

# Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

June 1999



A PASTOR'S SPIRITUALITY  
Balancing Ministerial Priorities



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### The competent pastor

It is refreshing that pastors are speaking out on real issues (David VanDenburgh, "The competent pastor," February 1998) that are rarely discussed. Many pastors (and their spouses) have been unfairly labeled as "incompetent" by local conferences solely on the basis of opinion of the few—the money giving and outspoken core of the congregation.

Being labeled as "incompetent" jolts pastors spiritually and mentally and harms their professional standing. When a conference, because of low ratings by the core, suddenly relocates pastors with no more explanation than "we've been getting a lot of calls and letters from your church," that can lead to pastoral self-doubt regarding their calling.

I believe many pastoral moves have been based primarily on the "core's" opinion, which is often a reaction to the pastor's desire to point all people to Christ even if it means stepping on the "core's" toes.

—Connie Johnson, Valrico, Florida.

● VanDenburgh's article deeply concerns me. The article lacks the element of the restoration of ministry. Vandenberg's proposal creates an image of a giant street sweeper who mindlessly handles the city trash. Or more fitting perhaps is the image of an aborted child that has been judged unworthy to live, the fetus thrown into the dumpster, while the perpetrator walks away with never a second thought. Yes, sometimes the church does employ this heartless approach, perhaps in secret. But in secret or in open, it is a crime and a blot that covers my church. This approach does nothing to remove the shame but only adds to it.

VanDenburgh's article has a

subtle undercurrent of protectionism, not restoration. Restoration ministry is the heart of the gospel, and ministers need it also. If Vandenberg would have articulated a plan of restoration, his article would have been well-rounded. Without it, it is no more Christlike than what the church may do in secret now. When you fire someone (or the person resigns) without a plan of restoration, you have damaged the church. You are driving a wedge between current workers and the church, frightening future workers from entering the ministry, and damaging the church in the eyes of the community. It is time for the church to be more Christlike than the corporate world. As a church, we would do well to remember that it is the wounded soldier of the gospel, who has found healing, who does the greatest work.—Name withheld.

● Pastor VanDenburgh makes an excellent point, and I would like to ask him: Why not apply the John Wesley principle at the very beginning when a student enrolls to become a minister? Of the seven or so who passed through the church and Andrews, only one remains in the ministry, and some are now not even church members. I am convinced that screening students early on would achieve the goal Vandenberg so beautifully outlines in his article. One can only wonder whether our educational system would not have been fairer to those students if early on they had been guided into a different field of study; maybe some would still be members.—H. D. Schmidt, Loma Linda, California.

### Balance in theology

There is good news and bad news in the two articles by James Hopps

and Reo Christenson (February 1999). The good news is that both writers apparently are hearing a great deal of preaching about the abundant, matchless grace of Christ. Hopps sees a ten year emphasis in Adventism on justification by faith alone; Christenson calls it a more "recent trend." I'm sure they both appreciate Ellen White's superlative descriptions of grace as "the ground of our faith" (1T 438), "the precious, saving truth for these last days" (*The Voice in Speech and Song*, 116) and "our choicest treasure" (*In Heavenly Places*, 220).

The bad news is that somehow they also have found controversy in the subject, as if there were conflict between God's saving grace and His ability to transform us into people who "abound in every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8). Hopps doesn't "see much improvement" in church members, and Christenson has discovered insincere beliefs, inappropriate behavior, and "a rather empty way of life." Both appear to blame the message of grace for the "rebellious spirit" of Christians, for "immature churches," and for our being comfortable with "an undemanding lifestyle."

Nothing could be further from the truth! "God's grace alone can work a reformation" (4T, 378). "It is the matchless grace of God alone that will triumph over the rebellion of the heart" (3T, 322).

It is also inaccurate to ascribe Paul's gospel emphasis to a reaction to Jewish "theological misconceptions." Paul believed that his "task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace" had been given by the Lord Jesus Himself (Acts 20:24), in order that all of us, by His grace, might have "eternal encouragement and good hope" (2 Thess. 2:16).—Stuart Tyner, Riverside, California. ■

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Toward the end of his life, Napoleon is supposed to have said of Elba, "Able was I ere I saw Elba." Elba is the Mediterranean

island to which Napoleon was exiled in 1814 after a life of achievement and conquest. Aside from the fact that this statement says the same thing, whether read from left to right or right to left, it is full of pathos. If indeed Napoleon said it, he was expressing in a few choice words his own sense of personal tragedy, loss, and decline. Although he ruled the island before moving into further exile on St. Helena, Elba marked the time and place of his personal and professional collapse.

The other day I heard a highly successful but disheartened pastor use Napoleon's sentence to describe the depletion he had been feeling since pastoring a church from which he had recently moved. (I use his story with his permission.) He had not sought his move, but he felt it had been a kind of redemption for him. He described scuffling with feelings of clinical depression and once or twice experiencing involuntary suicidal urges. In recounting his ongoing inner battle, he concluded with a wan smile, "Able was I ere I saw . . ." and he named his former church.

I was surprised to hear such a confession from him, because he is too obviously productive and positive a person for anyone to suspect that such turmoil could twist about within him. It was evident that much of his set-in perception of reduction was due to a couple of high-profile interpersonal crises he had worked through with members of his former congregation. Along with these, he had been chronically entangled with one or two critical, difficult people, who had learned well just how to

## Come fire or ice

W I L L E V A

wield their verbal lashes and target their cunning probes.

As I thought about him, I could not help thinking that he is one of many pastors who in one way or another are walking about amid the flames of similar furnaces. Are you one of them?

I am not about to broadcast unfounded comfort throughout the ranks. But I know something, at least, must be said when I read that 80 percent of North American clergy believe ministry has affected their families negatively, 70 percent report a lower self-esteem now than when they began their ministry, 40 percent say they experience serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month, and 70 percent confess to not having someone they consider a close friend.<sup>1</sup>

Looking at such percentages and the quality of pain they imply, I think of the dramatic time when three Hebrew "worthies" found themselves in a Babylonian furnace where almost mysteriously they were personally accompanied by the fabulous, recognizable presence of a Fourth.

They were "ministers" trying to maintain their integrity, and in so doing they were indicted by the hostile politically and legally correct watchdogs of the day. Frightened and embarrassed, yet with their heads up, they were publicly hauled into a hostile court and angrily sentenced to a seven-times heated furnace. In that desperate moment, alive and looking about, they discovered Jesus Himself right there in it with them. Recognizing such a presence with them, the hostile authorities could do nothing

but let them go. There is no need, is there, to say more to pastors, even disheartened ones? The trick is not to dismiss the reality so beautifully personified in this story as impractical or detached from the heat of your furnace or mine. The truth of the Presence in the fire lies at the heart of Christian faith.

But let's shift the metaphor from fire to ice. I have a love for the poetry of T. S. Eliot, especially that which flowed from his soul after he became a Christian. In his poem, *The Waste Land*, there is a magnificent, prosaic allusion probably to the desperately life-threatening Antarctic expedition of Ernest Shackleton:<sup>2</sup>

*Who is the third who walks always beside you?*

*When I count, there are only you and I together*

*But when I look ahead up the white road*

*There is always another one walking beside you*

*Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded.*

*I do not know whether a man or a woman*

*---- But who is that on the other side of you?*<sup>3</sup>

In the whiteout swirl of a deathly Antarctic iceland and the interminable plod to simply keep alive, is it just "you and I together," single file? No, as on that awfully terrible, awfully wonderful road to Emmaus, "there is always another one walking beside you."

"When I count" it's only you and me." But "when I look" there is always that Other. Look now, look long, and look carefully with me. ■

<sup>1</sup> From results of a 1991 *Survey of Pastors* conducted by Fuller Institute of Church Growth. Referred to by H. B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Risk* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Victor Books, 1993), 22.

<sup>2</sup> From Notes on *The Wasteland*. *Selected Poems T. S. Eliot* (San Diego: Harcourt and Brace, 1964), 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

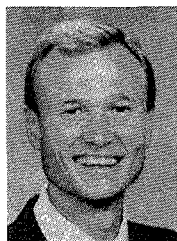


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# A PASTOR'S SPIRITUALITY:

## *Balancing Ministerial Priorities*

**W**ho touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me" (Luke 8:45, 46).



*Douglas Tilstra is pastor of the Burnaby and Coquitlan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in British Columbia, Canada.*

One of the occupational hazards of pastoral ministry is constant brushing and bumping against Jesus without the benefit of spiritual power from the contact. Like Peter and the careless crowd, we blindly bang against Jesus yet find no power flowing into us.

Not long ago, in an attempt to arrest some of the superficiality seeping into my own soul, I sought out some of the passionate portions of Scripture. I marveled at Abraham's agonized pleas for Sodom (Gen. 18:22-33). I heard Moses sing with Israel on the far side of the Red Sea, "Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" (Exod. 15:11). I saw David dancing as the ark came home (1 Chron. 15). I wondered at Daniel's tears for Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:19). I found Ezra tearing his clothes and hair in anguish at the sins of his people and gathering those who would tremble at God's word (Ezra 9:1-6). I listened to the passion in Paul's voice as he wrote to the believers in Thessalonica: "Brothers, when we were torn away

from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you . . . for what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:17-20).

I read the familiar cries of the psalmist: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Ps. 42:1, 2). "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps. 63:1). "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Ps. 84:2).

### **Danger of superficiality**

At the time I was reading and marking these passages in my Bible, I was also reading Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*. His opening lines sharpened the contrast between the passionate people of Scripture and my

own often bland brushes with Jesus. "Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."<sup>1</sup>

David Watson in a foreword to the same book makes a painful evaluation of Western Christianity as "flabby" with a "sad decline in true spirituality." Perhaps in the nearly twenty years since Foster wrote, the decline has spread beyond North America and Europe and threatens to characterize too many more of us. "We have forgotten how to be still before God, how to meditate, trapped as we are in the vortex of modern life. We have lost our sense of direction; and, confused and bewildered, we know little of the exuberant joy of celebration enjoyed by God's people down the centuries, even in tough and depressing situations. There is little to attract the unbeliever in the traditional, organized Church."<sup>2</sup>

If this analysis is even half true, perhaps we pastors need to take inventory of our own spiritual lives. Have we been numbed into a "professional pastor role" that can blandly bang together the things of God? Is the result little better than "a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1) that has little impact on the unbelieving world?

So, what can we do? How can we touch Jesus and receive power? Actually, those are the wrong questions. Our actions will never produce the change. Even our attempts at devotional connection with Jesus may still leave us empty. Ellen White said it so well: "Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle of Christ's loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work."<sup>3</sup> These people know all about bumping into Jesus. They do it every day! They've checked in with Him

for the day but gotten about as much good from the contact as the crowd that banged into Jesus but didn't know which bump was from Him and which came from the encircling crowd.

So, is the answer to double or triple the time in devotional pursuit? Will that bring about the power connection? Again, the wrong question! Our actions will never produce the change! The actions of the bleeding woman were not

*I*ronically, the art of waiting, or finding rest, seems to take great effort! It is so contrary to our nature, if not our environment! Yet it is the single most important skill I have discovered to embrace the gift of grace—the gift of hungering for God. So, I have struggled to carve out times and places and ways to learn to rest—to wait on God.

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all that different from the actions of the casual crowd. The difference was her hunger for healing. "In that one touch was concentrated the faith of her life."<sup>4</sup> The touch was merely an expression of her intense hunger.

#### Hunger for God

Where does that hunger come from? Not from my actions. Not even from an act of my will. Hunger for God is a gift—a gift of grace. Jesus said it so plainly, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him"

(John 6:44). "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). Hunger for God is a gift! Jesus is lifted up, and we are drawn. The Father declares, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness" (Jer. 31:3), and we hunger for Him. We cry out in response, "I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land" (Ps. 143:6).

As pastors, I think we minimize or overlook this gift. Too often we are too preoccupied with finding a three-point outline that we miss the voice of our Father. We are crafting words, planning projects, advancing the kingdom, and forgetting that we are little children, like everyone else, desperately in need of a Father's love that is lavished beyond imagination.

Hunger for God is a gift—purely of grace, born of the Father's love. I cannot will it. I cannot manufacture it. I may embrace it. I may also embrace those attitudes and actions that nurture this gift and resist those that destroy it.

My experience has shown me how easily I forget that hunger for God is a gift of grace. My experience has also shown me how slow I am to embrace those attitudes and actions that nurture the gift and resist those who destroy it.

One of the attitudes I am embracing is my identity as a son. I am God's son, His little child, before I am pastor (or teacher or counselor or administrator or anything else). I am His little child. I am precious to Him without performance. I am vulnerable without His help. I am just as vulnerable to a divided heart, a distracted mind, a diminished love, as any of the people to whom I minister. My role as a pastor gives me no "corner with God" nor does it excuse pretense or hypocrisy. I am a child, like those I serve, desperately in need of daily drawing from my Father. As I embrace that attitude, I embrace the gift.

#### Integration of life

Other embracing attitudes flow from this primary one. I am learning an integration of my life (emotional, so-



cial, family, physical, spiritual, vocational). Keith Miller, in *The Taste of New Wine*, expressed it well ten years after his conversion. "All the different personalities I had projected in the various areas of my experience were somehow being melded into one. I didn't have to have a separate vocabulary, a different kind of humor and a different set of ethics for my business life, my church life, my family life, and my prayer life. It was as if Christ had taken his fist and begun to knock out the partitions in my soul which had made my life so fragmented."<sup>5</sup>

I am also learning to "put myself under the authority of the Word" instead of just using it as a tool of my trade. I am learning to think in terms of *God's church, God's work, and God's perspective* instead of *my congregation, my job, and my plans*. I am learning (painfully at times) vulnerability, transparency, and authenticity. I am learning more of the meaning of grace in the Sabbath—even for pastors! And that, like all God's gifts of grace, the Sabbath as well, can be destroyed or enjoyed because of the boundaries I am willing to live within.

### Waiting on Him

All these attitudes that nurture my hunger for God overlap with actions that embrace and nurture that passion. For me, the most significant actions are those that teach me the art of waiting. More than a dozen Hebrew words are translated into the familiar "wait" of the King James Version. Those words have root meanings of silence, ceasing, standing still, waiting earnestly, waiting with hope, staying, expecting, looking for, observing, watching, etc. and are translated as such in other versions of the Bible. Sometimes the word *rest* is used, as in Psalm 62:5, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him."

Ironically, the art of waiting, or finding rest, seems to take great effort! It is so contrary to our nature, if not our environment! Yet it is the single most important skill I have discovered to embrace the gift of grace—the gift

of hungering for God. So, I have struggled to carve out times and places and ways to learn to rest—to wait on God. I have tried to take a clue from Ellen White in her statement about those who hurriedly check in with Jesus and return to work with their burdens. She says, "These workers can never attain the highest success until they learn the secret of strength. They must give themselves time to think, to pray, to wait upon God for a renewal of physical, mental, and spiritual power. They need the uplifting influence of His Spirit. Receiving this, they will be quickened by fresh life. The wearied frame and tired brain will be refreshed, the burdened heart will be lightened."

Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need.<sup>6</sup>

I am learning the art of waiting in daily unhurried time with Jesus. I am learning the value of days or half days spent alone in silence at the ocean or in the mountains. I am learning to listen as well as talk in prayer. I am learning to express more of myself and my emotions as I pray through the psalms and reflect on each day from God's perspective. I am learning new ways to journal and listen to God for insights. I am learning (slowly) a language of adoration, surrender, and trust.

I am learning that here, in the art of waiting, actions and attitudes intersect like no other place! Richard Foster says it so pointedly, "We must come to see, therefore, how central the whole of our day is in preparing us for specific times of meditation. If we are constantly being swept off our feet with frantic activity, we will be unable to be attentive at the moment of inward silence. A mind that is harassed and fragmented by external affairs is hardly prepared for meditation. . . . With our tendency to define people in terms of what they produce, we would do well to cultivate 'holy leisure.' And if we expect to succeed in the contemplative arts, we must pursue 'holy leisure' with a determination that is ruthless to our date books."<sup>7</sup>

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### Accountability

I will mention briefly a few other actions that are allowing me better to embrace the gift of hunger for God. One powerful habit is accountability to a prayer partner(s). Twelve years ago I began praying and opening my life to a handful of other Christian men. Topping the list of many benefits from such prayer-partnering is this: I never come away from one of those sessions without a sharply increased hunger to know God better.

Other significant practices that nurture my hunger for God are: responding to the exact challenges I preach to the congregation, putting myself under the teaching of those more spiritually mature than I, worshiping with music at "off times," and studying the classic spiritual disciplines.

Have you bumped into Jesus lately? Are you hungry for something more? " 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled' " (Matt. 5:6). " 'Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink . . . streams of living water will flow from within him' " (John 7:37, 38). ■

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

<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton, 1980), 1.

<sup>2</sup> David Watson, in Foreword to *Celebration of Discipline*.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1903), 260.

<sup>4</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1898), 343.

<sup>5</sup> Keith Miller, *The Taste of New Wine* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1965), 65.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Education* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1952), 260, 261.

<sup>7</sup> Foster, 20, 21.

CHARLES E. BRADFORD

# SABBATH ROOTS

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# CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PROPHECY GIFT

**T**hrough the spiritual gifts given each believer, the church will accomplish *everything* God has commissioned it to do.



*Roy Naden, Ed.D., is professor emeritus of religious education from Andrews University and lives in Bainbridge Island, Washington.*

Nurturing the members of each congregation, sharing the gospel worldwide, and any other legitimate church action will be accomplished through the application of the gifts of the Spirit in the life of each individual.

Why hasn't the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed a comprehensive theology of such a crucial aspect of truth? The question is more perplexing because of our official belief that one of those gifts, prophecy, is an important identifying mark of our church.<sup>1</sup> This article seeks to explore this little-discussed theme.<sup>2</sup> The thesis is that a widespread misunderstanding about the distribution of the prophecy gift has been at least partially responsible for a thwarted nurture ministry among members—which in turn has led to a serious apostasy rate (802,995 in the last quinquennium alone).

## **Fundamental beliefs**

Despite our long standing antipathy to creeds, "the fundamental beliefs" of Seventh-day Adventists were first described in 1930 by a group of four (M. E. Kern, F. M. Wilcox, E. R. Palmer, and C. H. Watson). Although never voted by any official committee, their statement was printed in the 1931 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. It included this paragraph: "God has placed in His church the gifts of the

Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. . . . These gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ" (377-380).<sup>3</sup>

Twenty years later, in the 1951 yearbook, the following words were added: "The gift of the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. 1 Cor 12:1, 28; Rev 12:17; 19:10; Amos 3:7; Hosea 12:10, 13. They [Adventists] recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen White."

Whatever the motivation to add those words 36 years after Ellen White's death, the results are clear: the church-wide understanding that Ellen White's prophetic ministry constituted *the* manifestation of the prophecy gift in the end time.

The 1981 yearbook published a much more comprehensive affirmation on spiritual giftedness. It stated, in part: "God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. . . . According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy. . . . One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying

mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth."

This 1981 statement affirms that *lay members* gifted with prophecy should minister through that gift and that Ellen White did and continues to minister through the same gift. To many Adventists, that is a conundrum. They conclude that one cannot have it both ways, and with little or no further thought, they relegate the gift to Mrs. White alone.

Having attempted over the past 25 years to assist members in discovering their giftedness, I know how disbelieving and diffident they become when faced with the probability that they have the ministry of prophecy. "That can't be," they reason, "that's Ellen White's gift." It was this reality (in part) that led to the withdrawal of my *Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (which identified the prophecy gift) and the development of the

*New Spiritual Gifts Inventory* and the *Personality Profile Inventory* to identify clusters of gifts rather than name individual gifts including prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

But is there not some way to reconcile the twin contentions of the 1981 statement? Having discussed this theme with hundreds of Adventist ministers in my doctoral classes at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, I believe Adventism has not yet embraced the verity that the prophecy gift is and always has been one of the most widespread of the Spirit's gifts. It has to be, because it is a major nurture gift (along with pastoring) intended by God to build the church and maintain its spiritual health.

The apostle Paul makes this clear in his words to the *local congregation* in Corinth: "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy,"<sup>5</sup> and "prophecy, however, is for believers"<sup>6</sup> (i.e., the congregation); and again, "For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone [i.e.,

the entire local congregation] may be instructed and encouraged;"<sup>7</sup> and still again, "Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy,"<sup>8</sup> for this is how members of the body of Christ are nurtured.

If Paul's words are true, can we affirm the prophecy gift among lay persons in local congregations and also uphold the unique and distinctive prophecy ministry of Ellen White? This is something we must affirm, because a comprehensive lay involvement in nurture and outreach will never be fully realized until we understand the multiple distributions of the prophecy gift.

### New Testament teaching

Like other New Testament epistles, Romans has two sections: doctrine and duty. And Paul usually bridges the gap between these two major divisions with the word *therefore*, as we read at the beginning of Romans 12—"therefore brethren." After the development of the doctrine of righteousness by faith, Paul presents a logical application. Once we

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have experienced the joy of salvation by faith, have died to self and been raised to a new life as a new creature, only then can we begin a life of ministry.

There is great intentionality in the use of the words *therefore brethren* in Romans 12:1. They introduce Paul's presentation of spiritual gifts. All who join God's family because they have been made righteous by faith are gifted for ministry. Each receives gifts/abilities to minister for the Lord Jesus, and these gifts fall into two major areas: nurture and outreach. Romans 12 names several ministries that one can expect in the local congregation. They include helps, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy, hospitality, and, predictably—prophecy.<sup>9</sup>

In reading the clear sense of this passage, there is no possibility of separating prophecy from the other gifts that Paul indicates will operate through the members of local congregations.

In 1 Corinthians there are two gift lists. The first names ten gifts, including prophecy.<sup>10</sup> The second gift list at the end of the chapter names eight gifts, again including prophecy.<sup>11</sup> The meaning is clear when you read all of Paul's lists of the gifts, in Romans, Ephesians, and 1 Corinthians: Every spiritually, healthy local congregation will have people ministering through the gifts, including the prophecy gift.

Paul uses the identical illustration for an understanding of spiritual gifts in all three New Testament passages, where he discusses the topic at length. He likens giftedness to the organs of the human body. While some organs are most useful, they are not vital to life (you can live a full life without a hand, a foot, an eye, an ear); other organs, though, are imperative. Without a heart or liver, for instance, the body dies. Similarly, the gifts of prophecy and evangelism are essential. Without them a congregation will die. For example, *Someone's past utilization of the evangelism gift will not suffice for the church today even though they may leave a heritage of many printed sermons, appeals, and techniques. And someone's past utilization of the prophecy gift will not*

*suffice for the complete nurture of the worldwide church today either.* We need and can expect multiple contemporary manifestations of both these gifts.

### Three spheres of ministry

Which brings us back to the question: If local congregations need people to utilize their prophecy gift (as was the case in the early Christian churches in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome), how do we understand Ellen White's church-wide prophecy gift? It is obvious that although in one sense these two manifestations are the same gift, in another sense they are very different.

To begin, it should be affirmed that every gift from the Holy Spirit is appropriate for its purpose. Although the gifts are given to finite sinful human beings, the Spirit's gifts are completely appropriate for their divinely-appointed purpose. More than a decade ago (when this article was first submitted to *Ministry*), I had come to see the prophecy gift as operating in three spheres of influence. First are the "holy men of God" who penned the words of Scripture. Second, I believe that Ellen White was equipped by God with the prophecy gift (and several other equally important gifts) to guide the Adventist Church. And third, I believe that today, as in every other period of church history, both men and women are gifted by the Holy Spirit to exercise the gift of prophecy/nurture at the local congregation. *In each of these three spheres, the prophecy gift is perfectly appropriate for its designated purposes, but there may be significant differences in those purposes from one situation to another.*

In each of these three spheres of influence, the prophecy gift operates in four dimensions that are *divergent* from each other and in four that are *similar*. First, the factors in common.

1. All with the prophecy gift *speak for God*, because it is a spiritual gift from God to speak for Him.

2. All minister in harmony with the Bible's definition of the gift in 1 Corinthians 14:3. (This is the only spiritual gift in the New Testament that is defined.) Paul says it is for "*strength-*

*ening, encouragement, and comfort.*"

3. The prophecy gift is *rarely involved with foretelling future events*. (Some contend that foretelling is more the work of a seer than a prophet.) To illustrate:

Sphere A. Comparatively speaking, there is little foretelling of the future in the books of the Bible—with exceptions in some chapters of such books as Isaiah, Daniel, and Revelation. But that constitutes a small percentage of the Scriptures.

Sphere B. Similarly, Ellen White's ministry was rarely concerned with foretelling future events—with the exception of the eschatological segments of *The Great Controversy* as an example. In her corpus, that represents a small percentage.

Sphere C. And at the local church level, one would not anticipate any foretelling.

4. Those with this gift are fully inspired by God to accomplish His intended purpose through them. You can't be partially inspired! As a result, in all three spheres, ministry will be appropriate for its divinely appointed purpose. The Holy Spirit guarantees it will be so as long as the messengers are faithful to the call.

Now four dimensions in which there is divergence.

1. *Duration*. How long is each individual's prophecy ministry to continue?

Sphere A. Over three thousand years ago, the writers of Scripture began to record the thoughts God placed in their minds. And God intended those words to be a continuing expression of His will until the end of the ages. The prophecy ministry of these men has lasted for scores of centuries.

Sphere B. By contrast, Ellen White came in the end time to serve as a special messenger, with her writings maintaining relevancy until the Lord returns. This is a much briefer period; to the present, only a century and a half.

Sphere C. In the third category, the gift operates for even briefer periods, just the years of the members' committed lives. The duration of the ministry

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of this group is usually measured in decades or less.

2. *Hearers.* To whom does each sphere minister?

Sphere A. It was God's intent that the writers of Scripture should benefit the entire human race.

Sphere B. In the second sphere, we find Ellen White ministering through her gift to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She is not the prophet of Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, or Mormons. She is the prophet of Adventists. This is not to say that her writings have not on occasion been a blessing to people of other faiths or won't be in the future as well. But she is our prophet, accepted as such by us, but not by the Christian world or the world at large. This is a much narrower focus.

Sphere C. In the third sphere, we have, by comparison, a far smaller range of influence, a local congregation or more likely a small group in a local congregation such as a Sabbath School class. This is a very limited influence.

3. *Basic purpose.* What is God's in-

tended purpose in each sphere?

Sphere A. The writers of Scripture enunciated the great *eternal principles* on which God's kingdom rests—a normative function. Its history, biography, poetry, etc. contain these principles to guide the believer and convict the seeker.

Sphere B. Ellen White led the maturing Adventist Church by making *modern applications* of the eternal principles of Scripture for the worldwide church and by constantly pointing members back to Scripture—a "formative" function, to quote an article in *Ministry* from the Ellen G. White Estate.<sup>12</sup> "Little heed is given to the Bible," she wrote, "and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."<sup>13</sup>

Sphere C. Local church members exercise their ministry by making *local and personal applications*.

4. *Symbols.* In the quote above, Ellen White suggests two appropriate symbols for two of these spheres:

Sphere A. The first sphere she sym-

bolized as a *greater light*, like the sun.

Sphere B. Her own writings she symbolized as a *lesser light*, like the moon, which reflects light from the sun.

Sphere C. Members of local congregations with the gift which may be symbolized by *candle light*.

At this point all we have is a theoretical model. Most advances in knowledge come through the development of theory. But we must test the theory. In doing this, three periods of history are obvious time laboratories—Old Testament, New Testament, and modern times.

### The Old and New Testaments

A search through some four hundred references to prophets/prophecy in the Old Testament reveal some thirty named men and women categorized as prophets/prophetesses, though many of the best-known are not called prophets, even if the ministry they accomplished for God makes it obvious that this was their gift. The New Testament picks up these hanging threads and



identifies another fifteen Old Testament individuals as prophets, including Daniel, Jonah, Enoch, and David.

Throughout the centuries of the Old Testament, of all those God called to exercise this special gift, a mere 38 are explicitly named prophets/prophetesses. And of the writers who penned the Old Testament corpus, only some fifteen are actually called prophets.

This article has already suggested that there are three discrete spheres in which the prophecy gift operates to benefit the Adventist Church today: Scripture writers, Ellen White, specific members of local congregations—identified above as spheres 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

At this point, the question will probably be asked, Did any sphere 1 prophets know they were to have sphere 1 influence? Probably not. If they had, their words would presumably have been couched in broader, less localized terms. What seems more likely is that these gifted people recognized God's call to speak His message to the nation

of Israel (a sphere 2 ministry). But *it was the clarity and universal applicability of the timeless principles they recorded that marked these books, intrinsically, for preservation and recognition as a sphere 1 prophecy ministry.*

The Old Testament canonical writers who knew they were called as sphere 2 prophets acted also in sphere 3; that is, they were human beings in contact with the people among whom they lived and responded to individuals' questions and needs as well as speaking for God to the nation at large. For example, Elisha didn't delegate another to assist the workman who lost a borrowed ax. Spontaneously, he met an axman's need, although the outcome was of no national significance.

Inevitably, based on the examples of history, there is an overlap in the spheres of prophecy ministry in which *the wider incorporates the narrower, but not the reverse.* That is, sphere 1 includes spheres 2 and 3. Sphere 2 includes sphere 3; however, a sphere 3 ministry appears to operate *only* in sphere 3.

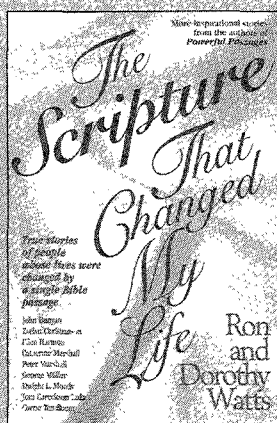
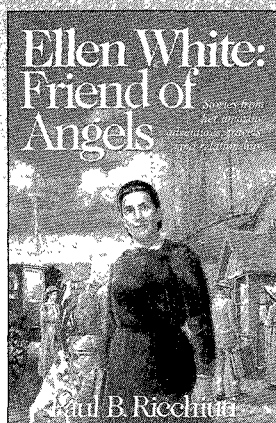
In the centuries of the Old Testament, it seems there was no need for more than one sphere 2 prophet to exercise the prophecy gift for the entire nation at any one time. Nor was there always the need for back-to-back succession of prophets. But in those cases where God indicated that there would be an immediate succession, that also became clear. For example, the cloak of the ascending Elijah descended from the sky and was taken by the succeeding Elisha, based, at least in part, on God's knowledge of the need.

The record of the New Testament, spanning a mere seven decades, does not contain the same quantity of information as the Old. It contains only some two hundred references to prophets and prophecy. And hardly any people are actually named as possessing the prophecy gift, except some eight, including John the Baptist, Silas, Zachariah, and Anna. Apparently, just as in the times of the Old Testament, the prophets of the New provided such a vital function for the church that they were recognized

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as exercising the gift of prophecy without always being named as such in the record.

### The end time

Then what of the end time? As the fifteenth century began, a series of individuals were raised up to speak for God. As the world church came out of the depressing darkness of the Middle Ages, it faced the twin tasks of rescuing the truths long distorted by centuries of individual and ecclesiastical meddling and the sharing of the gospel with multitudes of unsaved. With no attempt to be comprehensive, the succession included Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation, and Luther, who revived the doctrines of righteousness by faith and "the priesthood of all believers"—*crucial for a revived spiritual-gifts ministry*. Williams revived the symbol of the washing away of sin in baptism by immersion. Calvin, among other things, revived a form of church government that restored authority to a local congregation. Wesley emphasized the fruit of a methodical Christian life. Miller recovered the truth of a returning Savior. Each of these people made an invaluable contribution to the process of restoring lost truths taught by Jesus in order that, in these last days, there might be a worldwide proclamation of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

All of these heroes I would classify as sphere 2 people, with the prophecy gift given them by the Holy Spirit that they might contribute something of major importance to the congregations of the church worldwide. Without question, the natural consequence of the ministry of these prophetic voices was spiritual life, health, and growth for the body of Christ in the end time.

Is the ministry of the founders of some end-time denominations named above the same as the Old and New Testament prophets? Not exactly, but perhaps their work is comparable. Clearly, the ministry across denominational boundaries of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and others will continue through the end time to the Christian

church at large as we await the Lord's return and preach the gospel to earth's last generation.

### Two important clarifications

Before concluding, two brief but important observations need to be made. First, there will be some who remain skeptical about a local congregational application of the prophecy gift. They may wish to curtail its application in a given congregation because they fear that it might be abused on that level. They may wonder if it will encourage splintering or "congregationalism," as persons on a local level claim that prophetic revelations give them a doctrinal or structural authority which supercedes that of the church as a whole. In that connection it should be said that the most recent Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the church denies this objection when it affirms: "God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry. . . . These gifts include such ministries as prophecy." And if read in context, the apostle Paul could have been speaking of no other sphere but a *local* one when he referred to the prophecy gift in Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 14:1, 3, 4, 5, 22, 24, and 29. Besides, it would indeed be a travesty to be so concerned about possible abuse that we quenched the authentic manifestation of the gift.

Second, what can one say about the issue of "inspiration" when manifested in the local church through the prophecy gift? A fear that is a twin to the one mentioned above may cause some to shy away from embracing the gift as God offers it in the congregational setting. They may be afraid that some will take the "revelations" they receive through the prophecy gift in the local fellowship of believers and place them above the authority of the inspired work of Ellen White or even the Bible.

But because there is no such thing as "partial inspiration," we can only conclude that people are fully inspired by God to perform their specific ministry. In the third sphere of application

of the prophecy gift, the ministry is a limited local ministry, unlike the wider authority of the first and second spheres. God can and does equip people for just such local ministries. That is the very essence of the theology of spiritual gifts: Believers are equipped for ministry, and the healthy manifestation of this ministry is one that cannot contradict the essence of what has been communicated through the first two spheres.

### Conclusion

Which brings us back to the original hypothesis. If church members are to be adequately nurtured, if the fruit of evangelism is to be faithfully preserved and commissioned into service, there must be nurturers with the prophecy gift in every congregation. There must be *many of them*, as was the case in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

The Bible continues to nurture those who read it. The words Ellen White wrote to her church, our church, continue to nurture those who read them today. And the spoken words of some individuals in each local congregation around the planet must be accepted as part of God's purpose for the nurture of His church. This third-sphere manifestation sees godly individuals chosen by God, gifted by God, and inspired by God with the spiritual gift of prophecy, exercising it for the "*strengthening, encouragement, and comfort*" of the members of local congregations. The acceptance of this reality is a key to the nurture of the church; otherwise, the erosion of membership will continue unabated in most areas of the world. ■

<sup>1</sup> Rev 12:17; cf. 19:10.

<sup>2</sup> Additional aspects of the discussion can be found in my commentary on Revelation 14 and 19 in *The Lamb Among the Beasts* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> See LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), 413-415.

<sup>4</sup> An additional factor was the difficulty of using nomenclature from the New Testament that frequently carry preconceptions and misconceptions of meaning.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 14:1.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 14:22.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 14:31.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. 14:39.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 12:6-13.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. 12:8-10.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. 12:28.

<sup>12</sup> *Ministry*, October 1981, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 257.

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# THE STOP-START JOURNEY ON THE ROAD TO A CHURCH MANUAL

**T**he first of this two-part article told of a failed attempt in 1883 by the Adventist Church to adopt a church manual.



*Gilbert M. Valentine, Ph.D., is a vice-president of Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.*

*In this article, the author examines how the church addressed the need for a manual during the next 50 years until finally adopting one for the whole denomination in 1932.*

In 1883 Adventist Church leadership categorically rejected the need for a church manual. At the time, General Conference President George Butler was certain that the church had no intention of heading down a formalistic, creedalistic road.

This determined stance, however, did nothing to address the need for some compendium of guidance on local church life and ministerial practice. Nor did it stop the ongoing codification of church polity as local conferences and the General Conference continued to legislate uniform practice for the growing sisterhood of churches. But the decision had been made. Pastors, churches, and conferences were to labor on with the Bible as the “only rule of faith and practice.” This did not mean, however, that the need for a general volume would vanish.

So how did the church change its

mind and adopt a formal church manual 50 years later? To begin with, in place of a “manual,” a variety of books by individual writers appeared to fill the void. The story of these interim efforts provides a fascinating backdrop to the church’s about-face.

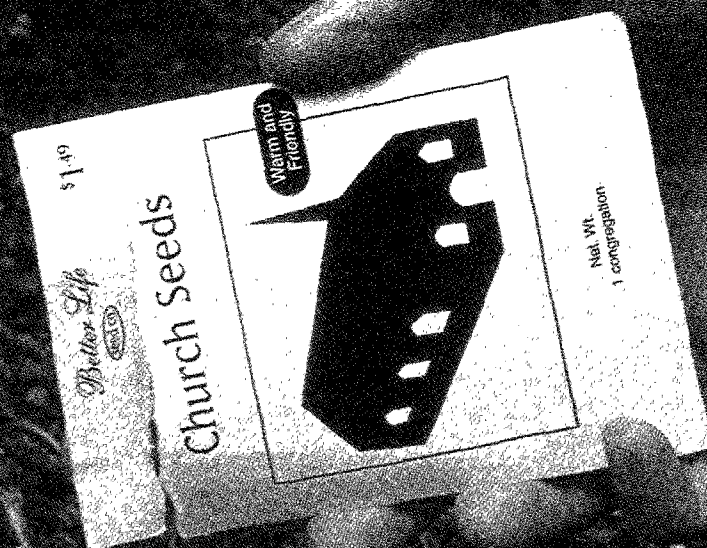
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Less than two years after rejecting the manual, the General Conference had the issue back on its agenda, the matter being pursued by J. H. Waggoner. As editor of *Signs of the Times*®, he had published a manuscript for a manual in the *Signs*.<sup>1</sup> But when he broached the idea of the General Conference endorsing the document, session delegates deftly sidestepped the issue. They referred it to the California publishing house to be dealt with as any other manuscript published under an author’s own name. Pacific Press® published the eight-chapter, 122-page volume in 1887. Only 20 copies were printed, and it was never revised or re-issued.<sup>2</sup>

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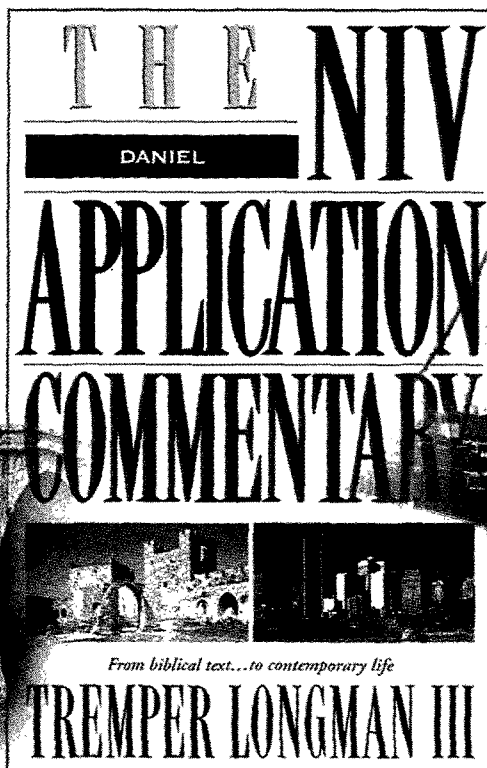
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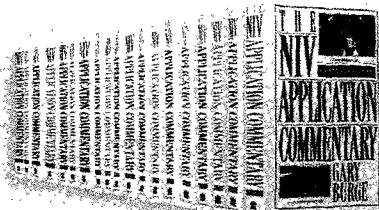
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tion to a manual, the content of Waggoner's manuscript indicates why it did not qualify. The style is sermonic, chatty, hortatory, polemical, and is peppered with personal illustrations. Both nameless ministers and churches come in for critique. It would not have been difficult for some to have identified themselves and their faults.<sup>3</sup>

Also limiting the usefulness of Waggoner's manual was his vigorous advocacy of a "closed" Communion which would have offended Adventists who came from a Freewill Baptist or Christian-connection background. Further, Waggoner's argumentative approach was inappropriate for a general manual.<sup>4</sup> No wonder Waggoner's manual didn't go farther than a few churches in southern California.

#### A veteran speaks

At the turn of the century came the turmoil of denominational restructuring, followed immediately by the seismic upheavals of the Kellogg schism. These events added weight to the perceived need for a manual on church order. It seemed as important to explain and defend the validity of the new pattern of the denomination's organizational practice as to provide guidance on matters of congregational life.

In 1906 John N. Loughborough took up the challenge. Published by the Review and Herald in 1907, Loughborough's 183-page book, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline*, proved exceptionally helpful as a compact guide. In 1908, the General Conference sent the author on a world tour to promote the volume and to speak about church order and organization. The book was not an official manual, although it represented a strong consensus on church polity. In fact, it came to be accepted as a *de facto* church manual for the next 20 years.

Loughborough's book illustrates a clear development in the culture of the denomination, during this period, toward a more centralized approach to denominational life. The volume was assertive, prescriptive, and almost authoritarian in tone. The dominant

metaphor was military. The emphasis was on recognizing and submitting to "authority." Loughborough conveyed the feeling that the church had "arrived" in its organizational development and things were now the way they should have been all along.<sup>5</sup> The integrating theme was based on an often repeated 1893 statement from Ellen White that "the Lord has wrought in the organization that has been perfected."<sup>6</sup> The first 14 chapters dealt with broad principles of church organization and consisted almost entirely of lengthy quotations from Scripture and Ellen White. The last 15 began with a historical review of Adventist church organization and moved on to discuss conference structure, committee procedures, elections, and the jurisdiction of officers. While the book touched on local church issues, its focus is on the church as a broad organization as opposed to the individual worshiping congregation.

#### A pastoral approach

Even as Loughborough was working on his manuscript, H. M. J. Richards of Colorado was also writing a church manual in order to answer "the great need for a plainly written work of moderate size and easy reference on the subject of Gospel Order."<sup>7</sup>

Richards's 12-chapter volume begins with a catechetical approach: answers supported by extensive quotations. Like Loughborough's work, the first chapters deal with broad principles, while the latter chapters deal with the practical application of these principles. In contrast to the authoritarian and triumphalist tenor of Loughborough, Richards's manual has a warm, soft, pastoral tone and focuses more on issues of congregational life and the work of the pastor. While the writing is less polished, the approach is more winsome.

Richards's work was based on the understanding that a manual on church order is supposed to be primarily *descriptive*. It acknowledged the need to yield individual interests for the sake of the whole body. It dealt with authority sensitively. It also reflected a creeping sacramentalism in the church; for ex-

ample, the advocacy of the sanctity of the pulpit as opposed to the Sabbath School desk. Yet Richards conveyed these ideas with pastoral and persuasive warmth. In many ways the manual was superior to Loughborough's. The two volumes helped fill the church manual vacuum, each in its sphere, for almost twenty years. But as the decades wore on, both became dated.

#### A departmental leader's turn

In 1922 General Conference Home Mission Secretary, James Adams Stevens, freshened things up with *The Officers of the Church and Their Work*.<sup>8</sup> This volume became the forerunner of an official church manual.

Stevens had 13 years of pastoral and departmental leadership experience before being elected to the General Conference. His approach was more polished and scholarly than that of his predecessors. He began with a historical overview, tracing the roots of Christian church order back to the Jewish synagogue system and on through the New Testament church. His emphasis was on the local church and its officers, reflecting the new departmental approach to church life that had developed during the first two decades of the century. With a didactic approach, Stevens addressed the contemporary problems and procedures that church officers should know about. The book was a "how to" handbook of instructions; it included a stronger emphasis on the leadership of the local elder who, in Stevens's view, almost rivals the role of the local ordained pastor. In fact, if Stevens's prescriptions had been followed, local elders would soon have felt overburdened with the duties of their office.<sup>9</sup>

While Stevens's work was *prescriptive* in its focus on the role of church officers, it did not convey heavy prescription with regard to church order per se. The book illustrated, however, the changed perspectives since the days when George Butler and Ellen White had set the agenda and pointed out the danger that formalism might sap spirituality. Stevens was heading in the

other direction. "Experience has demonstrated that faithful adherence to certain rules in the conduct of our church work results in a deeper spiritual life on the part of the members and consequent progress in every phase of church activity."<sup>10</sup> Stevens's book showed that things were changing.

In 1929, H. S. Miller, a theology lecturer at Southwestern Junior College, wrote to the General Conference asking if Stevens's volume was "authoritative." Miller had heard that the status of the book was "seriously questioned." Was its "mission and counsel endorsed unquestionably" by the General Conference? If not, was "there anything to substitute it?"<sup>11</sup> T. E. Bowen, editor of the *Church Officers' Gazette*, who replied for the General Conference, hedged. He could assure Miller that as far as he knew "there was no outstanding defect in the book"<sup>12</sup> regarding the questions under consideration. But the manuscript had only been "passed upon" by the book committee of Pacific Press®. It is significant to note that questions such as Miller's suggest that the church was on the way to being ready for a formally endorsed manual.

#### A periodical approach

The *Church Officers' Gazette* was another attempt to fill the void. In 1913, the North American Division requested that a "Church Officers' Manual" be prepared. Whether the 1883 episode was still too fresh and there was lingering resistance to a manual is not clear. What is clear is that in place of a "manual" the *Gazette* was initiated. The 16-page monthly carried articles on church order and on the role of church officers. Feature articles, both sermonic and didactic, elaborated on the way officers should carry out their duties. The *Gazette* lasted for 37 years before it was replaced in 1951 by two publications, the *MV Program Kit* for the Youth Department and *Go for the Home Missions Department*.

#### Minor manuals

Two smaller volumes bearing the word *manual* staged an appearance

during the 1920s. One for foreign missionaries set out policies and served as a guidebook for those appointed to serve overseas. The other, in 1925, a *Manual for Ministers*, detailed the work of the pastor with explanations of ordination and credentials and suggested service outlines and scripts for the celebration of Communion, marriage, and funerals. Although the scripts were even more detailed and specific in some areas than the general suggestions in Littlejohn's rejected 1883 manuscript, the two volumes were accepted without objection. They provided useful guidelines for these important and usually formal occasions.

#### A manual again

Perhaps the success that attended these two smaller manuals persuaded church leaders that the church might be ready to accept a formal manual on church order—if handled properly. The codification of matters of church polity had burgeoned through the years as the church grew, becoming more international, institutional, and complex. This codified material needed to be in an accessible compendium. The emergence of a distinct organizational "policy" book dealing specifically with matters of denominational employment, organizational and institutional relationships, and industrial issues had also perhaps clarified what needed to be included in an official "church" manual, thus making the task easier.

The old rationale for a manual had gathered fresh intensity. Inexperienced ministers were being employed. The church had spread to many countries. The number of new churches had grown rapidly, and this meant waves of new church leaders. The means of providing the necessary instruction without a standardized document seemed out of reach. But given the church's past experience, the question still remained: how to get such a volume as a church manual? General Conference leaders decided to brave it.

During late 1926, James L. McElhany was asked by General Conference officials to draft a document. He

began work on it the following year.<sup>13</sup>

The background to the request is mysterious. General Conference correspondence and committee actions indicate that church leaders understood that the invitation to McElhany had been a formal request from the General Conference Committee.<sup>14</sup> There is, however, no extant record of such formal authorization. Whether the General Conference officers were sensitive to possible criticism and wished to initiate the project discreetly without a minuted action or whether an action was taken that was "inadvertently" not minuted is not known.

What is known is that the officers were enthusiastically behind the idea. The book would be comprehensive, explained T. E. Bowen to an enquirer; it would pick up "the principles of the book Elder Loughborough first brought out, as well as the main features of Brother Stevens' book, and then go even beyond this in a careful survey of the church work and problems often arising in the church with a view of offering suggestions and principles developed by long usage that would more fully meet the requirements of the churches."<sup>15</sup>

McElhany had to fit the project around his regular duties as a union president. Although he did not discuss the task, at least not in the extensive correspondence held in the General Conference archives, there was clearly much consultation.<sup>16</sup> But it was not until five years later, in October 1931, that McElhany submitted his work to the General Conference officers.<sup>17</sup>

The approval process moved rapidly. In an interesting appropriation of authority, the General Conference officers "authorized" the Executive Committee "to take steps towards editing the manuscript."<sup>18</sup> The president quickly nominated an editorial committee of seven, endorsed by the Executive Committee, to fulfill this task.<sup>19</sup> Two months after the manuscript had been handed over, the General Conference Executive Committee received the report of the editorial review group and approved the amended manuscript. They added the

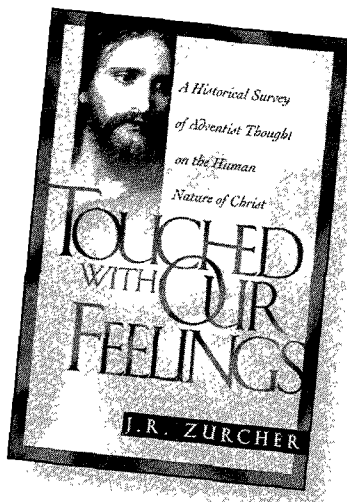


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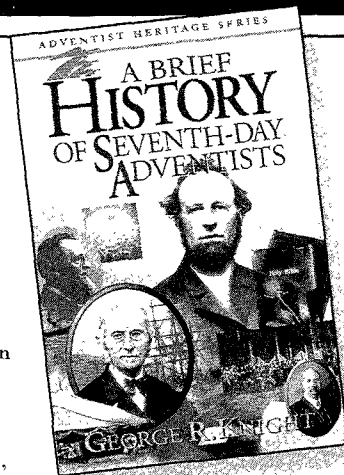


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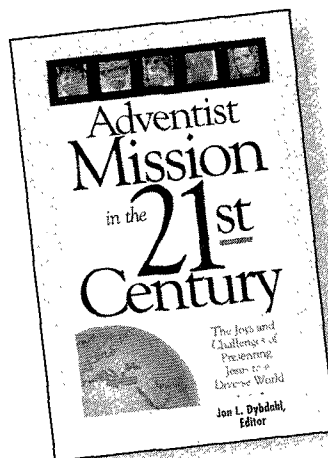
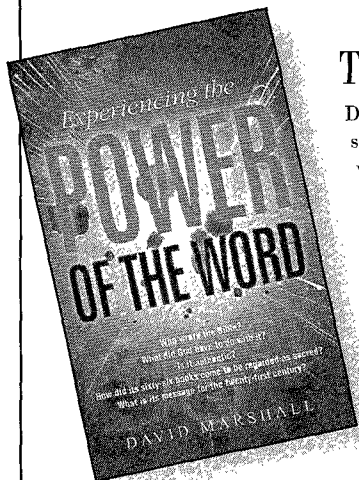
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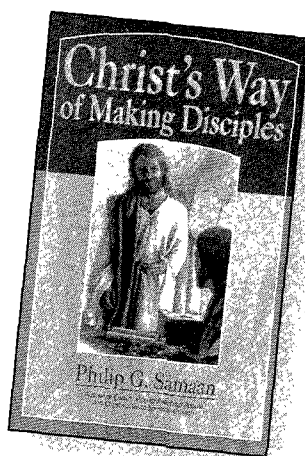
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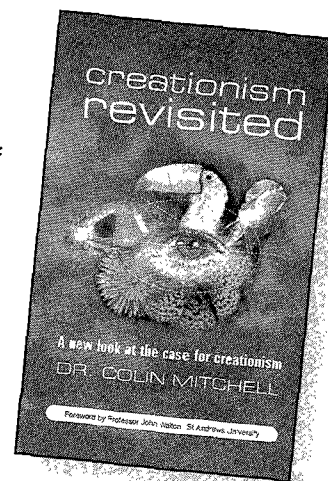
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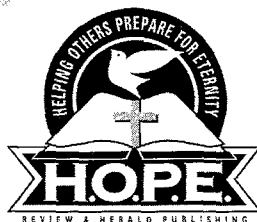
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proviso that the galley proofs be furnished to local members of the Executive Committee. In early 1932 President C. H. Watson declined the invitation to write a personal foreword for the manuscript (he wanted to give the project universal appeal). Instead, a small subcommittee drafted a statement that could be signed by the whole General Conference Committee.<sup>20</sup> In late March, last-minute revisions were added before the Review and Herald presses rolled for a midyear release. A formal church manual bearing the authority of the General Conference was finally a reality.

No recorded discussions or actions approving the manual indicate an awareness of the rejection 50 years earlier. Neither, it seemed, was there any reaction from George Butler, who was pastoring churches in Ohio when the manual was issued. One wonders whether leadership might, in fact, have been familiar with the first attempt and judiciously avoided the need for approval by a full General Conference Session.

### A manual for the church

McElhany's 1932 *Church Manual* did not break new ground. It was primarily *descriptive* of church life and practice as it existed, but it incorporated recent consensus agreements voted at the General Conference on such matters as committee procedures, church-board membership, and issues concerning disfellowshipping of members. The approach was "this is our custom," with room for variations at the local level. It was *prescriptive* in the sense that new churches were to be organized on the basis of the manual. The General Conference agreed that local fields could develop their own adaptations of the manual (provided they were approved). The British Union Conference was the only organization to take up the offer in the early years.

The preface avoided a heavy-handed creedal approach; it stated that the manual was set forth "as a guide" in matters of church administration. It was not, however, just to set forth "de-

nominal practices and polity"—but also to "preserve" these. For those who feared a drift toward creedalism, the worrying word was *preserve*, which suggested an element of prescription and raised the difficulty of how the manual could be revised should that need arise.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the manual was the inclusion of a new statement of fundamental beliefs. Drawn up by a committee of four, chaired by *Adventist Review* editor Francis M. Wilcox,<sup>21</sup> the 22-article document was not formally approved by any committee but was passed to Edson Rogers, General Conference statistician, for inclusion in the 1931 *SDA Yearbook*. Endorsement occurred later as part of the approval process for the manual as a whole. There was no review or wide consultation on the statement, nor formal vote of the wider church. Sensitivities about the appropriateness of voting on statements of belief and the prospect of being charged with creedalism possibly explain the unusual way in which the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs became "official."<sup>22</sup>

Keeping the document current soon became a problem. Revisions were authorized by the General Conference Committee, appearing in 1934 and 1940. But in 1946 the General Conference Session resolved that changes could be approved only by its delegates in session.<sup>23</sup>

### Conclusion

Today the *Church Manual* is a matured document, accepted as an authoritative guide. It has been of inestimable value to countless ministers and churches and has played an immensely helpful role in keeping the church a cohesive body. But a church manual, in an important sense, is a backward-looking rather than a forward-looking document. It began primarily as a descriptive document: "This is the way the church does things." As variation, growth, and development occur in the light of Scripture, future editions of the manual will describe what is customary and what has proved helpful. In this

way, while benefiting from an authoritative guide, the church will avoid the trap feared so intensely in 1883, that such a document may become narrowly determinative for the future. ■

<sup>1</sup> "The Church: Its Organization, Ordinances and Discipline," *Signs* (January 1, 1885 to August 6, 1885).

<sup>2</sup> See Book Committee Proceedings, Oakland Session 1887, 78; *The Church: Its Organization, Ordinances and Discipline* (California: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1886), 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 104ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, Mich.: International Tract Society, 1893), 135. See Loughborough, 50, 51, 61, 62, 90-94, 127.

<sup>7</sup> H. M. J. Richards, *Church Order and Its Divine Origin and Importance* (Denver: Colorado Tract Society, 1906).

<sup>8</sup> Pacific Press® commissioned and published the book.

<sup>9</sup> James Adams Stevens, *The Offices of the Church and Their Work*, 20-27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> H. S. Miller to T. E. Bowen, January 11, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> T. E. Bowen to H. S. Miller, January 20, 1929.

<sup>13</sup> J. L. McElhany to T. E. Bowen, August 12, 1927.

<sup>14</sup> General Conference Minutes, November 9, 1932.

<sup>15</sup> T. E. Bowen to H. S. Miller, January 20, 1929.

<sup>16</sup> J. L. McElhany to Union and Local Presidents, August 14, 1929; General Conference Officers' Minutes, October 15, 1930; G. C. Minutes, May 6, 1931.

<sup>17</sup> General Conference Officers' Minutes, October 28, 1931.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> General Conference Officers' Minutes, November 11, 1931; General Conference Minutes, November 12, 1931; November 13, 1931.

<sup>20</sup> General Conference Officers' Minutes, February 11, 1932.

<sup>21</sup> Other members of the panel: M. E. Kern, dean of the seminary; E. R. Palmer, publishing director; and C. H. Watson, General Conference president. Wilcox appears to have been the chief draftsman.

<sup>22</sup> See L. E. Froom, "Creeds," 5; General Conference Archives; also Gottfried Oosterveld, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mission: 1919-1979," unpublished paper cited in Lawrence Geraty, "A New Statement of Fundamental Beliefs," *Spectrum* 11 (1983): 1:3.

<sup>23</sup> See *Review and Herald*, June 14, 1946, 197-199; also Gary Land, *Adventism in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 180.

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# THE PASTOR AND PLANNED GIVING

**M**aybe you can learn from my mistakes! As a graduate, fresh from the halls of academia, I plunged into parish work. For me the conference office in our local territory was a virtually unknown frontier.

*W. Ronald Watson is the director of the Department of Planned Giving, Loma Linda University, California.*

I did not understand all the protocol and procedure of life in relation with the office staff. I therefore found myself at times either at odds with the programs or ignorant of the legitimate help they could give my congregation and me.

It was not until after a number of years of experience that I discovered a more focused relationship with the departmental ministries of my local conference. One of these I must admit I had hardly noticed—the Trust Services department. My discovery of the value of this department was largely due to the Trust Services director in my conference at the time, Alf Johnson. His friendly and kind authenticity attracted me, and I began to have an interest in what he was actually about in the conference.

The conference association (the legal corporation of our church) came under his supervision. I was fascinated with the details that he administered and was amazed with the order and carefulness with which his office looked

after conference legal matters such as church properties and the management of trusts. His thoughtfulness and friendship soon caused me to recognize the need of a proper will for my own personal situation. At the time, my wife and I had two small girls, and we had begun to grasp the worth of having a plan that would care for them in case we as parents faced unforeseen trauma or death. And so, with Alf, we initiated the process of preparing our own will.

## **Will preparation for the pastor**

In this we were encouraged to select guardians for our children and provide funds for their education and future needs in case we would not be there to do so. The process also called for us to think about our parents, who might need to know that we were considering them when we prepared the document. The entire experience gave us a sense of satisfaction and security. We had provided for our family in case we could not do so in the future. As we arranged to write our will, we also pro-

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W. RONALD WATSON



vided for a percentage for the work of the church. This also gave us a touch of fulfillment as we realized that our ministry could continue even after death.

In those early years our "estate" was not large, but we did have some assets: a small savings account, household possessions, an automobile, and a monthly bank account. "Not worth the trouble of designing a will!" you might say. But in those "gathering and collecting" years, we had more than we realized or had actually counted up. We rightly decided it was worthwhile having even these small assets properly designated for family and faith. We also realized that sometimes there are lawsuits that can accrue to one's estate or, as in my case, there are life-insurance policies that have been carried by one's own family. I remember that I cashed in one such policy that had been carried on my life, provided by my grandparents since the time of my birth. So, it is wise to consider that there may be "outside" and "contingent" assets in your estate that you have not thought of.

### Learning from mistakes

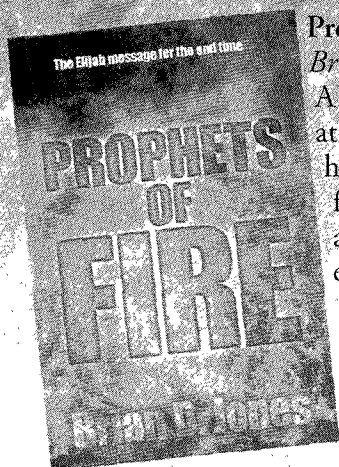
After my initial experience with Alf and making our will, I continued to enjoy my years of pastoring. I kept a close relationship with the people, especially the older ones in my parishes. I associated easily with them. I also found that I had a special interest in legal issues. I realized that I enjoyed working with the procedural patterns in real estate, had a curiosity about powers of attorney, elder care, and conservatorships. So it is not surprising that during a conference presidential annual review of my work I mentioned these interests to my pastoral leader. Not long after this conversation, I was invited, and accepted the invitation, to join the local conference Trust Services department as one of the trust officers. Among other things, in doing this I hoped that I could be of genuine assistance to pastors who needed thoughtful help from a colleague who had made his mistakes with these issues while pastoring. I remembered especially one situation I had not handled too well as a pastor.

I recalled a well-to-do parishioner in one of my churches. The elders of my church called me one afternoon and told me that this man wanted to leave the local parish a sizable gift from his estate. His wife had died some years before. He had no children and though he had some financial obligations, his major desire was to benefit the local congregation and its program. My church leaders wanted to draft an instrument right there in the boardroom of our church. They asked me to "type it up." Then, in well-intentioned zeal, they encouraged him to sign this "draft" while they gathered around to sign as witnesses.

This was not a good plan. I was young and inexperienced, so I followed along. If only I had called the conference Trust Services personnel and gotten guidance and input. How much more appropriate to have had a qualified third party to assist our member in his decisions and desire or to have the resources of the conference to help in these arrangements.

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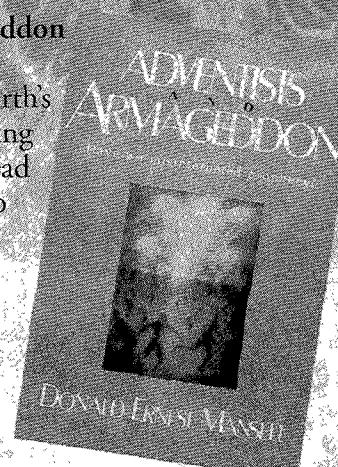
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I remember another situation I learned from, involving another pastor. He came to the conference office with a nonchurch member from his community. She loved the local programs offered by the local Adventist church and wanted to "make a donation" of properties to this small parish. In this case the minister was wise in coming to the Trust Services department of his conference. What caught the attention of the Trust Services personnel was that the pastor evidently had a seriously limited knowledge of property and real estate deeds and documents, because none of the papers he laid before them had the woman's name on them. He could have saved himself embarrassment, time, and mileage. The woman had apparently collected deeds from the local county clerk's office and made copies. These she offered to the church as if they were legally viable. There were no documents upon which she had any vested rights as an owner. The conference Trust Services director was obliged to pleasantly thank the woman and to diplomatically decline her offer.

As colleagues in ministry, we would do well to acquaint ourselves with some of the legal issues that arrive within the church community and among its business affairs. It is also important for pastors and local church leaders to have information concerning the work of Trust Services and the office of the legal corporation of the church. This contact can certainly be the source of much benefit to the congregations and to the leadership of local churches.

As ministers we are in a position to bless and benefit our membership. One way of doing this is to have a well-informed sensitivity to the charitable concerns of the people under our care. Since the Trust Services department can offer some real security for maturing church members and can assist them in planning for their families and for an ultimate gift to the church, this is an interest area that pastors can nurture. We can encourage our people to discover the guidance of God's will in the handling of their estates and not simply seek to influence them with im-

pending death as the motivator. With long-term planning, much good can be accomplished in families and in the church circle.

Not everyone will respond to the provisions of Trust Services. Many may feel more comfortable with their own legal counsel and personal planning. If this is the case, it is definitely best to leave the arrangements with the members. Hopefully they will still include the Lord's work in their wills and trusts. Our regular preaching and teaching, along with intelligent and balanced calls to remember God's vineyard in life and in death, should make its mark. We should be careful not to exert "undue influence" on our members or get into situations that may be construed by them or their families to be an "unlawful practice of law."

However, people do appreciate being helped. As pastors and parish leaders, we are facilitators, helpers, and enablers within the church community. Since any one of us is always looking for means and avenues of skillfully aiding our parishioners, I would recommend that your list of options include the assistance of Trust Services.

### **The pastor and Trust Services**

As already implied, Trust Services (also called Legal Affairs, the Association, and Planned Giving) is a user-friendly concentration of advantages and benefits for one's church members and for the minister's own estate needs. There the door is open to provide a qualified and comprehensive look at planning providentially for the future. The services can include: ideas for the care of family needs, providing for peace in the hearts of children, provision for elderly relations and extended family, thoughts for enhancing charitable interests and sympathies, gaining security by action now for potential problems later, learning of income-producing trusts that pay donors now and assist church programs later.

This list constitutes a limited enumeration of opportunities that a visit to Trust Services can open up as pastors seek to broaden the potential of

their ministries of generosity. Church members can gain from Trust Services an inventory of available avenues and different types of instruments for planning as they think of their families and the work of God.

The first important movement for the minister is, as a spiritual leader, to acquaint himself or herself with what the local conference and union or mission office provides. In this there are wide differences between local conferences and unions. For example, of the 300 listed personnel for the North American Division Trust Services, just 203 are full time in this department. Of the 121 on record in other global divisions, less than fifty are full time in this ministry. This employee ratio is not in balance, but it is the situation at present in our world field, for reasons that are undoubtedly reasonable and valid.

So it may be that when you go to explore your sectional Trust Services facilities, you may find them to be very limited, nearly nonexistent, or quite sophisticated. Either way, it is worthwhile to explore your options as a pastor. This may well enhance your ministry and your usefulness to your local congregation.

### **Specific services offered**

*Testamentary will information* is offered by many conference Trust Services departments. They may provide kits or brochures to enable church members to understand how to prepare a will. Some conferences will even pay for an attorney to meet with an interested person and then draft the instrument for their approval and execution. Usually they have an attorney or solicitor on retainer to assist in this provision. Also, the conference officer will seek to discover the desires of the individual or individuals so that the local church program and/or conference entities benefit from their estate. People may include the church in any size gift in their wills. However, because of the extent of the responsibilities of those who service the member's estate, most church organizations find it necessary to have at least a 25 percent gift for the church in order

to manage a trust.

*The revocable trust* is a fine medium for a person, single or married. Since assets are named during one's lifetime as part of this trust, the probate procedure of most jurisdictions is not necessary. At death, the trustee (usually the conference trust department) sees to the distribution of the assets without the use of time-consuming, costly, and unwieldy court proceedings. Many organizations now have self-directed trusts, which are the same as the revocable, except that the donors themselves become their own trustees. This is an acceptable plan to many who prefer to look after their own affairs until age or incapacity should change this. In such cases conferences can become successor trustees to assist the donor when events or circumstances make it difficult for them or their family members to provide the work and maintenance as trustee.

A *unitrust* allows a church mem-

ber who has appreciated property to gift this to the conference organization. This instantly takes care of any capital gains liability, since the church is tax exempt when it sells such real estate. This is an excellent plan in countries where this is feasible and allowable under existing tax codes, especially for members who would experience large tax assessments were they to sell the property themselves. Once the trust is funded with cash from the sale of the gift property, the organization can invest this and pay the donor an agreed percent in income for their lifetime. A charitable deduction is also available in many locations. This is calculated from the value of the gift property, minus the potential payments to the donor.

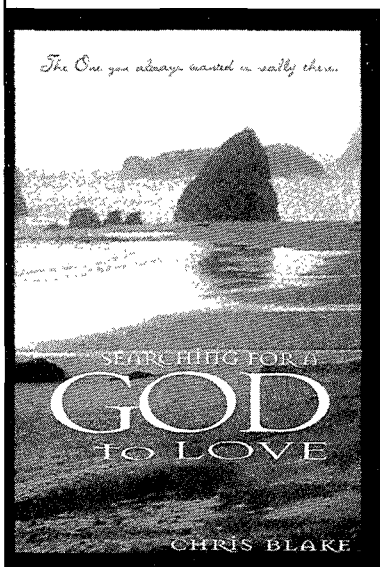
A *gift annuity* is a fine way to increase one's income by simply placing cash in contract with a church organization. The person is then paid according to a set percentage, based on his or her age at the time of the gift. This an-

nuity will pay an unchanging amount of income during the individual's life, a portion of which may be tax-free. The remaining portion of the annuity principal (left at the death of the donor) then goes to the church organization as directed by the donor before his or her death.

This is only a brief overview of the options. It is commendable and advisable for a pastor to gain at least a clear sense of the available charitable trust and contract arrangement options.

The beauty of stewardship in general, and this kind of stewardship specifically, is that it carefully considers the issues of family responsibility, the needs of gospel work, and the interplay of God's blessing and His providence in the life of the believer. It is a wonderful extension of the kind of gratitude that centers the life, work, and existence of an individual pastor, a parishioner, and the heartbeat of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole. ■

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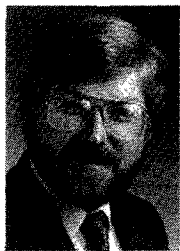
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**T**here is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the

man. . . (Thus he declared all foods clean)" (Mark 7:15, 19).\*

What did Jesus mean by "defile" and "clean"? Was He referring to clean and unclean foods?

At issue in Mark 7 are the "traditions of the elders" (verses 3, 5, 8, 9, 13). These "traditions," according to Jesus, were used to disregard the commandments of God (verse 9). For example, the "traditions of the elders" allowed a person to ignore the fifth commandment by giving a donation to the temple. Jesus pointed out that the Pharisees had many such escapes from God's law (verses 10-13). Condemning such practices, He quoted the "commandment of God," passages from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy (Mark 7:10, 11; cf. Exod. 20:12; 21:17; Deut. 5:16; Lev. 20:9).

The issue that precipitated this discussion in Mark 7 had to do with the accusation of the Pharisees and scribes that the disciples ate with "impure hands." "Impure hands" was a specific, technical distinction not found in the Old Testament. The idea of hands becoming "unclean" or "impure" was developed during the intertestamental period. Because English words like "defiled" and "unclean" are used in Mark 7 in conjunction with food, some have assumed that the issue being disputed earlier in the chapter was "clean" and "unclean" meat.<sup>1</sup>

But is this the case?

#### Clean and unclean meat

The Bible differentiates between

## Clean and unclean meat

DAVID MERLING

two kinds of animals: those that were clean and fit for food and those that were unclean and unfit to eat. An early distinction between clean and unclean animals is found in the Flood story (Gen. 8), but we have no way to determine from this passage which animals were clean and which unclean, though obviously Noah knew.

The clearest identification of which animals were clean for food and which were not is found in Leviticus 11. Land animals must "chew the cud" and have a split hoof (Lev. 11:2). Water creatures must have fins and scales (Lev. 11:9). All other animals are considered "unclean."

Mark 7, like the rest of the New Testament, was written in Greek. Because the New Testament writers used a Greek version of the Old Testament (LXX), it is helpful to compare the LXX with New Testament passages to check for hidden issues that may have been obscured in the translation process. In the Old Testament, when "unclean" is associated with animals, the Hebrew word used is *m*. In the LXX, *m* is regularly translated by the Greek word *akatharton* ("unclean"). *Akatharton* is used many times in the New Testament, including Mark 7:25. However, in the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees, neither Jesus nor the Pharisees speak of *akatharton* (unclean). The key word in their discussion is one rarely found in the

Old Testament, *koinoo*, translated in the NASB as "impure" and "defiled."

#### Meaning of "impure"

When *koinoo* is used in the New Testament, the meaning is that something good or holy has become profaned or desecrated. This use is a unique Palestinian Jewish concept and is not found in secular Greek writings. During the intertestamental period, a significant cultural shift occurred among traditional, religious Jews. They became determined to remain separate from all uncleanness, including anything to do with the Gentiles. Jews were instructed by their religious leaders to refrain from purchasing oil, bread, milk, or meat from a Gentile.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the issue in Mark 7 has to do with the "cultically unclean hands" of the disciples (Mark 7:2).<sup>3</sup> There was nothing intrinsically evil about the disciples' hands, but the "tradition of the elders" stated that one's hands had become cultically defiled by the commonness (*koinos*) of their activities. According to the tradition, if the disciples touched polluted food, the resulting defilement would cause them to become unclean and they would become spiritually unacceptable to God.

Jesus denied that such a thing is possible. He explained that spiritual defilement comes from within, not without (Mark 7:20). In saying so, Jesus underscored a significant truth: Even external actions like "fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries" were defiling, not due to their outward action, but because they represent the fruit of the evil within (Mark 7:23). It is the internal rebellion that "defiles" a person's relationship with God. Real evil (i.e., defilement) comes from within, thus producing the outward signs of that rebellion.



### Jesus against external rituals

Thus the issue of Mark 7 is not food. Jesus was primarily arguing against external strictures that ostensibly raised the level of spirituality while undermining the authority of the Holy Scripture. Lambrecht writes that Jesus said the Pharisees' "hypocritical fidelity to the tradition of man induces them to neglect the commandment of God."<sup>4</sup> Jesus' refocusing of the issue clearly undermined the "traditions of the elders" and all externally practiced rituals and, at the same time, raised the status of the Scripture.<sup>5</sup>

This accusation by Jesus against the Pharisees is pertinent because some have suggested that Jesus Himself acted in the same manner in which He accused the Pharisees; that is, some have assumed that Jesus set aside the "commandments of God" by creating His own new tradition.<sup>6</sup> In support of such a stance, they use the parenthetical phrase of Mark 7:19, "Thus He declared all foods clean." Even some Seventh-day Adventists have suggested that Jesus in Mark 7:19 had done away with the clean and unclean distinctions of Leviticus 11.<sup>7</sup> If that is what Jesus did, Jesus was guilty of doing what He accused the Pharisees and scribes of doing: setting aside the commandments of God to follow His own, newly introduced, tradition. Such an interpretation cannot stand theological scrutiny.

Leviticus 11 recognizes two types of "unclean" animals. The first is that which is not fit for food. No prescription is offered to make them "clean" because the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" was not based on cultic distinctions. Eating such foods made the eater "detestable" before God; mainly, it seems, because such creatures were in themselves obviously implausible sources of food (Lev. 11:42, 43).

The second kind of uncleanness

discussed in Leviticus 11 is a temporary one that resulted from inadvertent contact with unclean animals. Those who touched an unclean animal were advised to wash their clothes; they remained unclean "until evening" (Lev. 11:24-28, 31-40).

### Mark 7 and Leviticus 11

The confusion between the "unclean food" of Mark 7 and the "unclean" meats of Leviticus 11 has resulted due to some unfortunate circumstances. First, since the time of the gnostic Marcion, many Christians have tried to impose a major rift between the teachings of the Old Testament God and the New Testament Jesus. It is this often unmentioned and assumed predisposition that influences interpreters to suggest that Jesus introduced a new commandment in Mark 7. These interpreters see a major break between the Old and New Testaments, and Mark 7 is to them one of those milestones. By doing so, however, they inadvertently accuse Jesus of committing the same error that Jesus attached to the Pharisees—teaching a new tradition that undermined God's commandments.

Second, the confusion is a result of some wanting to make Christianity as unlike Judaism as possible, thus ignoring the early and clear roots of Christianity.

Third, some see confusion in Leviticus 11 itself. Some Seventh-day Adventists argue that if we obey Leviticus 11, then we have to adhere to all of Leviticus. While this argument sounds logical, it is flawed. Leviticus is a complex book, with many teachings, some of which are universal principles and some uniquely Israelite. Among the universal principles are the commandments of Leviticus 19: "Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods" (19:4); "you shall not

steal" (19:11); "you shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him" (19:13); "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18). And Leviticus also has teachings pertaining to typical Jewish cultic practices. One needs to distinguish between the two.

### Peter's vision

One cannot discuss the issues of Mark 7 without considering Peter's vision found in Acts 10. Mark 7 and Acts 10 are bound together by the use of the word *koinos* and the shared theme it introduces. In Acts 10 Peter has a vision in which he sees animals of two kinds: those that are "common" and those that are "unclean" (*koinos kai akathartos*, Acts 10:14). According to the then-current Jewish idea, things that have become "common" (*koinos*) have attained that status by their association with things that are "unclean." So what Peter sees in the sheet are unclean animals and clean animals that have become "common" (i.e., defiled) by touching the unclean animals.

The purpose of this vision is to remove from Peter (and the early Christian church) all racial prejudice (see Acts 10:28, 34, 35), but many suppose that this chapter is also the basis for the repudiation of the "unclean" meats of Leviticus 11. After all, does not the text state that God cleansed all meats? Actually, what the text states is, "What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy" (Acts 10:15; 11:9). It is the choice of English words and the uniqueness of early Roman Jewish thought that have so often confused the reader. If we were to read it this way, "What God has cleansed no longer consider *koinos*," it would be immediately clear that the message of Acts 10 is the same as in Mark 7. What had God cleansed? Things that were thought to be defiled by association.<sup>8</sup> While Peter said he had never eaten anything that was

"common" or "unclean," the voice Peter hears only says that the "common" things have been cleansed. What about the "unclean" (*akathartos*) thing? The voice of Acts 10 is silent.

This interpretation fits the story of Acts 10–11 perfectly. Peter is asked to go to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, and Peter knows "how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him." But "God has shown me," says Peter, "that I should not call any man unholy (*koinos*) or unclean (*akathartos*)" (Acts 10:28). According to the "traditions of the elders," Peter would have become *koinos* if he had associated with Cornelius (an "unclean" person, i.e., non-Jewish person). Peter affirms after the vision that God "is not one to show partiality"; everyone who "does what is right is welcome to Him" (Acts 10:34, 35). Regarding people, there are none common or unclean. Such a distinction among people was always and only the "traditions of the elders" extrapolated from the Old Testament by those "elders" but not actually taught in it.

#### Paul on "unclean"

That defilement by association was strongly ingrained among the early Christians is clear from the discussion of it by the apostle Paul. In Romans 14 Paul specifically states that "nothing is unclean (*koinos*) in itself" (Rom. 14:14). The situation in the early church was complex because, although the early church was largely Jewish and rooted in that heritage, Gentiles began to accept Christianity very quickly. These Gentile Christians had grown up in a culture where food was offered to idols for blessing. For the Gentile Christians, the issue of eating food offered to idols was a compelling one. The problem was that "some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their

conscience being weak is defiled" (1 Cor. 8:7). Paul spoke for the Jewish Christians when he wrote, "Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world and that there is no God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4). How should Christians relate to things not yet clear to them? By being sensitive to those with a different opinion but faithful to their own beliefs (Rom. 14:13, 21, 23).

From these passages, no one can conclude that Paul is saying, "I don't care what the Old Testament teaches; do what you want." If that were his intention, he would have been introducing his own new traditions, but that is untenable, as we have already noted. First Corinthians 8 specifically cautions those who think idols are nothing to be careful how that knowledge might affect those who had come from an idol-worshipping society (1 Cor. 8:10). Romans 14 encourages those in the church to be compassionate with their fellow Christians. Paul acknowledged that *koinos*, as a command, was not binding on Christians, but some in the church had not become free from the "tradition of the elders." Paul wrote the Roman Christians not to do anything that would weaken the faith of their fellow Christians, because all must be faithful to their beliefs (Rom. 14:21, 22). In neither Romans 14 nor 1 Corinthians 8 is "unclean" (*akathartos*) mentioned. Only *koinos* ("commonness") is the focus of attention.

#### Summary

Now, back to Mark 7. From a study of that chapter and related issues in Leviticus and the New Testament, we can see that Jesus was radically opposed to anything, including the "traditions of the elders," that undermined the Old Testament. In His discussion with the

Pharisees and scribes in Mark 7, He drew attention away from external obedience to the necessity of a pure heart. Jesus was also not establishing His own traditions. On the contrary, He upheld the Scripture and defended it against the "traditions of the elders." His careful use of *koinos* makes it clear that He was well-aware of the unique use of this word among early Roman Jewish scholars and He was not afraid to debate them on their own terms.

Nothing in the teachings of Jesus or His apostles undermined the authority of the Old Testament or its teachings, including the distinction between clean and unclean flesh foods. ■

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\*Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture passages in this article are from the New American Standard Bible.

<sup>1</sup> For example, Carlston notes that Jesus' statement that "nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him" (Mark 7:15) was "obviously intended to set aside" the dietary laws and "the Law as a whole." Charles E. Carlston, "The Things that Defile (Mark VII. 14) and the Law in Matthew and Mark," *New Testament Studies*, 15, 75.

<sup>2</sup> T. C. Smith, "Acts," *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman, 1970), 67.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Hauck in Gerhard Kittel, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 3:797.

<sup>4</sup> J. Lambrecht, "Jesus and the Law: An Investigation of Mark 7:1-23," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 53 (1977): 49.

<sup>5</sup> Hauck, 797.

<sup>6</sup> Carlston writes "that in the communities where this story circulated Jesus is seen as setting aside not only scribal tradition but the binding force of the Mosaic law itself" (93). Cf. Hauck, 797.

<sup>7</sup> For e.g., John Brunt, "Unclean or Unhealthful? An Adventist Perspective," *Spectrum*, no. 3, 11:17-23.

<sup>8</sup> For a more complete discussion of these issues see Colin House, "Defilement by Association: Some Insights From the Usage of KOINO /KOINO in Acts 10 and 11," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, no. 2, 21:143-153.



**W**hen Jesus sought leaders, He looked beyond externals and considered potential more important than pedigree.

Pastors have the great privilege and responsibility to discover and recruit the very best laity leaders (elders, deacons, trustees) for God's church.

Remember, however, many with the most to offer think of themselves as lacking even basic leadership skills. Therefore, we must look beyond the obvious and find those whose potential for building the kingdom is beyond their own comprehension.

While no potential leader may possess every attribute, as you search to recruit the best leaders, ask whether potential elders possess some of the following characteristics.

**Mind for God.** Many laity mistakenly believe they must be perfect to serve in a leadership role. More important than the impossibility of arriving at perfection is the intent of the person's life. Do they have a desire to know and follow God's will? Do they exhibit an interest in spiritual matters and an inclination to quickly respond to the Holy Spirit's leading?

**Heart for souls.** Even if they fail to see their own strengths, effective leaders are always looking for the potential in others. Watch for those who are eager to see others come into to a saving relationship and those who are eager to give others the opportunity to grow in grace.

**Eye for the future.** Leaders must be forward looking. While a sense of God's leading in the past is essential, too many who fancy themselves leaders are more focused on maintaining the past than building the

## Recruiting laity leaders

JAMES A. CRESS

future. They believe the best days of the church past and their goal is to "take us back." Leaders, however, look to the future, discern God's will for tomorrow, and build toward His goals.

**Arm for cooperation.** Do potential leaders exhibit willingness to cooperate with pastoral leadership along with loyalty to church organization. When church boards make a decision, leaders have the responsibility to support and implement the action regardless of their personal opinion. There is a time for dissent, but once a decision is reached, leaders unite. Fierce independence is devilish.

**Hand for work.** Church leadership is more than an honorary title. Elders have much greater responsibility than guarding the platform during worship services. Future leaders will demonstrate their potential by active involvement in various church projects and functions. Develop specific job descriptions and recruit those whom you can reasonably expect to fulfill the expectations.

**Tongue for the Spirit.** Leaders are disqualified for office if they gossip or even if they mistreat the truth. The biblical admonition to speak the truth in love mandates that the love never reveals all that it knows even if it is truthful. Leaders should control their tongues before they attempt to control anything in the church.

**Attitude to learn.** Teachability is a God-given grace. Beware anyone so impressed with their own opinions that they are incapable of learning from someone else. I would rather

recruit a leader who asks the right questions than one with all the answers.

**Head for business.** Wisdom is in far too short supply. Leaders should exhibit sound decision-making skills in their personal and business life. Avoid those who make rash choices or who rush to judgment.

**Focus for heaven.** What is the ultimate goal of your leaders? While their business sense needs to be firmly rooted in reality, their vision must extend to eternal values and the blessed hope!

**Feet for going.** Leaders need to actively seek opportunities to serve. They should be eager to encourage the believers, strengthen the weak, and seek the lost. One of the most effective elders I ever was privileged to know would constantly ask me, "Pastor, is there someone you need me to visit?"

**Trust of the members.** Regardless of an individual's willingness to serve, if their fellow members do not affirm their leadership they will not be effective. By close observation you will discover who has earned the trust of your membership. Entrust greater responsibilities to those who have earned greater trust.

**Empathy for people.** Idea people are tremendous. Technicians are essential. But people persons are indispensable. Leaders must have followers and they must love those whom God has called them to serve. They must not consider themselves superior to those they seek to lead and they must know the value of servant leadership.

**Openness to change.** Remember, God consistently says, "Behold, I do a new thing." Leaders must do more than maintain the status quo, they must seek new methods and venture boldly toward God's design for finishing His work and hastening Jesus's return. ■

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**A**lthough you never know what your future may bring, preparing for unexpected surprises in life will help you manage them when they do happen. Most people believe they will never need help with everyday activities such as bathing, dressing or eating. The unfortunate reality is that three out of five people over the age of 65 may need some type of long-term care over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>— and long-term care is not just for the elderly; an injury or chronic illness may necessitate long-term care services at any age. In fact, of the 13 million Americans who need long-term care, 40 percent are under the age of 65.<sup>2</sup> Long-term care services can be very expensive and can quickly deplete a lifetime of savings; and most people don't realize that long-term care coverage under their health plans and Medicare is generally very limited.

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1 Project Report for the Health Insurance Association of America, 1990.

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