ministry and failure

To deal with failure is difficult for anyone, and more so for pastors. The very thought of it plays havoc with what might be an already embattled sense of self-worth and confidence. Most pastors struggle regularly with feelings of inadequacy and personal value. The very nature of their work promotes these feelings. Much of what we do relates to people, and the job is laborious, tiring, very public, and uniquely frustrating. People’s lives can’t be fixed in a 9:00-to-5:00 workday. Consequently for the pastor, there is rarely a sense of completion,

the feeling of a job well done. Coupled with this is the fact that people can project onto pastors their own issues. Thus the daunting task of ministry can seem overwhelming, heightening the feelings of personal inadequacy. This prompts the inner questions: Am I making a difference? What did I really accomplish? So before any particular act of failure occurs, pastors already exist in an environment in which failure on an emotional level is never far removed.

Failure and the call to ministry

Another complicating factor peculiar to ministry is the theology of the “call.” Part of this theology is the belief that “God has not called us to be successful, He has called us to be faithful.” While that sounds well and good, it gets a bit messy when a much-anticipated church project has failed, and the blame is falling disproportionately on the pastor-leader. And people have creative ways of reminding the pastor of what happened!

The truth is that the theology of the “call,” as it is sometimes described, does not prepare one for failure. In our thinking we don’t associate the call to ministry with the

inevitability of failure. I'm not suggesting that one should have an obsession with failure, but one should be able to recognize that even in God's work, it happens, and faithfulness to the call doesn't preclude it. So since it's going to happen, how do we deal with the inevitable?

Moses: A study in dealing with failure

When you think of leaders who have had their share of failures, Moses stands out at the top of the list. What exacerbated his failure was the fact that a few thousand people were always in attendance. He never had the luxury of pastoring some quaint little church in the hills, shut away from the masses, so that when he messed up, only a smidgen of folks knew. Instead, Moses did ministry under the hot lights of constant scrutiny, censure, and criticism.

It all started with Moses being a passionate protector of his people. But in a series of events that eventually spawned out of control and resulted in a murder, Moses found himself a fugitive—running for his

life. He was a victim of the "law of unintended consequences." He thought he was helping but ended up short-circuiting his leadership. It was a simple error of judgment in which Moses led with his heart instead of his head.

But the majority of the people, no doubt, branded Moses a major hotheaded disappointment. And it probably didn't matter to them that it was one of their own that greased the skids in the premature collapse of his career. A broken man, Moses fled Egypt.

Many pastors can identify with Moses' plight. That of being passionate and well-intentioned as one promotes some cause but having to endure the agony of a decision gone awry: seeking the termination of a church school teacher with questionable competence but neglecting to gather all the facts; changing a stale order of service without first testing the waters; convincing the congregation to spend money on a "can't-miss" undertaking that ultimately crashes and burns, or any of a million blunders that

you wish you could take back. Most of the time, a bad decision does not result (such as in Moses' case) in having to leave the church, especially if the stumble was not terminal. But there does arise, more often than not, a haunting sense of personal failure that is endemic to those in ministry.

Pastors need to forgive their own failures

Pastors are most often extremely sensitive and forgiving when it comes to their members' failures. We are adroit in helping people put even their worst defeats in proper perspective. We understand grace, especially as it relates to others, but regrettably are reluctant to partake of it ourselves, especially when it comes to some public mistake made in the actual practice of our ministry.

Ministers are notorious for engaging in torturous introspection and self-flagellation. Why did I do it that way? How could I be so stupid? When am I ever going to learn? Pastors as a group do not handle failure very well. Edward Bratcher terms it the walk-on-water syndrome. That internal notation that perpetually insists that "I've got to have it together at all times."

The pressures of leadership and our passion to be an example "to the believers" can lead us to place unrealistic expectations on ourselves. I think that was exactly one of God's concerns in pulling Moses offstage and into the desert. The lonely desert experience was an excellent opportunity to bring him to understand that the work was the Lord's and that he wasn't responsible for carrying all its weight on his shoulders.

Remembering whose work we are doing

It's the same with us. When we forget who's really in control, we end up losing perspective and thinking the work hinges on what we do or do not do. Then when failure occurs (as it certainly will), we're sent reeling into the abyss of self-doubt and self-recrimination. It is for that reason that we must occasionally allow God, as He did with Moses, to pull us back from the fray long enough to gain needed perspective, and to learn, among other things, patience with ourselves. This time alone with God may be only an afternoon spent walking in the quiet of nature—sorting out what happened, or, in some cases, there might be a need for an extended period away from the

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Seasoned with Love
Sharon Cress, Editor



grind of ministry. But in times of reversals it is essential to take time to step back with God to gain perspective.

Failure and the wear and tear of ministry

Moses was on a roll. Beginning his ministry afresh after years of solitude in the desert, he enjoyed a long string of successes. To be sure, there were times of high stress. But for the most part things were moving in the right direction. A glance at his ministry during this period would reveal a momentum that any pastor would covet: He displayed rock-solid courage during the precarious hours at the Red Sea; communicated a clear, confident word from God in the face of the peoples' anxiety; solved some difficult organizational issues; handled courageously a tough church disciplinary matter, resulting in 3,000 members being "permanently" disfellowshipped from the church; and led the congregation into a multimillion-dollar building program, all the while chairing the capital campaign committee himself. Impressive!

But then things began to heat up. There had always been a measure of criticism against Moses' ministry, but now it became intense. A rebellion ensued instigated by several influential members that were bent on unseating Moses as leader. More than 14,000 people died as a result. If it hadn't been for Moses putting himself on the line, more would have perished. Not surprisingly, the wear and tear began to take its toll on the stressed-out leader. His frustration began to build to the point that he lost his temper and lashed out at the people. They wanted water, and "he" gave it to them—the wrong way. The chapter heading (Num. 20) in my Bible simply calls it "Moses' Error at Kadesh." In simple words, he failed.

The spiritual dilemma for Moses was obvious. He didn't follow the instructions of the Lord. However, something else was being played out on an emotional level. What were the thoughts that ran through his mind as it dawned on him that he had failed? For most of us who fail, there is a plethora of thoughts and emotions that gather like dark clouds announcing the arrival of a storm.

Linda Gottlieb and Carole Hyatt, in *When Smart People Fail*, zero in on the con-

flicting emotions that accompany failure. "You feel pummeled, destroyed, violated, betrayed, terrified, angry, guilty, depressed, vengeful, lethargic, impotent—and occasionally relieved and resolute. . . . Your mood swings wildly from hope to despair. It is a time of great confusion."² Gottlieb and Hyatt go on to point out that in failure one has what psychiatrists term a "narcissistic loss"—a loss of your very sense of self. "And the more closely you identified yourself with the job or endeavor that failed, the greater the loss."³

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not handle failure very well.*

Distinguishing who we are from what we do

This is highly reflective of the experience of pastors. Our whole lives and identity can easily center around our ministries. And when we feel we have failed in an endeavor (striking as opposed to speaking to the rock), our whole sense of self can suffer. We head downhill emotionally—occasionally into mild (or not so mild) forms of depression. In all this, our spiritual life may also take a dive. The problem is that we are often unable to separate our personhood from what we do as work. The fact is, we are not our jobs, and conversely, our jobs are not us. The last thing that means, of course, is that we should pastor at an emotionally safe distance, ensuring that we will never get hurt or make a blunder.

To pastor effectively is to pastor with passion. And pastoring passionately demands full engagement. The challenge, though, is to be able to make a full separation from what one may consider the job "failure" and one's worth as a person before God and oneself. God still considered Moses his friend, notwithstanding what had occurred. He still counted. His value as a person was never in question.

And neither is ours—no matter what has happened. This salient truth permits us to be liberated from a self-defeating mindset so that we may constantly enjoy the successes of ministry, while we look at the failures in our ministry as growth opportunities.

Failure isn't final

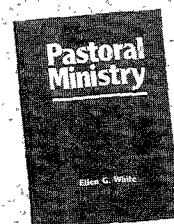
Moses was at the end of his ministry. God had informed him that he would not be going with the people into the Promised Land—the destination toward which he had struggled for so many years. Though God valued him as a person and a leader, he had to experience the consequences of leadership failure.

God allows His children to fail for the sake of the greater purpose He has in mind for them. God took Moses to an infinitely better Promised Land. What had seemed like a total washout, and no doubt a terrible disappointment for Moses, turned into the ultimate celebration. Why? Because God has this sovereign ability to do wonderful, unexpected things in and for us, even when things grow out of our worst failures and appear their bleakest. ■

¹ Carole Hyatt and Linda Gottlieb, *When Smart People Fail: Rebuilding Yourself for Success* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1993).

² *Ibid.*, 39.

³ *Ibid.*



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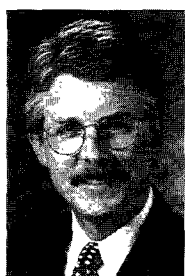


PROJECTING THE IMPACT OF NET '98

Alfred C. McClure interviews Dwight K. Nelson, speaker for NET '98—the largest evangelistic event ever undertaken by a Christian church. It will be broadcast via satellite to as many as five thousand downlink sites in virtually every time zone around the world.



Alfred C. McClure is president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.



Dwight K. Nelson is pastor of the Pioneer Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Alfred C. McClure: For the NET '98 speaker we turned to you, a pastor in a relatively small community. Dwight, how do you think NET '98 will impact the church and its evangelistic thrust?

Dwight K. Nelson: NET '98 will open up a new paradigm for public evangelism. Public evangelism is not only the hiring of "professional guns" (as much as we need their expertise and giftedness). Rather, evangelism is the domain of the local body of Christ and the local shepherd. What NET '98 will be modeling to the world church is a local pastor, in his local pulpit, serving his local parish by reaching out to local friends and neighbors, and communicating passionately the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. Administrators have been saying for years, "Pastor, you are the evangelist. Your people are the partners in evangelism with you." Now, we are modeling that paradigm.

ACM: What kind of person do you have in mind as you prepare for this series?

DKN: I have heard from pastors in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, across Asia, and from my colleagues on this continent that they want NET '98 to interface with secular people, those who dominate the mind-set of human civilization right now—a group that has not been our traditional target. So in shaping the program, the format, the messages of NET '98, I have tried to keep in mind the secular person, especially the secular young adult. That's all generations, *including* the young.

ACM: What, specifically, drives your special concern for young people in relation to NET '98?

DKN: Within the church GenXers have grown up with a sense that evangelism really was not for them. Outside of the church, evangelism has not interfaced as effectively as it could with the GenX population. The goal of the next millennium seminar is to be life-changing for all, and it is certainly going to be user-friendly to the young.

ALFRED C. McCLURE AND DWIGHT K. NELSON

ACM: That's something, clearly, that the whole church has been praying for and longs to see happen. What is your vision for that?

DKN: Our theme for NET '98 will be "Finding a Forever Friendship with God."

ACM: What does that mean?

DKN: This is the most relationally starved generation in the history of the earth. Across the board. All demographic groups. All age groups. What better time to be communicating a picture of God that will be relationally compelling in the midst of all the brokenness. What better time to reach out with a picture of God that will draw the relationally hungry to a lifelong, even eternal friendship with God. We will sweep across all the major summits of biblical truth but find at the top of every mountain this compelling picture of God as someone who urgently longs to draw the human race into personal friendship with Him now.

ACM: I think I hear you saying that there will be distinctives that will make this series different from others.

DKN: Yes. NET '98 obviously is going to build on the strong shoulders of NET '96 and NET '95. But we have been listening to the pastors, and over and over again the word that has come back is "Shorten the program." Each NET '98 airing is going to be only 60 minutes long.

ACM: Can you do everything in 60 minutes?

DKN: We will have a host couple who will welcome both our local site and the global audience, and the musicians will sing. Then we will go to video clips, on-the-street interviews in cities all over this earth. Those on the video roll-ins will ask questions pertaining to the themes that I will be covering in our evening lectures. As soon as the on-the-street interviews are over, I step to the microphone and have the message. At the end of the lecture we may have an appeal song. I may make an appeal, but boom, I am telling you, in 60 minutes it will be over.

ACM: What would you suggest that a pastor do to encourage members to be involved in preparation for opening night?

DKN: At this juncture, just weeks away from opening night (October 9) it is imperative that we as pastors, with our people, move into an even deeper dimension of intercessory prayer.

ACM: Just pray?

DKN: Al, I am absolutely convinced that the only hope for the success of NET '98 is God's response to a concerted concert of prayer. This world is too big for you and me, all of us. It is humanly impossible to reach this generation as God has asked us to. So, the first strategic action of every prayer and every parish right now is to intensify our prayer strategy of praying for the lost who live around us.

ACM: Is there anything else?

DKN: Step number two is that we have got to be out among those people. If NET '98 is going to be a relational series based on a relational truth about God, pastors must be in the pulpits asking our people to strengthen, to affirm, to keep nurturing the friendships they have. Because in two or three weeks we will be going back to those people with smiles on our faces and a very attractive, compelling handbill in our hands, inviting them to be with us on opening night. So number one: intensified prayer strategy; number two: intensified relational strategy.

ACM: Let's assume that I am a pastor and my church has made adequate preparation and is off to a good start. What can I do as the pastor to build a bridge from your presentation each evening to being able to provide leadership to the group in attendance?

DKN: I really am hoping that the local pastor will see me as a colleague whom he has invited in for a quick interface with an inquiring public. I want to urge my colleagues to assume the role of evangelistic leadership that is already theirs. Before they turn on the screen and the cameras start panning the audience at Pioneer Memorial

Church on the campus of Andrews University, before they even turn on that switch, their visibility up front will be strategically significant. Pastors will be viewed by their people as the leaders of these local events. The pastor's personal appeal, his or her own friendly bridging to the audience, will be key. What we do on the screen, the Holy Spirit is going to anoint, but the pastors are the linkage with the real human being. Pastors will be providing spiritual leadership at a key time in people's lives. The screen won't save a soul. The Holy Spirit is going to work through the pastors' personal contacts in the home and in the office, as well as at the church.

ACM: Dwight, you said the screen won't save anybody. But what about the messages?

DKN: A sermon is a speech that ends with a motion. In other words, you come to the end of that speech and you say, "Therefore, I move." As I spent July 1997 through January 1998 working every spare minute on the 28 messages for NET '98, I endeavored to shape each of them into a moment of decision. There is no way we can encounter the living Christ of the universe, the Father of all life, and not be confronted with a decision. And we will have altar calls. So, in answer to your question, yes, every message has been shaped to lead the secular, urban, contemporary human spirit to make a choice about God.

ACM: Since your emphasis will be on finding a forever friendship with God, what can church members do to help build relationships with people coming to the meetings?

DKN: That's a key question. We can't talk about a God who seeks friendships and wants to deepen His relationship with human beings and yet be a church that is offering no human friendship. It is vital from the opening night that the congregations exude the warmth, the friendship of Christ.

ACM: Do you have any specific suggestions?

DKN: At our site, for example, the host

continued on page 24

Hey! Preacher's Kid

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One winner in each category will win a free trip (travel, accommodations, food, registration) for themselves and their pastoral parents to the General Conference pre-session, World Ministers Council at Toronto, Canada, in June 2000. Sorry, Adventist PKs only.

PK Contest Guidelines

Note: Follow instructions. Entries that do not follow the guidelines will not be considered.

Contest Theme: "The Way of the Cross Leads Home"

1. Only Adventist PKs (preacher's kids) born during or after 1983 qualify. Contestant's parent(s) must be a full-time Adventist ministerial employee, such as a pastor, chaplain, departmental director, Bible instructor, administrator, or Bible teacher in a secondary or higher educational institution.
2. Every entry must use the theme "The Way of the Cross Leads Home."
3. Entry deadline is April 1, 1999. Entries received after that date will not be considered. Ship to: PK Contest, GC Ministerial Association, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA.
4. For judging purposes, your name *must not* appear on your entry. Instead, include a separate paper with your name, birth date, address, parent's name, division and union, and telephone number if available.
5. PKs must create the entry without parental or other help and must submit original entries, not copies.
6. Pack all entries carefully for shipping. Damaged entries cannot be considered.
7. All entries become property of the General Conference and will be displayed at the Toronto World Ministers Council. No entries can be returned.
8. Only one entry allowed per category per contestant.

Contest Categories

Each entry must follow the contest theme: "The Way of the Cross Leads Home"

Art (for *Ministry* magazine cover)

- Art must be in color and the original work of the PK.
- Size minimum 8 x 10.5 inches (20 x 27 cm), maximum 11 x 16 inches (28 x 41 cm).
- Allow room in artwork for the *Ministry* magazine title logo. See magazine cover.

Cartoon

- Cartoons must be single line drawings or a series of no more than four related line drawings that tell a story. (Ink on 4 x 5 inch (10 x 13 cm) card. No pencil drawings.)
- Mount each drawing on 8.5 x 11 inch (26.6 x 28 cm) card stock paper.

Banners and Flags

- Must express theme by script or design representation.
- Make from handmade or commercial cloth.
- Use paint, thread, fabric, stain, and similar materials.
- Minimum size one yard (about one meter) long and wide and maximum three yards (three meters) long or wide including border.

Recitation/Memorization

- Choose one passage: Isaiah 52:9-53:12; Luke 23:33-24:9; Romans 5:1-21.
- Use any recognized version of Scripture in the language of your choice.
- Recitation from memory, without prompting. Your entry will be judged on memorization of the passage and your ability to hold the listener's attention.
- Submit on audio cassette.

Article

- Article must respond to one or two of these questions: How does the fact that Jesus left heaven, became a

human, and died like a criminal make a difference in your life? How does it affect your thinking, actions, and goals?

What does Jesus' sacrifice tell you about God: who He is, what He's like?

How does Jesus' life and death help you understand sin? How does this help you relate to other people especially those who disagree with you?

How does Jesus' life and death here give you hope and guide you "home"?

- Don't use many quotations from any source. Use one or more personal stories to illustrate your ideas.
- Length between 750 and 1,000 words.
- Type or hand-print with double-spacing.
- Use the title, "The Way of the Cross Leads Home: What it Means to Me."
- You may talk about your ideas with friends, family, teachers, or pastors. They may give suggestions, correct grammar, or spelling, but not write, revise, or rewrite.
- Tell your story. Not someone else's.

Stitchery

- Except for ideas, the entire entry must be your work.
- Types of stitchery eligible: crochet, embroidery, crewel embroidery, quilting, knitting, applique, and needlepoint.
- Size minimum, 4 x 4 inches (10 x 10 cm); maximum, 2 x 4 feet (61 x 122 cm).
- Materials must be native to your country.
- Your entry will be judged on originality, use of materials, neatness, and how well it captures the theme.



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Waking up to a telephone's ring at 6:00 a.m., I began one of the more colorful days of my life as a pastor in Zimbabwe.

"Pastor Stoddart, my father is ill and wants you to come and pray for him," said the middle-aged woman on the poor-quality line. I knew her father well and had previously visited his home in the rural areas. He was in his seventies.

As soon as possible, I climbed into my reliable Peugeot 404. I had to decide which route to take. The short route meant I had a walk of two kilometers through the bush from where the road ran out or the long way (another 50 kilometers), which enabled me to drive right to the cluster of rondavels. I had driven the long way before, so I thought I would try the short route. It meant a river crossing—on foot.

Then I turned south onto the dirt roads and finally arrived at the river crossing. Locking the car, I descended the two meters to the water, took off my shoes, and laced them together so they could hang around my neck. Along both banks were several staffs used by the locals to assist in the crossing. I took one that gave me some balance against the current as I made my way across the twenty meters of submerged, slippery rocks. The water was up to my thighs. In one hand was my Bible, in the other hand the staff.

I made it to the other side, put on my shoes, and headed for the small cluster of huts at the end of the dirt track. The cool interior of the rondavel and the smile on the face of my aged friend made the arrival a pleasure. I spent an hour or so with him and his family, praying, reading the Bible, and discussing his chickens.

I told them that at home in Harare I had some bantams that laid lots of eggs. But I wanted them to breed. The trouble was that none of the hens wanted to sit on the eggs. When I mentioned this to my

The chicken and the river

RON STODDART

hosts, they reacted in a typically African fashion by insisting I take one of their hens! I knew that refusing their offer would not be right. So I accepted graciously and was given a large black hen.

When it was time to leave, I told them I needed to make my way back to the car.

"Take the bicycle," said the man. "Bicycle?" I asked. They wheeled out one of those black, thick framed, delivery bikes, the sort with a frame for a huge basket. It had no brakes, and the tires were bald. But it meant less walking down to the river, so I accepted. The children were given my Bible and the chicken and instructed to run alongside me as I wobbled my way to the river. In a few minutes there we all were at the bank of the river—me, the children, and the chicken. Now I had an audience as I faced crossing the river with a chicken under one arm and my Bible in the other hand, which meant no hands free for the staff.

"It shouldn't be too difficult the second time; I know the current," I told myself. Shoes around my neck, I stepped into the water. The children were all quiet, but I could feel their eyes. One step, ten steps, I was doing fine. Then, at just about the halfway point, a green, algae-covered rock moved under my foot. I began to topple.

In a split second I had to decide how to fall and still prevent myself from being swept away, save the chicken, and keep my Bible dry. What comes first, the chicken or the Bible? I am afraid the chicken lost. To howls of glee from the children, the minister baptized the future mother of my bantam chicks. I have to admit, even I thought it was humorous at the time. Holding the Bible as high as I could, I landed on my side, chicken side down, and then managed to regain my footing, with

the poor bird held tight against my side. I stumbled out the other side and looked back, to find that the children had run in case the minister was going to tell them off for laughing. I am sure that many a fireside chat was enlivened by their description of Mr. Stoddart's river crossing.

Getting to the car, I then had to decide what to do with a wet hen. Have you ever smelled a wet hen? The people in animal cruelty societies would object, but the only place I was prepared to put the bird was in the car's trunk. I then drove home, drying off in the hot air from the outside. The Bible lay on the seat next to me unscathed. I still use it today.

The chicken somehow survived the trauma of the dunking and the ride in the trunk. When I introduced her to my bantams, the rooster found her quite attractive (there's no accounting for taste.) Within a week she was sitting on eggs and was soon after pecking and clucking around the garden with her adopted children scurrying around her. We called her Mvura. It means water bird. ■

Ron Stoddart is pastor of the World Wide Church of God in Concord, New Hampshire.

With this exemplary article we inaugurate a new, semiregular column in *Ministry*, entitled "The Pastor's Day."

In doing this, the objective is to enrich the *Ministry* reading experience by adding a human interest element. The success of the column will depend almost entirely on our readers becoming writers.

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- We especially encourage our non-North American writers to submit material.

MINISTRY IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

As we near the end of the twentieth century and prepare for a new millennium (the third in Christian history), as leaders we need to think seriously and evaluate prayerfully the condition of the church.



David Gyertson, Ph.D., is president of Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky.

How well are we fulfilling the Great Commission mandate of making disciples in every tribe, tongue, and nation?

Trends indicate an alarming decline in the influence of Christian thought and experience in contemporary western culture. During the past fifty years, American Christianity has set the pace for the worldwide work of the kingdom. This was a powerful movement that is now in decline. Today over half of the U.S. population has no religious affiliation. Most churches have either maintained their numbers or declined in the last decade. Overall, church membership fell nearly ten percent while the population grew at almost 12 percent in the same period. Most troubling is the loss of Christian memory and frame of reference. Less than half of the young-adult population, the emerging leaders of tomorrow, has any form of religious training and context.

Internationally, the trends are more encouraging. There are signs of new spiritual life in Central and South America, India, the former Soviet Union, and the Far East. The gospel explosion in central Africa is dramatic; some believe that, if current

growth continues, the entire region could enter the new millennium as the most Christianized continent on earth.

Without question, an era of unprecedented challenge is confronting the church. Christian leaders throughout the world, particularly in the West, must wrestle with how a gospel, birthed in a culture of sandals and sails and sustained across time by a focus on ecclesiastical structures and theological orthodoxy, can be effective in a future dominated by moral relativism, self-centeredness, and cyberspace. What will revitalize the gospel for the next generation, century, and, should Jesus tarry, millennium?

Modeling the great commandment—advancing the Great Commission

First and foremost, a gospel fit for the twenty-first century must be anchored to the mission and mandate of the first-century church. Simply put, our unchanging call is twofold: first, to model the *Great Commandment* (Matt. 22:35-40); second, to advance the *Great Commission* (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus left two clear, unequivocal assignments. The first is to love God with

DAVID J. GYERTSON

our total being, finding in that love His passion for a lost and hurting world. Having come to love our neighbor as ourselves, we are called to a role in the Father's business, and that is making disciples in every corner and culture of the world.

In embracing this mandate and implementing that mission, we must take our cues from Him who introduced His gospel during the first century. In the encounter with the Samaritan woman at Sychar's well (John 4:1-42), Jesus established a pattern for ministry that works with every person and culture across the face of human history. With this story in mind, here are a few key elements that I believe will be characteristic of the ministry of the church in the twenty-first century.

Persons more than programs

In John 4:4, Jesus interrupts the established plans and program of His culture in order to get from Judea into Galilee by taking a detour for the purpose of engaging people. *But He needed to go through Samaria* (NKJV). Such a change violated societal norms. Observant Hebrews were willing to endure significant inconvenience to avoid contact with, as they described them, the half-breed, theologically perverse residents of Samaria. He needed to go through this land because people there needed Him.

In an era driven by "Titanic" movie spectacles, it is tempting to pour increasing amounts of time, energy, and resources into programs, props, and places. If we are not careful, the staging rather than the audience, the sanctuary rather than the seeker, become the unintended end. In a society increasingly depersonalized by systems and cyberspace, in societies overwhelmed by sensation and spectacle, the honest, straightforward witness of individuals changed by an intimate encounter with the Christ will be the most effective strategy. We need a generation of Christian leaders focused on the woman at the well in need of the individualized attention of a personalized Messiah. Christ-centered caring in cross-anchored community will produce a third millennium communion worthy of the Master's name.

Proclamation more than presentation

In Jesus' ministry, content was always

more important than costume. His ministry mystified and challenged the people of His day. He taught as one with authority, not as the scribes and Pharisees, who spoke anchored primarily to tradition. At the well that day, Jesus was more concerned about the message than the medium. He wanted to be sure that the woman had her focus on the water and not on the bucket. "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (verse 10, NKJV).

We are in desperate need of prophetic, heartfelt, life-changing proclamation in the church of the new millennium. How long has it been since a message so burned in your bones that you feared it would consume you? How long has it been since preaching was your greatest passion and preparation to preach your most consuming priority? How long has it been since your people left the assembly so aware of the anointing that they said, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet" (verse 19).

Dr. Julian C. McPheeters, second president of Asbury Theological Seminary and then in his ninety-second year, shared with me a most important insight on effective, anointed proclamation: "Prepare yourself full, pray yourself hot, and preach yourself empty!" While relevance and style are im-

portant, the content is the highest priority. How thankful I am for those who preach the Word of God in power, under the anointing and with prophetic conviction—whose message brings life because it has first come alive in them. Effective leaders in the next millennium will be those in whom the Word of God dwells richly. Great-Commandment-driven and Great-Commission-focused churches in the twenty-first century will be places of the passionate, prophetic proclamation of the whole counsel of God.

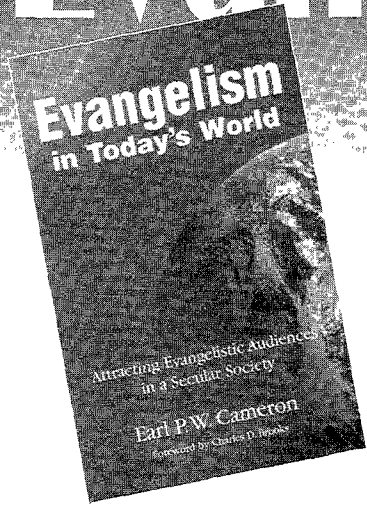
Incarnation more than institution

While the gospel of the next millennium will be more people than programs, more proclamation than presentation, it will be also more incarnational than institutional. Jesus had not gone far into His dialog with the woman until form and institution got in the way. Do we worship on the mountain or in the temple? (verses 20-22), she asked. His answer is one of the most important for the third era of the Christian movement: We worship a person, not a place.

One of the most significant trends in contemporary society has been the abandonment of brand loyalty. This is particularly true today in the historic, denominationally anchored church. The cry of the modern heart is Sir, we wish to see Jesus (John 12:21). Our comfort with what

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has gone before can be one of the most significant detriments to what God wants to do next. Someone has suggested that the seven last words of the church are *We've never done it that way before*. Now, I am a traditionalist with a passion to learn the lessons of those who have gone before me. I believe in the value of a connectional church and a historic theology. The danger is making the connection and the theology into the end rather than the means. In many churches the butterfly has gone. We are worshiping the empty cocoon left behind.

While theology and ecclesiology are important, the church of the next millennium will be one where the presence of the Christ is clearly welcomed. The leaders of this next millennium will be anchored to the biblically essential orthodoxy and orthopraxy of the past while ever focused on the challenge to reveal the person of Jesus fresh to the present age. The Incarnation was the answer to the ecclesiastical irrelevance and heartless legalism of the first-century church. It will be the answer to the same in the twenty-first century.

Celebration more than information

In this same dialogue, Jesus refocuses worship from a place of information to a relationship of celebration. "You worship what you do not know. . . . But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:22-24).

In the new millennial church there will be a maturing of worship. It will become increasingly a celebration of the One who is redeeming us rather than just a reiteration of what the past reveals about Him. In many places we are guilty of worshipping what we personally do now know. Increasingly the hunger of the human heart is that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10).

Throughout the world today, pilgrims are discovering a deeper relationship with the Savior through both private and corporate worship. There is a dramatic increase in Great-Commandment celebration charac-

terized by an upward, individually-tailored experience with the God who intimately cares and personally calls. Worship-centered, gift-driven, phenomena-punctuated congregations are among the fastest growing segments of Christendom worldwide.

Danger lurks, however, in an overemphasis on personal experience and enthusiasm. In these settings, the gospel can become that which primarily ministers to me rather than through me. Without the safeguards of a Great Commission reason for being and a Scripture-centered orthodoxy, personal experience becomes the measure of that which is both essential and true. We end up worshipping worship, falling into the same institutionalized hollowness of those who have gone before us. He, the Lord, rather than we, must become the center of worship. The fruit of such celebration will be a renewed and enhanced passion for a world longing to know Him. Effective twenty-first century leaders will be those who, hearing the Father's heart cry, will lead their people into a worship-centered relationship with Him who is both Spirit and Truth.

Intercession more than condemnation

Finally, the church of the next millennium must find itself committed to transformational intercession more than confrontational condemnation. It is interesting that Jesus ignored the cultural arguments and the nonessential theological wars of His day to focus on the act of transforming people. The woman at the well was a Samaritan and an adulteress. He looked beyond what she was to what she could become. He saw a sinner with saintly potential. Jesus wasted no time engaging the disciples in their questions about either His disregard for tradition or her character. She was clearly wrong, but Jesus knew she could be thoroughly changed.

Too many Christian leaders manifest a warlike rather than reconciliation-focused stance. I am troubled by the dramatic increase in secular rhetorical devices and strategies showing up in the church. The use of irony, sarcasm, and condescending humor from our people and pulpits does not reflect the humility and charity characteristic of the Christ. Separatist and partisan strategies seem far from the model of a Savior deeply engaged with publicans and

sinners in thought-provoking and life-changing interaction.

We too often speak and act toward those with whom we disagree in tones that reflect arrogance and anger. While it is important that we stand for righteousness, we must take those positions absent from a language and methodology that contradicts and even negates our message. Jesus calls us to touch and transform rather than defeat and destroy our enemies. If it is true that He is not willing that any should perish, then none are beyond the potential of being reached and engaged by His preventive grace. Our words and actions must reflect such a conviction.

I believe Jesus was able to relate to a lost world so effectively because He was in intimate conversation with the Father of that world. The deeper my commitment to life-changing, circumstance-engaging intercessory prayer, the more my actions and words are seasoned with the person and passion of Christ. The church of the next millennium will see every sinner with saintly potential. That perspective will only come in intimate, disciplined communion with Him who weeps over a world in pain.

Whom shall He send?

Jesus' closing words to the disciples at Sychar have unusual relevance for church leaders in the era before us. "Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life" (John 4:35, 36).

Those same words must be heard afresh by the church and its leaders of today if we are to know and to do the will of the Father in the next millennium. Let us lay hold of the Great-Commandment mandate, loving God with our total being. Let us rededicate ourselves to the Great-Commission mission, convinced that as we focus on people more than programs, proclamation more than presentation, incarnation more than institution, celebration more than information, and intercession more than condemnation, we can fulfill the plan for every ear to hear that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

Whom shall He send to lead the twenty-first century church? Those who, deeply in love with the Savior, will give themselves passionately to the harvest. ■

What to Do If Your Church Member Has a Conflict Between Religious Practice and Labor Union Membership

STEPS TO ACTION

1. Be aware that the laws in Canada and the United States provide significant relief to those whose sincerely held religious beliefs preclude labor union membership or the financial support of labor unions.
2. Provide your church member with copies of official position statements and other historic church teachings concerning membership in or support of labor organizations.
3. Help your member articulate his/her belief and the basis for it. Political or philosophical opposition to the payment of union dues is not enough: there must be a sincerely held religious belief against membership in a labor organization.
4. Determine whether your church member's practices are in harmony with his/her professed beliefs and with church doctrines and standards.
5. Get the full name and Local number of the union involved, plus the telephone number of the Local's business agent and the church member's employer's representative.
6. Get copies of any written communication among your member, the union, and the member's employer concerning verbal communication among them involving your member's religious belief.
7. Provide all the above described information to your local or union conference PARL director.
8. Counsel your church member to maintain a cordial and non-confrontational relationship with union representatives.

Presented by the North American Division Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department and Liberty Magazine.

THE JESUITS AND THE REFORMERS

The name Jesuits was first used by Calvin and others to designate the Roman Catholic order called The Society of Jesus, founded in 1534 by the Spanish noble Ignatius Loyola. The pope formally recognized the new order in 1540.¹



Errol Webster is the pastor of the Orange Seventh-day Adventist Church in New South Wales, Australia.

After two painful operations on a leg injury received in battle, Ignatius was convinced that his career as a soldier had ended. While in the hospital, in fits of fever because of his injury, he is said to have received visions of the virgin Mary, and he vowed his life to the service of the church.² The Protestant historian Wylie says that "he who lay down on his bed the fiery soldier of the emperor rose from it the yet more fiery soldier of the pope."³

The Society of Jesus became a totalitarian institution⁴ demanding complete obedience to an infallible church and an infallible pope.⁵ Their constitution demanded the rejection of "all opposing opinion or judgment," including their own.⁶

This made the Jesuits "a weapon by which not only was the Reformation checked, but a 'Counter-Reformation' was organized which regained for Rome much that she had lost."⁷ "And it must be confessed," says Wylie, "that these new soldiers did more than all the armies of France and Spain to stem the tide of Protestant success, and bind victory once more to the banners of Rome."⁸

The Germans had demanded a free council to address the issues raised by the Reformers. The emperor Charles V, who wanted to unite his empire, agreed. He knew that many able bishops wanted reforms, and also that the pope was not indifferent to their requests. But he had not reckoned on the Jesuits.

The Society of Jesus was but five years old when the council met at Trent, in northern Italy in 1545. The maxim of the society was the relentless suppression of heresy. They sought no compromise with the Reformers. It was Lainez, one of Loyola's early disciples and his successor as head of the society, who "made it his business to prevent the council making any concessions to the Protestants. His address, his subtlety and tenacity, gave him great influence" against liberal Roman Catholic bishops. He persuaded "the council to grant no doctrinal reforms."⁹

The Council of Trent met sporadically from 1545 to 1563 and consisted of 25 sessions. Its success in restoring coherence to Catholicism (now, properly "Roman" Catholicism) made permanent the split in

ERROL WEBSTER

Christendom. It provided guidelines for a major offensive to win back the part of Europe that became Protestant. It helped define the areas of future operation for the Jesuits, who were the epitome of the Counter-Reformation.

"It is not often realized," writes one historian, "how much of modern Catholicism, as we know it, springs from no farther back than Trent."¹⁰ The influence of Trent lasted right through until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), when some significant reforms took place.¹¹

Two views of salvation

Out of the Reformation came two views of salvation. On the one hand, the Catholic view, formulated by the Council of Trent, was predicated on ecclesiastical tradition. On the other hand, the view of the Reformers was based on Scripture. The outcome of the Council of Trent, for the Catholic Church, was largely the result of a Jesuit influence, largely steeped in established, traditional formulations.

On January 18, 1562, at the opening of the final period of the council, the archbishop of Reggio declared that church tradition had authority over Scripture. He cited as evidence, among other things, the change of the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week.¹² While Trent emphasized tradition, the Reformers insisted on Scripture.

The fundamental issue of the Reformation was the doctrine of justification by faith.¹³ The question was, How can a sinner be just before God?

This question should interest Adventists on two counts: first, because the basis of the three angels' messages is the "everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6); and second, because of our emphasis on the judgment. We could put the question another way: How can a sinner stand before God's holy law in the judgment and be acquitted? The soteriological views that came out of the Reformation and the Council of Trent gave two radically different answers.

Four areas of disagreement on the subject of justification stand out: (1) the meaning of justification, (2) the basis of God's declaring a sinner righteous, (3) the means by which a person is justified, and (4) the effect of justification.¹⁴

A fifth area of disagreement, which is really at the root of the other differences, was over the understanding of the nature of sin and human depravity.¹⁵

Comparison between the two views

1. *The meaning of justification.* "Justification," Trent said, "is not only remission of sins but also sanctification and renovation of the interior man." "God cannot consider one just or nonsinner without making him just." Trent confused justification with sanctification.¹⁶

What many do not realize is that for both Protestants and Catholics, salvation is by grace alone. Catholics believe that the "whole of justification is the work of God's grace." What, then, is the difference?

On the other hand, the Reformers taught that *to justify* meant "to declare," "to credit," or "to account righteous." "It is a forensic judicial change in relation to God."¹⁷

2. *The basis of justification.* What many do not realize is that for both Protestants and Catholics, salvation is by grace alone.¹⁸ Catholics believe that the "whole of justification is the work of God's grace."¹⁹ What, then, is the difference?

For the Reformers, the basis of justification, of God's acceptance and declaration that we are righteous, was the perfect life and death of Jesus imputed, credited, counted, to the believer—an act of grace for

us. It was based on a righteousness that is *totally outside* of the believer—an "alien righteousness."²⁰ Luther said, "Believers inwardly are always sinners; therefore they are always justified from without."²¹

On the other hand, for the Catholics at Trent, justification was on the basis of an infused, or imparted, *inherent righteousness* "poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost"—grace within.²² It was based on the grace of Christ *in* the believer through the Holy Spirit. This, they said, is God's gift of grace that justifies.

3. *The means of justification.* The fundamental argument of the Catholic position at Trent was to deny that we are justified by faith alone on the basis of the merits of Christ. Trent declared that the means of justification was by God making us righteous "through rebirth in Christ" and the "infusion" of righteousness in sanctification through the Holy Spirit.²³ Imputed righteousness was said to mean imparted righteousness "by which He makes us just." "Imputation of . . . the merits of Christ in fact takes place in the infusion [impartation, bestowal] of charity."²⁴

For the Reformers the means of justification was *faith alone* in the *completed* work of Christ—*plus nothing*. Luther said, "Wherefore God doth accept or account us as righteous only for our faith in Christ."²⁵

4. *The effect of justification.* For the Reformers, the effect of justification was full and complete pardon and acceptance the moment a sinner believed in Christ. Nothing else could be added to justify the sinner. Regeneration and sanctification were the immediate fruit. While obedience was the wholehearted response of the believer, perfect obedience was impossible because of his or her sinful nature.²⁶

For the Catholics, justification was incomplete, being based on sanctification, and it could be increased by good works. They declared that it was possible for the justified to perfectly keep the commandments of God.²⁷

5. *Sin and depravity.* The basic difference between the two views was and is in the understanding of sin and depravity. The Catholic position externalized sin and taught that depravity is curable in this life.²⁸ In other words, sinless perfection and complete obedience are possible in this life through indwelling righteousness.

Taking its starting point from Thomas Aquinas, who taught an incomplete view of the Fall, the teaching of Trent insisted that "the will was fallen or corrupted but the intellect was not affected."²⁹ In justification, human sin is not merely covered but actually eradicated.

In contrast, the Reformers believed that sin is what we are—our disposition—and that depravity is total. That is, every area of our being was affected by the Fall.³⁰ The final effect will not be eradicated until glorification.

Subtle shift at Trent

A significant, subtle, but often unnoticed shift took place in the Catholic doctrine of justification at the Council of Trent. Trent's teaching was not the crude legalism that Luther encountered years before when Tetzel was selling indulgences, whereby it was believed people could purchase forgiveness. The Reformation had spread too widely for that to be accepted, even by the bishops.

What Trent did was to substitute the work of the Holy Spirit for the work of Christ as Savior, thus making the Holy Spirit our justifier instead of Christ. Trent made the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth and sanctification (God's gift of grace in us), the basis of justification instead of the completed work of Christ.³¹

While the work of the Holy Spirit is *as necessary* for the plan of salvation as the work of Christ for us, the Holy Spirit is not our justifier and our Savior—Jesus is. Atonement, mediation, and intercession are the special work of Jesus, while sanctification and regeneration is the special work of the Holy Spirit.³²

Just as Jesus and the Holy Spirit are inseparable and yet distinct, so justification and sanctification (including regeneration) are inseparable and yet distinct. The work of Jesus as our justifier has to do with our *standing* before God and is a work of God done *for us*—righteousness *imputed*, or *credited*, to us; while the work of the Spirit as our sanctifier has to do with our *state* in this present life and is a work of God *in us*—righteousness *imparted* or *a share of it given*, to us.³³

The work of the Holy Spirit is to point the sinner to the completed work of Christ

and to lead him or her to trust in that *alone* for salvation. In that trust the believer grows as he obeys and cooperates with the Spirit, who works within, transforming the life.

Loving obedience and sanctification are always the response to and outcome of the free gift of salvation in Christ. If that response is missing, that is sure evidence that a person has never accepted the free gift of God's grace. But while the response of obedience is essential, it is *never the basis* of our acceptance with God.

In his classic work on the Reformation (*The Doctrine of Justification*, 1867), James Buchanan highlights this subtle error in Trent's theology. The statement needs to be read carefully: "There is, perhaps, no more subtle or plausible error, on the subject of justification, than that which makes it to rest on the indwelling presence, and the gracious work, of the Holy Spirit in the heart. It is a singularly refined form of opposition to the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, for it merely substitutes the work of one divine Person for that of another; and it is plausible, because it seems to do homage to the doctrine of grace, by ascribing to the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit the production of faith, and all the effects which are ascribed to it, whether these belong to our justification or to our sanctification."³⁴

Buchanan warns that it is more difficult to expose and refute error when presented in this apparently spiritual form than when it comes in the more crude forms of legalism and salvation by works.

Thus we have the two views of salvation: justification as *making* righteous and justification as *declaring* righteous.

The judgment

Now let us apply these two views of salvation to the question stated earlier: How can a sinner stand before God's law in the judgment and be acquitted? According to Trent, God has to make us righteous before He can acquit us. In other words, believers must become sinlessly perfect first through indwelling righteousness.

Because of their wrong view of sin and depravity, and their externalizing sin and lessening the effects of the Fall, Trent could advocate perfectionism. "Rome teaches," writes Berkouwer, "not only the possibility

of moral perfection but also the presence of perfection through the infusion of sanctifying grace in baptism."³⁵

This emphasis on the perfecting of the saints led to the whole system of monasticism, considered "the boldest organized attempt to attain to Christian perfection in all the long history of the church."³⁶ Because Trent made justification depend on sanctification, there could be no assurance of salvation until perfection had been reached.³⁷

For the Reformers, however, believers have perfection credited to them, even the righteousness of Christ, the moment they believe and sincerely accept the gift of grace in Christ Jesus. On this basis, *alone*, they are acquitted in the judgment. For the Reformers, obedience is the loving response of a believer to the gift of grace.

However subtle these differences might appear on the surface, they lead to radically different conclusions about salvation, and even after 400 years the gap still exists. ■

¹ E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1931), 151.

² T. M. Lindsay, *The Reformation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1883), 38.

³ J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, n.d.), vol. 2, 380.

⁴ Fredrick A. Norwood, *The Development of Modern Christianity Since 1500* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 81; cited in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book* (hereafter *Source Book*) (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1962), 539, 540.

⁵ J. Atkinson, "Catholic Counter-Reformation," in Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 562.

⁶ Cited in Norwood.

⁷ Broadbent.

⁸ Wylie, 377.

⁹ Lindsay, 38-90.

¹⁰ Jeremy C. Jackson, *No Other Foundation: The Church Through Twenty Centuries* (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980), 146.

¹¹ Atkinson.

¹² Cited in *Source Book*, 887.

¹³ Alister E. McGrath, *Justification by Faith: What It Means to Us Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 7; James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977 [from the 1867 printing by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh]), 19, 153; *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), vol. VIII, 89.

¹⁴ Buchanan, 113-126.

¹⁵ See *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. VIII, 88.

¹⁶ Ibid., 84, 85.

¹⁷ Buchanan, 115. See also McGrath's summary of the Reformation view: "Justification is the forensic declaration that the Christian is righteous, rather than the process by which he or she is made righteous. It involves a change in status rather than in nature" (61).

¹⁸ G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 13.

¹⁹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. VIII, 90.

²⁰ McGrath, 52.

²¹ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans* (1515-1516) (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1954), 83.

²² *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H. J. Schroeder, 43; cited in T. Hoyer, *Why I Am Not a Roman Catholic* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 12, 13. See also *Source Book*, 553.

²³ *National Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. VIII, 84.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (1535) (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1979 [from 1850 ed.]), 71.

²⁶ Z. Ursinus and C. Olevianus, *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church, 1975), 25, 50. "Even the very best we do in this life is imperfect and stained with sin."

²⁷ Schroeder, 36, 44; cited in Hoyer, 16, 17. "No one should use that rash statement . . . that the observance of the commandments of God is impossible for one that is justified. For God does not command impossibilities" (36). "If anyone says that the commandments of God are even for one that is justified and constituted in grace, impossible to observe, let him be anathema" (44).

²⁸ Schroeder, 43; cited in Hoyer, 8: "This concupiscence [lust, desire], which the apostle sometimes calls sin, the holy council declares the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin in . . . those born again." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*: vol. 8, 88: "The Protestant view of justification logically presupposes the idea of a moral deterioration of man that is due to the Fall and incurable in this world" (vol. VIII, 88).

²⁹ F. A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1976), 52.

³⁰ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth, 1941), 246, 247.

³¹ McGrath, 68; Berkouwer, 95; Berkhof, 512.

³² J. C. Ryle, *Holiness* (Newark, Del.: Cornerstone, n.d. [reprint]), vii.

³³ See *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (Washington, D.C.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 118, 123. "Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified" (118).

³⁴ Buchanan, 387.

³⁵ Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 53.

³⁶ R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (Oxford, 1968), 158; cited in H. K. LaRondelle, *Perfection and Perfectionism* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1971), 301 (see also 301-309; Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*).

³⁷ Buchanan, 123.

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THE INTROVERT'S GUIDE TO NETWORKING

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? You are an introvert if you tend to consume energy as you interact with people. You are an extrovert if you gain energy.



Robert Peach is the director of the Kettering Clergy Care Center, Kettering, Ohio.

In the general population, about 25 percent are introverts. However, among clergy the figure jumps to 40 percent—significantly higher. Generally speaking, introverts live in a world in which extroversion is more socially desirable and rewarded. This is true in the parish as well. Thus it can be challenging for an introverted pastor to serve in a role that favors extroverted behavior. Yet it is possible for an introverted pastor to preach, teach, and lead quite effectively in congregations that prefer the extroverted. However, these extroverted behaviors will *use* the introvert's energy.

This energy must be restored with appropriately managed quiet and interior time for such a pastor. Unfortunately, such time is often in short supply. Worse, introverted clerics might be trying so hard to behave like good “people-centered” pastors that they don’t recognize their need to recharge their batteries. Their energy is used without adequate replacement, until the introverted pastor reaches the point of emotional depletion and even burnout.

How do such pastors get relief? Where do they find means to reenergize themselves? Among several possibilities, networking is a significant avenue of help.

Networking

Networking is making friends for your

ministry without being obnoxious. It is something that I as an introvert do not naturally prefer to do. However, in my work it is important that people know about the organization that I serve. Making my organization visible and helping people know that it can be of service to them is critically important.

I serve as the director of a parachurch ministry called Kettering Clergy Care Center. It needs to be known to the people it seeks to serve. It needs to be known to leaders who can direct other people to it for services.

Networking is an important part of my job. Pastoring a church has some differences from my ministry, but I think most of the same essentials for visibility are similar to those of the parish pastor, denominational executive, or staff person.

Seven rules for networking

To succeed in ministerial networking, I found the following seven rules helpful:

1. *Location, location, location.* I borrowed this from my real estate friends. They call it the “three” rules of real estate. It means that *whatever* you are, in *whatever* situation you find yourself, you can be networking and making friends for your ministry. This will not automatically occur to an introvert. It might even be frightening to think that

ROBERT PEACH

everywhere you go you might be "on stage." Don't panic; you really don't have to be "on" every single moment. But it does mean you need to at least look at every life situation to see if there is a friend that you can make on behalf of your ministry for Jesus. Sometimes it is as simple as just being kind to people and being willing to let them know something about yourself and your ministry. Don't make this a *big deal*. Just do it.

2. *Let others help you look for opportunities.* Tell your friends and colleagues that you need them. Ask them to keep you informed of other people and situations where you can network about your ministry.

3. *Listen, tell, listen.* This is the way introverts have conversations. Extroverts tell, listen, tell. Don't feel you have to be constantly talking when you're doing extroverted style networking. You can do it the more comfortable introvert way. Go with your strength. Be a good listener. Hear what others are eager to tell you about themselves. Ask questions. Encourage them to talk. They will love you for it. After all, there are a majority of extroverts out there all competing for airtime. The secret is to know when it's time to claim some time of your own. This comes when you have listened well and long enough. Be prepared and willing to tell the other person what your passion in ministry is all about. You might even outline it in writing and actually practice saying it out loud. This will help make you more confident in what you say. It will also put your conversation partners at ease and attract their interest to what you are saying. After telling, you can go back to listening and ask them what they think about what you have just said. This kind of guided listening will help them to lock on to and remember what you have communicated to them.

4. *Avoid comparing yourself to other personalities.* Introverts often compare themselves unfavorably with extroverts when it comes to interacting with people. Extroverts take to people naturally. They interact with people easily. However, as introverts, we risk being phony if we attempt to force ourselves into a different mold. God gave you the unique combination of personality characteristics that you have. Affirm your strengths and work within them. When you have to utilize nonpreferred behaviors,

recognize that it will require more energy and effort on your part. Allow sufficient recovery time to reenergize after your more intense, people-focused activities.

5. *Have the right tools and use them.* This is about communication mechanisms such as business cards, ministry brochures, and letterheads. In addition, one-page and two-page program descriptions, even video presentations that tell your story, can help you convey to others the important things to which you are dedicated. Not only will such tools tell your story when you are not physically present, but you might even feel more confident in your ability to write down what you wish to say than the more extemporaneous give-and-take of face-to-face conversation seems to allow.

6. *Follow up.* After the conclusion of a networking experience, follow up with the people who are important in a given situation. Letters, phone calls, additions of names to your organization's newsletter mailing list, all help people to keep in mind

the important things for which your ministry stands.

7. *Manage your energy.* Be a good steward of the resources God has given you. Again, respect your need for time alone. After a demanding period of making friends for your ministry through networking, allow quiet time for reenergizing. This doesn't mean you isolate yourself. But you may want to schedule work that can be done with few interruptions. Don't push yourself to demand people interactions because that's what you see extroverts doing. Don't run the risk of draining yourself.

Have a regular devotional life. Time to be alone with Christ is critical to the introvert's longevity in ministry. This not only draws you close to Jesus for spiritual direction but also restores your vitality and emotional energy. Don't let unfinished tasks mask your hunger for quiet time. Choose the "Mary" time of just being with Jesus as first priority. Doing this will enable you to care for those "Martha" activities. ■



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THE CHALLENGE AND REWARD OF PRISON MINISTRY

For the first time in my ministry I entered death row. The night before the execution I could hardly sleep. I spent the night reading my Bible and praying.



Bright Halwindi is president of the South Zambia Field, Zambia, Africa.

I could not imagine myself standing next to someone, created in God's image, someone whom God still loved, and someone whose life would be taken away by human hands. That was the most frightening experience of my life.

But that was some years ago. Since then one of the most interesting parts of my ministry has been to work as a prison chaplain, especially in maximum security prisons housing hard-core criminals. During my 10 years of this ministry in Zambia, I have discovered that prisoners fall into three groups.

Three groups of prisoners

The first group consists of those who are sorry for their past. They want to reform and be better citizens when they finish serving their jail sentences. The second group includes those who are not repentant but only afraid of the consequences of their crime. They pride themselves on being courageous enough to have committed their crimes. If given the opportunity to be pardoned, they would go back to their old lives of crime. But when they think about their execution, fear grips them. The third group is the "I don't care" type. They are so hard-

ened that even on the day of their execution they look defiant, tough, and fearless.

The prisoners and the Word

The majority of prisoners are receptive to the Word of God. Separation from their families and the world at large depresses them, and they think of trying God. To those who might have been churchgoers, prison is the time they want God to work miracles to procure their release. Some of them seem to turn into strong believers while in prison, but on their release they are often worse than when they went in. Of ten prisoners I have ministered to in prison who seemed to have accepted God, only four remained attached to a strong faith after release.

To go with someone to the gallows is one of the worst experiences in one's life. As a minister, I want to take that last-minute opportunity to lead that person to God, who alone knows the depths of one's heart and who alone can forgive and lead people to the kingdom of God.

Every living person must strive to end his or her life in Jesus, looking forward to that resurrection to eternal life. I want to offer that hope to prisoners on death row.

BRIGHT C. HALWINDI

The power of the Word

Once I was invited by a prison authority to minister to three people who were to be executed. Walking into the prison, I found those helpless prisoners in a desperate situation. My impression was that with death approaching in two days' time, they would accept salvation freely given to them. It was one of the most difficult moments in my prison ministry. All three men shouted at me, "What do you want here? We don't need you. Where is the loving God you have preached about so many times? We are now going to be executed, and He can't save us. Down with you and your God."

My efforts to make them listen were fruitless. They closed their ears and continued shouting so that they could not hear my words. I thought of church members who would carry their Bibles to church for worship. They would appear to be listening to the preacher, and yet their minds would be far away, sometimes even committing sin in their minds while sitting in front of God. I gathered courage and hope and spoke to the three prisoners who seemed to have shut their ears. But I went home a very discouraged person.

The same kind of behavior confronted me the following day. But the execution day was different for one of the inmates. He knew his life was approaching the end. He realized that even the head of state, who sometimes pardoned prisoners, could not pardon him. He was so afraid of death that he could not stand. His body was wet with sweat. He was shivering terribly. By then he did not have the strength to shout at a preacher. He was utterly hopeless. The law he broke was so vivid in his mind that now he was regretting having murdered someone. As I arrived where he was sitting, he looked into my eyes as if wanting to say something. I sat down with him and asked him whether he was willing to listen to me, and he said, "Yes, pastor."

I started my counsel by reminding him that he had only 20 minutes more to live and that he must use those 20 minutes wisely. I related the story of how Jesus was crucified with two thieves. I told him of how one of those thieves was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. When the multitude did not see who Jesus was, this dying

thief saw that the Life-giver was within his reach. I read to him the plea of this thief, and Jesus' response.

Almost instantly hope seemed to take over his life. He looked at me with a smile. The shivering stopped and the sweat dried up. He spoke in a soft voice: "Pastor, I have never entered the doors of the church all my life. Let me tell you, pastor, all my life I have lived an evil life, and I have killed many people, for which I have not been charged. Pastor, do you think your Jesus can forgive me like He forgave that robber?" I assured him that if he took the same stand, he could receive the same forgiveness. I read him Psalm 103:12 (NIV): "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Then I read John 5:28, 29: "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

Two things amazed him that morning. The first was to know that Jesus can forgive all kinds of sin, including murder. The second was the resurrection of the dead to eternal life.

Society may pass its judgment, but Heaven can forgive and provide the hope of a place in the kingdom to come. I understood that day the words of Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

The Word of God, sharper than a double-edged sword, penetrated this hard-core criminal's heart and brought a change in 15 minutes. At that point his face changed. He looked like someone who has just stumbled upon the greatest treasure, someone very excited, who for joy does not quite know what to do with the treasure. He repeated the words of that criminal crucified with Jesus several times: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." These words sounded sweet to him, and death was no longer frightening. His heart was at peace with Jesus and His promises.

We knelt down to pray. I asked him to pray first. The man who had never prayed offered one of the most powerful prayers I have ever listened to. Words of praise were

flowing from his lips as if he were reciting a memorized psalm.

After both of us prayed, we walked side by side to the gallows. He was walking with energy and excitement, like someone going to board an airplane for the first time. His steps were longer than usual. He walked toward death with Christ, looking forward to the resurrection.

After everything was set for his execution, he made one humble request, and that was to be given time to pray. Again, he offered a prayer I'll never forget. Part of his prayer was as follows: "God whose love is unmeasurable, I thank You because today You have washed away my record of being a murderer. The men who are in this room know me as a criminal of the worst type, but Lord, I stand here as Your child, ready to take a little rest in the grave while You are making final touches on our heavenly home."

At the end of his prayer he said to me, "Pastor, I only want to hear two voices: yours as my life ends and the voice of Jesus when He will call me to come out of the grave." I said to him, "See you, my brother, on that great resurrection morning." With that we said farewell.

The funeral presented me another occasion to turn to God's Word and speak to the prison officers and prisoners who had come to bury the executed one. I spoke of the forgiveness available in Jesus. I turned to Revelation 14:13 and offered the hope of resurrection to all who accept Jesus.

One officer told those present, "This criminal we are burying today is not the criminal you knew. He is in the hands of the Lord. He has confessed all his sins." Six months later all the prisoners who attended the burial of that criminal and two officers were baptized.

The word of God is powerful. It transforms. It gives hope. It saves. ■

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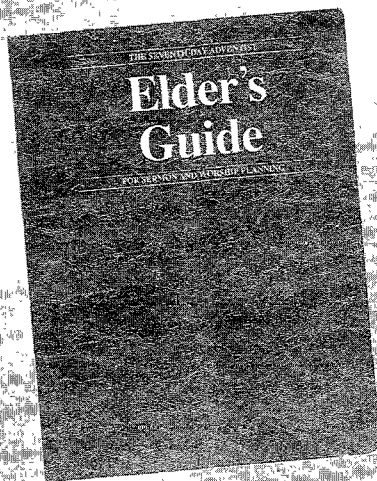
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NET '98

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site, we are assigning people to be what we are calling row hosts and hostesses. They will be assigned to the same pew night after night, because all of us as humans are creatures of habit, and we tend to return to the same pew, the same seat. So we are intentionally structuring our teams to have people who will be at those pews to welcome guests back night after night. They will assist when the cards are passed out, at the time decisions are made, as warm, friendly Christian partners in this NET '98 journey.

ACM: Dwight, you have been praying and planning for NET '98 now for eighteen months. What will make NET '98 a success?

DKN: The success of NET '98 rests not on our technological savvy nor on our global satellite network but upon the divine, supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit. And there is not a more vital and strategic preparation step or methodology than private prayer and corporate prayer. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is undertaking something never undertaken by any denomination in the history of Christianity; that is, broadcasting the gospel globally for five weeks. It is a first for our humble little Adventist global community. We dare not, we cannot, we must not move into this endeavor without bathing it with all of our human sense of inadequacy poured out in intercessory prayer before the throne of Grace. God Himself, with His bidding, is going to provide His enabling. And I believe with all my heart, Al, that at this strategic time in human history we are on the threshold of witnessing a supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon this earth's civilization. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, as humble and inadequate as we are, has been called by God to be a spokesperson to call the human race to a living encounter with the One who is soon to return to this planet. We cannot depend on our technological savvy to save us then. Our only hope is that the Spirit will harness the technology and will harness us as human beings—and then with fire, pour Himself out across the face of this earth through each of us. There isn't one person in the Adventist Church up to this challenge. Fortunately, God is. ■



Seventh-day Adventists saw in the historic earthquake of Lisbon, Portugal, on November 1, 1755, a fulfillment of the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17.

They further accepted the "inexplicable" darkening of the sunlight on May 19, 1780, for a few hours in some eastern states along the American seacoast as fulfilling the prediction: "The sun turned black" (Rev. 6:12). The meteor shower on the morning of November 13, 1833, seen across North America, was seen as a spectacular sign from heaven to warn humanity of the imminent coming of Christ. Ellen White considered this event the *last* of the cosmic signs predicted in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6, and the forerunner of the coming Judgment Day.¹ She declared that all three upheavals in nature—the Lisbon quake, the "dark day," and the meteor shower—were fulfillments of Christ's predictions in Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12, 13.² It seemed to her a "surety" that she was living in the last generation on earth.³

In retrospect, can we, today (in some cases centuries after the events) maintain the same understanding of these phenomena, especially since they are no longer inexplicable supernatural happenings—but are known to be the results of specific laws and predictable movements in nature?

Signs in the heavens

Adventist expositors persistently ascribed the darkening of the sun and moon in 1780 to a supernatural cosmic end-time sign. However, later evidence indicated that the darkening may have come as the result of forest fires. The smoke had eclipsed the sun, covering 25,000 square miles in the eastern part of North America and Canada. Such a regional event lasting for only a few

The application of cosmic signs in the Adventist tradition

HANS K. LARONDELLE

hours can hardly qualify as the cosmic happening prophesied in the New Testament. C. Mervyn Maxwell and others acknowledge that the so-called "dark day" of May 19, 1780, was not precipitated by a direct act of omnipotent intervention but by natural causes.⁴

The apocalyptic earthquake

The Lisbon quake in 1755, possibly 8.5 on the Richter scale, was nevertheless a regional quake, even if the shock covered 1,300,000 square miles; more than one-third of Europe. The loss of life is estimated to have been between 15,000 and 30,000, coming largely from 30 churches filled that morning for All Saints' Day mass.

That earthquake had a lasting effect on eighteenth-century philosophy, culture, and science. One modern author states: "No dramatist could have established the moment of time for this catastrophe with greater effect."⁵ This natural disaster actually "changed the world,"⁶ in the light of the prevailing philosophy of Leibnitz. "The very foundations of Western thought and culture were profoundly shaken. . . . The self-assured stride of the Age of Reason acquired a permanent limp after the Lisbon earthquake" (B. Walker).⁷

Yet scientists report that throughout

the centuries earthquakes have killed "on average some 15,000 people every year." Before 1755, three earthquakes were of even greater intensity: the 1456 earthquake of Naples, Italy (30,000 dead); the 1556, Shensu earthquake in China (820,000 dead); the 1737 earthquake of Calcutta (300,000 dead). After 1755, the Tokyo quake took 200,000 lives in 1803; in 1920 the quake of Kansu, left 180,000 dead in China; and the 1923 quake of Kwanto, Japan, killed 140,000. In 1976 earthquakes caused 650,000 deaths in China alone.

On both sides of the Atlantic, however, the Lisbon quake was explained by Protestants as a sign of the approaching advent of Christ. In the light of the quake, the Anglican Church proclaimed a special day of fasting for February 6, 1756. In Boston, the Lisbon quake was interpreted as a forerunner of the destruction of the world, as mentioned by Christ in Matthew 24:7. In 1756 the Congregational minister, Charles Chauncy, compared the loss of trade caused by the quake to the condition predicted in Revelation 18 and cited it as a warning to repent or experience similar judgments.⁸ Boston Puritan pastor Jonathan Mayhew explained that the Lisbon quake was a harbinger of the woes and plagues culminating in the great last earthquake to be visited upon Babylon.⁹

The apocalyptic meteor shower

On the night of November 13, 1833, an observer stated that "the stars were falling as thick snowflakes." Estimates for the fall range from 10,000 to more than 60,000 meteors per hour. The year 1833 is now regarded as the birth of meteor astronomy. Observers noticed that the meteors all seemed to stream from the constellation Leo. Gerald S. Hawkins, astronomer at Boston University, says that: "If the scientists were bewildered by the Leonid storm, we can easily imagine how the nonscientists felt. We do not know exactly how many deaths from heart failures and suicide could be directly attributed to the Leonids, but

many people in the southern states were panic-stricken, thinking that the Day of Judgment had surely arrived.”¹⁰

Later the American astronomer H. A. Newton of Yale discovered the natural cause of the Leonid meteor shower. Searching older records, he found that a Leonid shower had been seen practically every 33 years, starting in A.D. 902, “the year of the stars.” In the same year, an Italian observer in Salerno stated that it was the fulfillment of Luke 21:25. Outstanding Leonid storms had also been recorded in the years 1202, 1366, 1533, 1766, and 1799. Newton suggested that the Leonids might return in 1866; he was correct: A beautiful shower of meteors radiated from the constellation of Leo that year at the rate of about 6,000 per hour. Because of this scientific prediction, there was no widespread excitement. It was shown that the Leonid storm, in various degrees of intensity, was recurring in a natural cycle along its large elliptic orbit around the sun. In 1866 Wilhelm Temple in France discovered that a comet—later named the “Temple-Tuttle” comet—was responsible for the meteor showers from Leo when its tail of meteor particles entered the earth’s atmosphere. Because the comet passed close to Jupiter in the year 1899, the gravitational pull of this planet deflected the course of the comet so that it missed the earth, and the celestial display did not occur.

Many Adventist expositors today do not deny the natural cause of the celestial phenomena but stress the intensity of the Leonid storm of 1833.¹¹ However, on November 17, 1966, a record number of meteors streaked over North America, seen best in the mountain states, with a visual rate of about 1 million per hour!¹² The 1992 *Guinness Book of Records* declares: “The greatest shower on record occurred on the night of 16-17 Nov. 1966, when the Leonid meteors (which recur every 33 years) were visible between North America and the eastern USSR.”¹³

We must remember that many who experienced the sudden impact of those historic phenomena were deeply im-

pressed, seeing them as the hand of God in judgment or in preparation for final judgment. These signs brought some to repentance and to an apocalyptic sense of their accountability to God. We must honor them for that and acknowledge that the signs they observed in nature some 200 years ago were not only helpful to them but were also to become preparatory or precursory to the final worldwide cosmic

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signs yet to arrive under the seven last plagues. Further, the signs that they saw as indicative of the nearness of Christ’s second coming played a role in calling attention to the final signs yet to come. Thus they created the potential for those final signs to have a more dramatic impact on those living through them, looking for the coming of Jesus. It is only the eschatological, cosmic signs, however, which will play the role of actually ushering in the second coming of Christ.

New trend in Adventist evangelism

In light of these facts, some conser-

vative Adventist expositors are now convinced that the traditional Adventist interpretation of these historical phenomena has lost its convincing power. Samuele Bacchiocchi, in *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness* (1986), omits the traditional view about 1755, 1780, and 1833. The unanimous voice of conviction in Adventism regarding the prophetic significance of these phenomena has disappeared. Lost is the sense of self-evidence that used to accompany these events as supernatural signs.

On what basis, then, does traditional Adventism still defend the idea of a role in God’s eschatological plan for these specific disasters and natural events?

The appeal today is to the *timing* and the *sequence* of such occurrences: “Their appearance in connection with the closing years of the 1260 years of papal suppression both before and after 1798.”¹⁴ C. M. Maxwell explains: “As a series they came in the right order and at the proper time.”¹⁵ “The series of signs [Matt. 24:29] that were to take place ‘immediately after the tribulation of those days’ has evidently been fulfilled.”¹⁶ This conclusion is based on an exegesis of two passages: Mark 13:24 (rather than Matt. 24:29) and Revelation 12:6. “But in those days, following that distress, ‘the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky’” (Mark 13:24). “The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days” (Rev. 12:6).

Though it is assumed to be self-evident that both passages deal with the 1260 year-days (counted from A.D. 538–1798), that fact is not so self-evident. The context of Mark 13:18–25 (and of Matt. 24:20–30) connects the “days of distress” for Christ’s followers from A.D. 70 until the cosmic signs introduce the Second Advent. Nothing in the Mount Olivet forecast restricts the times of distress to 1260 years. Jesus also includes the *end-time* distress under the antichrist, because He referred specifically to Daniel 12:1 when He announced that the coming great distress would be “unequaled from

the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again” (Matt. 24:21; see also Mark 13:19). Daniel had declared that at the end of the unprecedented “time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then,” Michael would arise and the resurrection of the dead would take place (12:1, 2). Jesus referred to that end-time distress of Daniel 12 in His prophetic discourse and therefore did not restrict “those days” of Mark 13:24 to the Middle Ages (see also Matt. 24:22). Jesus thus rather indicated that the sun and the moon would be darkened *after* the end-time distress of Daniel 12:1. This fits the description of the supernatural, world-wide darkening during the last plagues in Revelation 16 (verses 10, 11). There is therefore no justification for the assumption that the “days” of distress spoken of in Mark 13:24 are identical with the “1260 days” of Revelation 12:6.

Further, the Adventist application of the falling stars in Mark 13:24, 25 to 1833 is not fully consistent with its premise that the timing for the celestial signs must come within “those days,” if those “days” are reckoned to be from 538 till 1798. The meteor shower of 1833 clearly came *beyond* those “days.”

The exegesis of Jesus’ reference to “those days, following that distress” (Mark 13:24) must take into account the total picture of the days of distress, as presented in the fifth seal of Revelation 6:9-11 and in 12:17; 13:15-17; 17:12-14. “White robes” are given to all who “*have come out of the great tribulation*” (Rev. 7:14; also 6:11). This distress is, of course, not restricted to the Middle Ages or to the 1260 years (ending in 1798). More than that, Revelation 12:17 points specifically to the end-time distress of the remnant church, a distress further enlarged in Revelation 13:15-17 and 17:12-14. This distress will be *cut short* by Christ’s divine intervention during the seven last plagues with the sudden *darkening of the entire earth* (Rev. 16:10) and the cosmic-universal earthquake (Rev. 16:18-21). This is impressively described by Ellen G.

White in chapter 40 in *The Great Controversy* (636, 637). The future cosmic signs during the last plagues fulfill precisely the proper timing and function of “cutting short” the universal distress of God’s people in the entire world.

Conclusion

A number of contemporary Adventist expositors admit the exegetical problems with the old interpretation of the cosmic signs. Today’s point to the increasing global influence of the papacy and of America; to the intensification of destructive disasters in the world and to the stage-setting for the final crisis and last distress for God’s people. (See Marvin Moore, *The Crisis of the End Time*, Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1992, chap. 4; S. Bacchiocchi, *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness*, Berrien Springs, Mich., 1986, chaps. 8-10.) These books no longer articulate the traditional application of the cosmic signs. In his recent book *What the Bible Says About The End-Time*, Jon Paulien urges: “We need a sane approach to current events.”¹⁷ He understands our inclination to date-setting and doom-saying: “Natural disasters are so gripping that it is almost instinctive for human beings to invest them with cosmic significance.”¹⁸ In fact, it has become traditional to interpret the many signs of disaster in Matthew 24 as signs of the coming end. Paulien offers this challenging exegesis: “The famines, pestilences, earthquakes, wars, and rumors of wars are not listed as signs of the end in Matthew 24. Instead they are ‘signs of the age,’ events that would occur throughout the interim between Jesus’ earthly ministry and the end. Jesus did not want those who observe such events to calculate their significance for the timing of the end. Instead, He wanted those who observe wars, earthquakes, and famines to *keep watch*.”¹⁹

The latest Adventist exposition of Matthew 24 by George R. Knight explains that the role of the signs in Matthew 24 is to reassure us “that the faithful, covenant-keeping God has not yet finished the plan of salvation They are signs that the end

is coming, but they are not the real signs of the end. . . . The pattern of Matthew 24 appears to be that the *real* signs are not signs of nearness but signs of coming.”²⁰

These results of a serious and responsible exegesis of the prophetic Word do not warrant a hasty rejection or condemnation; instead they are a call to a new reflection on the clarity of Scripture and its power to explain itself by means of its immediate and wider contexts. Traditional applications of the prophetic “signs of the age” are not part of any pillar or landmark of Seventh-day Adventism.²¹ Truth progresses; so should we. ■

Hans K. LaRondelle, professor emeritus of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, is retired and lives in Sarasota, Florida.

¹ See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, (Nampa, Idaho.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 334.

² *Ibid.*, 304, 306, 333, 334.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), 632.

⁴ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1985), 2:197. Also M. E. Sprengel, in *Adventist Review*, May 22, 29; June 5, 1980.

⁵ W. Breidert, *Die Erschütterung der vollkommenen Welt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), 6, own translation.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷ B. Walker, *Earthquake* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1982), 46, 48.

⁸ See LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1954), 3:191.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁰ Gerald S. Hawkins, *Splendor in the Sky* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 220.

¹¹ See Froom, 4:1218, 1219; C. M. Maxwell, 2:201.

¹² Hawkins, 222.

¹³ D. McFarlan, ed. (New York: *Facts on File*, 1991), 12.

¹⁴ Jon Paulien in *Symposium on Revelation* (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, _____), 1:237.

¹⁵ Maxwell, 1:214.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:202.

¹⁷ (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1994), 157.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ George R. Knight, *Matthew* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1994), 236, 237.

²¹ See Ellen G. White, Manuscript 13, 1889; quoted in *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946), 30, 31.



If we build it, will they come? If they come, will they stay? If they stay, will we run them off? Adventists are preparing to launch another evangelistic

thrust via satellite downlink, our greatest such project in history.

NET '98 will be similar in many ways to evangelistic meetings you may have conducted or observed in the past. It will take place in a local church. A pastor, rather than visiting evangelist, will preach. Members of the local congregation will attend and invite their friends. Good news from God's Word will be proclaimed and, by the Spirit's power, people will become disciples of Jesus Christ.

In other ways, however, NET '98 will be far from typical. For starters, thousands of congregations and hundreds of thousands of people on six continents will participate in NET '98, translated into some forty languages.

Generation X is the target

The defining characteristic—the thing that will most set it apart from past evangelistic endeavors—is that NET '98 will intentionally target young adults, ages 18–33, referred to as Generation X (GenX).

"What we share together is going to be life-changing for all ages," host Pastor Dwight Nelson assures us. "We are going to be user-friendly for the young."¹ Thus, it is no accident that NET '98 will originate from a campus congregation surrounded by some three thousand young adults.² Nelson's purpose is clearly articulated in his recent *Adventist Review* interview: "NET '98 is going to reach GenXers."³

If young adults accounted for more than one in eight of the baptisms attributed to NET '96, an event attended mainly by people over fifty years of age, we have

Keeping what we reap

JAMES A. CRESS

good reason to believe that many more young GenXers will respond to the messages presented in NET '98. It has been developed with them specifically in mind.

The challenge, of course, is that GenXers are quite different from the older generations who, historically, have been the greatest supporters of evangelistic projects.

Recently, I asked a number of colleagues to help me answer the big question: How do you make young people feel welcome in your congregation when you are not sure you even like them?⁴

The crucial question

Therefore, the urgent question for Adventist congregations around the world is: "How will we keep those we reap through NET '98?" Recent statistics indicate that we have plenty of room to grow in assimilating any members, but especially young adult members. How can we close the "back doors" of our churches through which too many depart?

Congregations that will respond best to the challenge of keeping GenXers in the church are those that exhibit a readiness to learn, grow, and change.

Characteristics of Generation X

Learning what makes GenX tick can be an exciting adventure for pastors and congregations and provide a basis for integrating these young people into our congregations. Current research tells us that:

- There are lots of them. Forty-six million people were born in the United States between 1965 and 1980.
- They are a diverse group with characteristics in common with several billion of their peers worldwide.

- They don't like labels. When we refer to them as Generation X, Baby Busters, or twentysomethings, they view such terms as an older generation's attempts to impose a label or put them in a box. "I am not a target market," protests a young adult in Douglas Coupland's novel, *Generation X*. "Why can't I just be a person? . . . And why can't we relate together as people?"⁵

- They often feel alone, abandoned, and alienated. Aloneness occurs in the midst of people when a young adult feels unable to connect with others in deeply fulfilling ways. Nearly half of young adults are children of divorce. Many wrestle with abandonment issues. It's hard to get close because they don't want you to hurt them the same way their families have hurt them. They feel alienated and have a deep need to experience reconciliation with others.

- Relationships are important. Many young adults exhibit a deep hunger for community. They feel most alive when they are with their friends and find fulfillment in relationships more than in the traditional accompaniments of success. They may change careers as many as six times during adulthood, often for relational reasons.

- They like to do things in groups. Dating, recreation, and shopping are frequently group activities. "The era of individual has ended. A new era of team and community has arrived."⁶

- There are no absolutes. As the first generation to grow up entirely in the postmodern era, GenXers have been educated by a secularized public school system to believe that all truth is relative and personal. For them, truth is relational rather than propositional.

- They do not trust institutions. The church as an institution holds little interest for them, even though church in a relational sense may be very attractive.

- Their quest is for meaning and purpose, though they no longer have faith in traditional modes of religious expression or in the previous generation's fascination with "scientific objectivity."

- They are sometimes pessimistic. Those whose pilgrimages toward meaning and understanding are less than fulfilling often veer toward despair. "The suicide rate for teens has doubled since 1968, and the number of children using drugs by the sixth grade has tripled since 1975."⁷

- They are open to God, not always to religion. It sounds arrogant to young adults to suggest that your truth is better than someone else's or that you have "the truth."

- They highly value authenticity and personal integrity. More impressive than a coherent philosophical system is the transparent life of a Christian who is genuine and open.

- They are not easy to categorize or understand. Postmodern young adults have an amazing capacity to live with paradoxes, both in their lives and in their worldviews. To contradictions that distress older generations, they often respond with a favorite expression: "Whatever."

Keeping young adults in the church

Growth in understanding and responding to the needs of young adults will characterize congregations that retain those who join their ranks from this target generation. Such churches seek ways to:

- Develop community in small groups. Church members have a marvelous opportunity to live out their faith through small groups where deep and lasting friendships with God and with each other are formed.

- Provide a sense of ownership. Young adults want to lead their own groups, meetings, and projects. Giving them a sense of ownership means stepping aside and entrusting young adults with responsibilities based on their talents and interests.

- Be practical. Young adults prefer action to talk. They favor projects with local relevance where tangible results can be seen. Hands-on involvement in ministry such as serving meals in a homeless shelter, building and restoring homes for people in need, and mentoring children and teens through "big sibling"

relationships allow them to translate faith into action.

- Be friendly. Beyond relationships with peers, young adults are looking for authentic, mutual relationships with older adults. Opportunities for the development of intergenerational friendships can help keep young adults in the church.

- Help them find their niche. Rather than plugging young adults into pre-defined roles, churches that are serious about retaining their young adults will assess the gifts, temperaments, and

More
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spiritual passions of members and seek to involve them in challenging areas for which they feel most suited—e.g., video production, computer graphics, contemporary music, and arts.

- Continue to learn and grow. Form a focus group or advisory council of young adults to guide the church in discipling young members.

- Create new worship experiences where young adults encounter God. Services must be interactive, employ story and drama, and give young adults room to search and form their own conclusions. Music must be joyous, creative, and in a familiar idiom. Excellence must be pursued throughout.

- Present a message of good news and hope. There has never been a generation more ready to hear and respond to Christ's invitation to belong to Him, to be a friend to God, and to live in

authentic fellowship in a community of faith than today's young adults.

Revealing God's character of love

"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world is a revelation of [God's] character of love."⁸

Pastor Nelson suggests two practical things pastors and churches can do right now to prepare.

"First, we have got to start building bridges with [people of all backgrounds] now. You cannot wait until opening night and drag them in and say, 'Here's Dwight.' You've got to go out and love people. Second, along with the loving there must be an intensive praying. . . . Forward on our knees—that's the only way we can go."⁹

Finally, begin planning now for creative ways to welcome GenXers into your congregation and to retain for discipleship those who respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation. ■

¹ "NET '98: Getting Relational." An interview with Dwight Nelson by Andy Nash. *Adventist Review*, April 1998, 13.

² The host congregation is the Pioneer Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church on the campus of Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

³ *Adventist Review*, April 1998, 12, 13.

⁴ I am indebted to several young adult ministry specialists for insights presented in this column: Don Keele, Jr. is a creative youth and young adults pastor in Oregon; A. Allan Martin, a pastor and church consultant in California, and Andy Nash, an assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*, are both GenXers and write extensively about young adult ministries and issues; Ron Preast is a pastor, evangelist, and academy Bible teacher in Washington State and his wife, Jeanene, is an academy chaplain; my brother, John Cress, is chaplain of Walla Walla College, as well as the father of two GenXers.

⁵ Quoted in Tim Celek and Dieter Zander, *Inside the Soul of a New Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), 415.

⁹ *Adventist Review*, April 1998, 12, 13.



Recently ordained/commissioned

Abejero; Ely, pastor, Central
Philippine Union Conf., SSD

Almanza-Torres; Obed (Adreana
Gil Santamaria), pastor, North Mexico
Union Conf., IAD

Anaba; Uonso Hilary (Rose),
district leader, East Nigeria Conf., AID

Ango; Amos, (Maryamu), district
leader, North West Mission, Nigeria,
AID

Anonaba; Kingsley Chukwuemeka
(Onyinyechi), evangelist, East Nigeria
Conf., AID

Arroyo-Kedney; Agustin Ruben
(Carolina Rovira Reyes), pastor,
Northeast Mexican Conf., IAD

Asaba; Willison (Eunice), pastor,
Western Uganda Field, EAD

Atgar; Charles (Francine), pastor
and stewardship/family life dir., French
Polynesia Mission, SPD

Ayala-Hernandez; Telesforo (Susana
del la Cruz Luna), pastor, North Mexico
Union Conf., IAD

Ayunwa; Yakuba (Rifkatu), pastor,
North West Mission, Nigeria, AID

Ayuperm; Keo (Pranee), pastor,
Thailand Mission, SSD

Bamroong; Peng (Udom), pastor,
Thailand Mission, SSD

Bernhardt; Osvaldo (Clelia Utz),
pastor, East Puerto Rico Conf., IAD

Betat; Olaf (Karen), pastor, Central
California Conf., NAD

Betts; Rollyn (Angie), pastor,
Oregon Conf., NAD

Black; Willie (Karen), pastor, South
Central Conf., NAD

Boboro; Sabaea (Rebecca), pastor,
North East Papua Mission, SPD

Bonev; Bony (Lydia), pastor,
Bulgarian Union, EUD

Bullock; Richard L (Donna Jean),
Arkansas-Louisiana Conf., NAD

Callorda; Ricardo (Nancy), pastor,
Austral Union, SAD

Careaga; Pedro Emmanuel (Alina),
pastor, Oregon Conf., NAD

Caviglione; Dario Marcelo (Maria
Virginia), pastor, South Argentine
Mission, SAD

Chiroma; Daniel Filimon JNR
(Saratu), district leader, North West
Mission, Nigeria, AID

Chu; Winsleigh (Ruth), pastor,
Thailand Mission, SSD

Coleman; Kenneth (Joy), pastor,
Chesapeake Conf., NAD

Corbett; Byron, pastor, Washing-
ton Conf., NAD

Correa-Mendez; Ismael (Esther
Linda Hernandez Donaire), pastor,
Central Mexican Conf., IAD

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Educational credit for participation in NET '98

Participants in NET '98 can earn educational credits from junior high through university levels, including seminary programs. The procedure is simple. When you sign up for NET '98 on October 9, just mention the kind of credit you will need: high school, college, or continuing education units. The various credit options are being worked out by Andrews University, Home Study International, the Adventist Theological Seminary, and Atlantic Union College. Following are the course options:

1. Andrews University, in cooperation with Home Study International: RELG 496 Special Projects in Religion, 4 quarter credits. In addition to regular attendance and participation in the NET '98 meetings, students will be required to read *Steps to Christ*, Dwight Nelson's *Outrageous Grace* and *Built to Last*, and Richard Rice's *The Reign of God*. A written assignment will also be required. This course may also meet Andrews University requirement for RELB100, God and Human Life.

2. Atlantic Union College, through its adult education program: Public Evangelism Seminar, 3 semester credits. This course is designed to give practical perspectives of the organization, methodology, and preaching of public evangelism in a contemporary framework.

3. The SDA Theological Seminary: CHMN660 Field Ministries, up to 4 quarter credits to pastors currently enrolled in M.A. Min. or D.Min. programs.

The above institutions will also offer Continuing Education Units.

4. High school students and home schoolers will use Discover Bible Course with special 6-page NET '98 "Next Millennium" study questions for each night's topic. An additional resource, the sermon outlines, will be available on website (<http://www.net98.org>). Nightly study guides can be obtained from Seminars Unlimited (800/982-3344, or from NET '98 website (<http://www.net98.org>).

International Jerusalem Bible Conference

The first international Jerusalem Bible Conference was held from June 8-14, 1998. More than 220 participants discussed biblical issues and heard scholarly papers that may be accessed at <http://www.adventist.org/gc/presidential/bibconf/index.htm>.

The written word

I have discovered in my ministry as chaplain to many Generation X students that the written word is still the most powerful way to communicate. The problem is lack of time and energy to write personal letters.

So I developed a ministry of note cards and postcards—note cards that can be sent to students in campus mail. I also think that a church could have in its foyer a church mailbox so the pastor and other parishioners could write notes. With commuter students, I mail a postcard to encourage or to connect with them.

Note cards can be purchased commercially or made inexpensively with an ink jet or laser printer. Postcards can be simply purchased from the post office.

Why use a note card/postcard? It's *convenient* (I keep a small stack with me at all times); it's *personal* (handwritten, not typed or E-mailed) and it's *efficient* (I limit my comments to the front of the note card/postcard—I have to pray and think before I write!).—Joseph B. Modica, Ph.D., chaplain, Eastern College, St. Davids, Pennsylvania.

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Communion With God



(Ellen G. White): This 125-page book is filled with powerful quotes from Ellen White on prayer. Its

53 sections begin with a Bible quote, a question, pertinent excerpts from Ellen White on prayer, then concludes with a brief prayer

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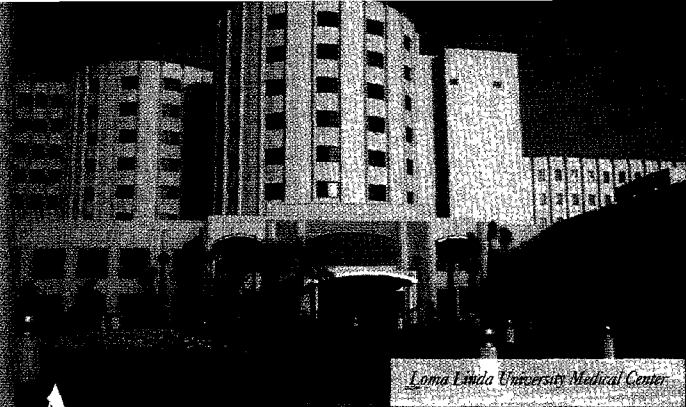


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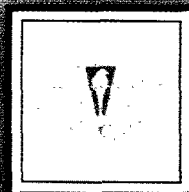
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Loma Linda University is a Christian, Seventh-day Adventist, educational health-sciences institution located in Southern California. Dedicated to its mission, "to make man whole," the University provides approximately 3,000 students with a comprehensive approach to helping others.



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