

# Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

July 1999



*That they may be one*

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PASTORING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES



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## November 1998 issue

With much gratefulness on my part to the donor who gives me *Ministry*, may I express my admiration to your commitment on the publication of *Ministry*—which is a very inspiring tool.

I am 23 years old and have been serving as pastor for just two years, and your articles provide deep encouragement to me.

We, in Central Luzon, are in dire need of "mentoring." Thank you for reviewing this almost forgotten dimension of a scriptural pastoral ministry.

Commendations for R. L. Holmes' "Be Sure to Leave Your Light On!" D. N. Marshall on C. S. Lewis; and Charles Scriven on visionary leadership. However, Loren Seibold's "First, You Must Do No Harm" is particularly inspiring and relevant to inexperienced starters like me.  
—Joveney F. Macabeo, Concepcion, Marikina City, Manila, Philippines.

## January 1999 issue

The article "Seven Steps to Restoring Your Church" was very timely. It strengthened our faith to know that there is hope for our small church.—William H. Stortz, Gillette Chapel, Gillette, New Jersey.

● The first part that I read of the January issue was the two-page book review of the recently published book *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*. I have the book, which was given to me but have not read it. I appreciated the review and the comprehensive description of its content and objectives. However, right away a

question popped into my mind. While the review was frankly very favorable to the book, considering the controversial nature of the subject matter at this time, I was expecting another unfavorable review. In previous books reviewed on the same subject, two views were given. Hopefully it is forthcoming. Balance and fairness would indicate it as wise.—Hearley Roscher, Modesto, California.

● In the the editorial, "What Makes the Difference?" Will Eva calls for a deeper quality of discipleship. Rather than structural design, doctrinal accuracy, or demographic analysis, he says we need "a deeper, more practical and authentic spiritual ministry". Amen!

Charles Arn in "Why add a new Service?" makes a reasoned case for reaching the unchurched through additional worship services. While I can agree with the need for new services and new congregations (the ministry of which I am a part), some of the underlying values or motives I question.

"Church," rather than a group of people living a life of shared discipleship and engaged in a number of activities, continues to be a gathering of people in a building for a provided service. Discipleship as a value or goal, either in my life or the life of new attendees is not primary. Instead, the goal is for our growth to get them to come to our (new) service, and to contribute financially.

New services, Win notes, will activate inactive members, which he defines as people "attending the weekly service." A new service will

get them to come to "church," stand when the program says, sing, kneel, put money in the church accounts and listen to a sermon. But is this discipleship? Corporate worship can be an important part of discipleship, but certainly not the limit.

The final reason presented for the two main growth strategies, new congregations, and new services is to "assure the future of a denomination." Now I am glad to be an Adventist and proud of our heritage and I would like to see Adventism prosper. But if that is why I am living among an unreached people, halfway around the world from my family and familiar life, then I would like to be on the next plane home.

If our motives for evangelism, outreach, or any other activity are self-preservation, private or corporate, or large attendance figures of "active" members, discipleship will be minimal. As Jesus taught, it is not enough to be engaged in spiritual activities, praying, fasting, giving, worship, but to do so from a true heart committed to discipleship and making disciples.—David Dill, Chiangrai, Thailand.

## For the record

In the November 1998 lead article, "Be Sure to Leave Your Light On," we incorrectly identified Abraham Lincoln's birthplace as Springfield, Illinois. A published letter (May 1999) from Karen Shea, seeking to correct the error placed his natal advent in Hodgenville, Indiana, and we agreed! Lincoln was, of course, born near Hodgenville, Kentucky.—Editors. ■

## Free Subscription

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



**W**hy the seventh day (Saturday) above any other as a day of rest and worship? Why attach ongoing,

definitive, importance to that day, instead of any other day? In the light of the arrival of Jesus and the rest He brought, indeed the rest He *is* through faith for the Christian believer, why continue to honor the seventh day? Why persist in celebrating the so-called Old Testament or old covenant day of worship? Wasn't the seventh day a type or prefiguring of the gospel rest which was to come with the arrival of the Messiah? So why not honor all days as "sabbaths," fulfilling and entering into the rest and holiness found by faith in Jesus Christ Himself? What's the significance of this particular day anyway?

### Background

Recently evangelical Christians especially have been asking these kinds of questions with renewed interest. A number of ministers from an array of Christian communities, who receive this magazine have written *Ministry* asking these or similar questions. The discovery of the gospel among leaders of the Worldwide Church of God has precipitated a momentous shift in thinking on this question and related ones among many in that communion.

In recent times some Seventh-day Adventists, laboring in the hot, dry field of religious tradition, stumbled upon the wonder of the gospel and in the joy of their discovery went out to sell all that they had in order to possess the treasure entire (Matt. 13:44). They ask with unprecedented pointedness the question of this article and its sequel (scheduled for

# Why the seventh day?

WILLMORE D. EVA

September 1999). A focused buildup of literature and discussion on the subject is having an impact on a limited number of Adventists and ex-Adventists. This is especially true among some of those moving out of Adventism into independent congregations. Some of these appear now to be well on the way to taking their stand against the seventh day as a particular day of worship. Adventists in general, who are aware of these questions, are looking on with their own assortment of feelings and opinions.

Let me state the central question of this study again, in a slightly different way: Why is the seventh day per se still an integral part of post-messianic or Christian faith and worship? The companion question, which is more fundamental will also be addressed: What impact did the arrival of Jesus in the first century actually have upon "the law" and thus upon the seventh day? In tackling these questions we will take a biblical and theological approach, dealing first with certain relevant Old Testament evidence. The most telling part of our assessment will come in the later, second, article as we frontally appraise the impact of Jesus' first-century life, death and resurrection on law and thus on the seventh day, and as we briefly review the thrust of some of the New Testament passages that illuminate the position taken on the issue of the seventh day by first-century Christian communities.

Although the approach or perspective of this study (particularly the second article) is not traditional Seventh-day Adventist fare, its assumptions and conclusions are entirely consistent with Adventist belief and thinking. The traditional Adventist approach to such issues as "the perpetuity of the law" simply does not seem, by itself to answer the legitimate, seminal questions posed by the contemporary antisabbatarian initiative. Therefore the attempt here is to approach the question of the seventh-day Sabbath not only from the perspective of its setting in the permanence of the Decalogue but to look at it in the light of Jesus Christ and the impact of His first advent on law and Sabbath. Thus the article aims at projecting the authentic Christian soul of the seventh day, its Christ-filled meaning and proud placement in a thoroughly scriptural and new covenant setting. In so doing, we must go on to reassess the consistency of the seventh day's legitimate biblical connection to the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments, even as Paul views the decalogue's new covenant role and permanence in strong law-Christ passages such as Romans 3 and 7 and Galatians 3 and 4.

So in this first article we will turn to some relevant Old Testament material.

The objective of this section of study is to expose the cosmic, pre-sin, pre-Hebrew, nonsectarian, non-ceremonial, moral and permanent nature of the seventh day as it is presented in certain passages in Genesis and Exodus. Space allows limited discussion of only three Old Testament passages:

### Genesis 2:1-3

This passage of Scripture gives an historical account of the origin and thus the reality of the seventh day as a divinely specified piece of holy time.

It is suggestive of a number of realities relevant to our discussion, which assumes the historicity of the Genesis account:

- The author of Genesis matter-of-factly gives the seventh day an intimate and inextricable connection with the seminal, historical event of the Creation.

- Thus the seventh day is tied to this objective and unchangeable historical occurrence, which is crucial to the nature and identity of both the seventh day and the whole of humankind.

- When the seventh day is connected to or included with God's primeval creative activity, it is thereby clearly assigned a certain cosmic meaning, transcending temporal, local or cultic (Hebrew) limitations. The seventh day predates the giving of all law—that is, the Mosaic-ceremonial law and most significantly the decalogue itself.

- In Genesis 2, not only is the seventh day associated with the pre-Hebrew, pre-“old covenant” cosmic event of the Creation, but it is sanctified, blessed and made holy by God at the same time it is inaugurated (verse 3). It is indeed the divine blessing of the day that calls Sabbath into existence. At its inception and therefore by its essential nature, it has little to do with our usual understanding of traditional covenantal issues such as, let alone mere “old covenant” structures. The fact that the sanctification of the seventh day long precedes any call to keep the Sabbath holy at Sinai is also undeniably crucial to the nature and meaning of the seventh day. It is also therefore critical to the permanence and significance of the seventh day among the family of God in every era of history—past, present, or future. Because the seventh day predates the giving of any law, it cannot be simply tied to the old covenant so that at the

formation of a new covenant it becomes obsolete. Indeed, given the origin and nature of the seventh day as outlined so far, the strongest case could be made for the transcendence of the Sabbath over or within all covenantal structures and contents.

- Perhaps the most significant reality implied by the Genesis 2 account of the origin of the seventh day is the fact that its creation or inauguration precedes not only the Hebrew nation and the formal advent of law, but it also precedes the arrival of sin. The seventh day is distinctly prelapsarian. Because of this it cannot be seen merely as something dependent for its viability upon old covenant structures. This fact hardly needs enlargement or explanation. Its negative impact on the theory that the seventh day is passé because it was included as a part of the old covenant, whose essential intent was, among other things, to deal with the existence of sin in the life of Israel, is rather obvious. This prelapsarian existence of the seventh day must be allowed at least to call into question the assumptions of a theology that dismisses the seventh day because of its “old covenant” connections.

It is disconcerting to read or listen to attempts to explain away such evidence and assign the seventh day a reduced or non-existent significance in the present new covenant era. So far the only palpable explanations I have encountered involve presuppositions which at their heart question the validity of the Genesis and Exodus accounts themselves. This is unbecoming in those who do it. It would be understandable if the essential orientation of my friends (and they are my friends) was “liberal-higher critical,” but it is not. Thus such reasoning, when articulated, comes across as uncomfortable, forced, inconsistent and inadequate. We

simply must try to put all of the biblical evidence together without placing ourselves in a position where we feel pressured to resort to such casuistic strategies.

#### Exodus 16:1-30

This is the account of God's gift of manna to Israel during their wilderness journey. This desert drama is evidence of the fact that the Sabbath concept existed among the Israelites before the giving of the Decalogue itself at Sinai (Exodus 20). In connection with this a number of significant issues stand out.

- The initial giving of the manna, and the Sabbath instructions that came with the manna, preceded the giving of the Ten Commandments and particularly the fourth commandment at Sinai.

- Regardless of whether or not the fledgling Israelite nation actually kept the Sabbath before Sinai, the wording of God's directions to Moses regarding the distinctive way of gathering manna as the Sabbath approached, presupposes a certain knowledge of the nature of the seventh day before this event. It is entirely possible, even likely, that Israel while in Egypt had all but forgotten the Sabbath and that before the formal command was given at Sinai, God gave the manna experience to prepare the nation for His Sinai covenantal expression.

- If the significance of this Exodus 16 Sabbath data is argued against in an attempt to discount the pre-Sinai consciousness of seventh day sacredness, we might also question the existence of a pre-Sinai moral heritage in Israelite life involving the principles behind the other nine commandments. It is interesting that almost no such attempt is made by those arguing against the seventh day existing in Israelite tradition or worship.

It is begging the point to say that there is little or no evidence of Sabbath keeping or Sabbath consciousness before Sinai. It is true that there is not a high volume of biblical material, but no fair-minded person can ignore the evidence that is there, along with its clear implications. Historically, Genesis 2 and Exodus 16 precede Exodus 20. Considering the nature of those passages, it is seriously questionable to virtually ignore or dismiss their objective historical content.

Other textual evidence that may indicate some pre-Sinai seventh day consciousness in Israel is found in Exodus 5:1-9 and 15:25, 26. The Exodus 5 passage alludes to and presupposes some kind of cultic or ceremonial activity that was to be celebrated in the desert. In chapter 15 there is mention of God's "decrees" and "commands" that were to be obeyed. Both of these allusions at least imply the pre-Sinai existence of some cultic material or custom.

#### **Exodus 19 and 20 (particularly 20: 8-11)**

This passage, of course, contains an account of the giving of the *decatalogue* at Sinai. It also contains an accurate verbal rendering of the fourth commandment. The way the data appears in Exodus reveals a number of closely related relevant essentials:

- The decatalogue definitely stands distinct from any other civil or ceremonial information or instruction given by God through Moses.

This is true because the decatalogue was given in an extraordinary manner when compared with the way the rest of the law was given (the ceremonial and civil requirements for Israelite worship and governance were, for instance, apparently simply written by Moses). The Ten Commandments are

clearly meant to stand foremost when compared to the other Mosaic revelations. (It is my distinct conviction that when Paul used the word "law" [see, for example, Romans 7 and Galatians 3-5] or the term "written code" he almost always seems to include in his mind all law, moral and ceremonial. (A careful review of the context of a given passage usually reveals quite clearly which aspect of law Paul is referring to.) Although obedience to law of any kind cannot in any way cause human salvation, no one could miss the primacy and exceptional status resident in both the way the Ten Commandments were given and their extraordinary universal substance or content.

Thus the fact that the decatalogue was delivered by God with awesome displays of lightening, thunder, smoke, earthquake and fire, preceded by divine warnings and the instructions for special preparations, Moses' ascension up Mount Sinai and God etching this moral essence of His will with His finger on tables of stone, such activity definitely distinguishes it from the ceremonial or civil aspects of the divine communications given quietly through Moses under more tranquil circumstances.

- In all of this it is crucial to frontally note that the seventh-day command is placed in the company of the other nine moral principles, at the heart of the decatalogue. Placing the fourth commandment in this setting clearly assigns it a certain moral nature and station or prestige transcendent over mere cultic, temporary, ceremonial or local significance. It is highly questionable to make some kind of exception of the fourth commandment, assigning it a passing, non moral, old covenant "Jewish" nature when it has been assigned much more significance by its divine placement among the other

nine commandments, whose moral and logically permanent nature no Christian seriously disputes.

- All of this is strongly confirmed by the actual wording of the commandment: The fourth commandment begins (verse 8) with the word "Remember." Among other things this again suggests or refers back to the existence of the Sabbath in some form before Sinai.

The wording of verse 8 is also reminiscent of the wording of Genesis 2. It is obvious that the six days for labor and the Sabbath seventh is reflective of God's activity during the Creation week (verse 9). This again reveals the inextricable connection of the seventh day to the universally significant cosmic creation event. The seventh day is part and parcel of first things. The transpiring of the Divine ordering of events places the seventh day within the inner circle of original being and consciousness. It is clearly part of what sets the essential trajectory for the entire creation. This, of course, is sealed by verse 11 which overtly ties the sacredness of the seventh day to God's creative work as He formed the earth, and again obviously alludes to the account found in Genesis 2:1, 2.

- Thus the very wording of this commandment gives a matter-of-fact, definitive reason for placing the seventh day commandment where it is. Again, the reason for its placement is decisively cosmic: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth . . ." (verse 11). In this crucial setting, the seventh day is not assigned any national, cultural, or ceremonial connection, but is designated a distinctly seminal and cosmic origin and meaning. Again, no particular connection with the Hebrew nation and its cultus is included in the wording of the commandment. Of course Moses urged its observance by the Hebrew

people, but this is only because its course was set by God at Creation and therefore again, like the other nine commands, it has global scope and significance.

All of this evidence does not, of course, deny that the seventh day was given significant cultic or ceremonial status in Hebrew life and worship. The point here, however, is to note the fact that the Sabbath is assigned much more than this limited standing in Israel's life as well as in the Bible as a whole.

### Conclusion

Thus the Genesis and Exodus accounts of the origin of the seventh day establish the universal nature of the seventh day—universal both in

time and location. These accounts confirm the seventh day to be not merely cultic, ceremonial, temporary or “Jewish.” To assign it any other nature or to limit these universal dimensions puts us under pressure to reject the historicity of the biblical account or to adjust the only reliable chronicle we have of our origins and of the origin and integral meaning of Sabbath.

At this point the real questions of this study begin to present themselves with renewed gravity. Some will say that while all of the above may be true, didn't Jesus introduce a historical and theological paradigm shift which transformed or reinterpreted the significance and nature of the law and the Sabbath,

particularly the seventh day, thus inaugurating the “new covenant”? What about Jesus, and His messianic effect on the law and the seventh day, or the Sabbath principle as a whole? This is the issue we will take up in the September edition of *Ministry*, as we move to the second part of this study, and assess the evidence of the New Testament. ■

*Willmore Eva, D.Min., is the editor of Ministry and an associate in the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

This is part 1 of a two-part series. Part 2 will appear in the September issue of *Ministry*.

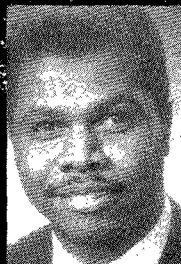
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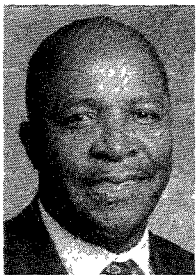
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# MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY: CHALLENGES AND BLESSINGS

**W**hy are we doing this?" The question startled me. I had just begun my third lecture in a seminary course on contemporary trends and was met by this challenge: Why should we spend so much time on multicultural ministry?



*Walter Douglas, Ph.D., is a professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and pastor of the All Nations Church at Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

Pastoring the All Nations Church is a wonderful challenge. All Nations is a congregation intentionally established as a multiethnic, multicultural, and multiracial congregation in Berrien Springs, Michigan. All Nations was a church born out of the biblical and theological conviction that God has made of one blood all nations of men and women (Acts 17:26), drawing them "from every tribe, language, nation, and race" (Rev. 5:9, 10, TEV).

But the question posed by my student challenged my assumptions. My twelve-year experience at All Nations, nurturing and growing a multicultural congregation, instantly came under review. Why am I teaching my students to develop skills, attitudes, and a disposition to prepare for multicultural ministry? Is it necessary?

I remembered the beginnings of All Nations—the struggles, the pain, conflicts, tears, and fears that we

experienced; the tension and suspicion, the misunderstandings, and the heartaches that occurred when people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds wanted to intentionally create a multicultural church.

As I reflected on these, I asked myself: Am I imposing an unnecessary burden on my students by challenging them to think of creating a multicultural ministry when they leave the seminary? Furthermore, by insisting as I do, that this is a trend in ministry for the twenty-first century, am I expecting too much in pushing them to consciously create a new model for ministry? Is it not easier and more comfortable to continue establishing congregations "the old fashioned way?"

These questions challenge the core value of my ministry as a pastor of a multicultural congregation and as a teacher in the Seminary. Some of the challenges in congregations around the

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WALTER DOUGLAS



world have their origin in cultural conflicts. The church in the U.S. is no exception. As cities, neighborhoods, and congregations change by the arrival of immigrants from Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the church, and more particularly the local pastor, will have to come up with creative, imaginative, and practical ways to develop and nurture cultural harmony within the congregation.

This is what drives me to spend so much time discussing this trend with my seminary students. They need to know where this movement is going and how it will affect their ministry. They need to take seriously the reality that in almost any town, city, or neighborhood they serve, they will have to minister to people coming from varied cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds. These Adventist Christians are quite often openly passionate about their faith and their worship. They bring a style of worship and belief, often far more traditional than the indigenous members, a kind of spontaneity, commitment, and zeal for the missionary outreach of the local church that may seem threatening, if not unacceptable, to the established congregation.

Unfortunately, if the local pastor and congregation do not have the skill to accommodate these newcomers, they will eventually leave to form their own congregation.<sup>1</sup> These new immigrants often feel that they are under suspicion and that there seems to be a reluctance on the part of the indigenous leaders to share opportunities and power with them.

### A millennial shift

The presence of these different cultural and racial groups in our local congregations is a major, massive, mind-boggling, millennial shift for American Adventism both at corporate and congregational levels. We need to be aware that this shift is not going to change direction anytime soon.<sup>2</sup> Immigrants will continue to arrive, and our congregation will be challenged to respond in at least one of two ways: either resist this trend and engage in Chris-

tian cultural conflict or extend the hand of fellowship and embrace our brothers and sisters from other cultures.

Both pastors and church members need to know that the second option is the only viable one. Why? Because churches across North America and in many parts of the world will be dealing with this kind of situation and if the church wants to continue to be the church of all nations, tribes, tongues,

Without

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reason for existence.*

and peoples, we have to adapt. If we want to avoid cultural conflict and achieve cultural harmony, pastor and congregation alike must openly discuss some issues and come to essential agreement. Without openness to other cultures, our congregations will not even approximate God's ideal for His church. Indeed, we will be spending a disproportionate amount of time dealing with cultural conflicts and racial tensions, and this could easily derail the church from fulfilling its mission and its reason for existence. Cultural con-

licts in any congregation cannot build up the body of Christ and produce the fruits of the Spirit.

### The New Testament example

Cross-cultural or multiracial ministry is nothing new. We see it in Scripture and Jesus practiced it through His ministry.<sup>3</sup> We have the story of Pentecost. "It is no accident," writes Cheryl J. Sanders, "that the Spirit chose an international, multicultural gathering of believers in Jerusalem for the Pentecost outpouring, whose testimony was that in our languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds and power. Pentecost is God's remedy for disunity. Many languages, many colors, many cultures, but one testimony of one God."<sup>4</sup>

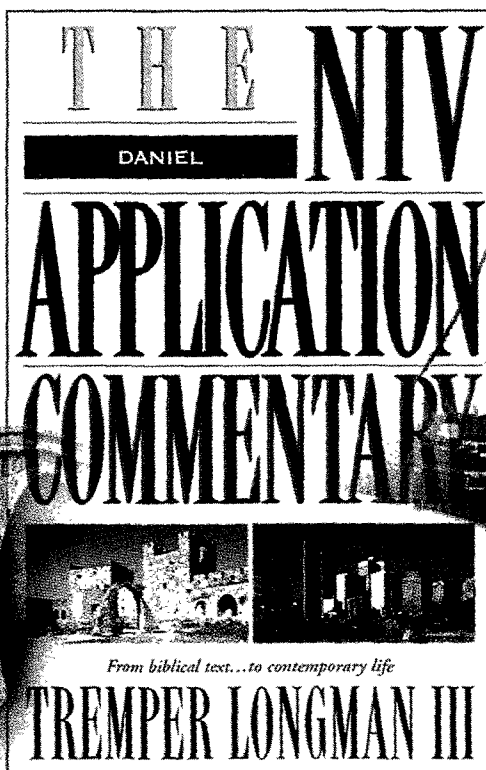
While it is true that in our fallenness we continue to erect walls of race and culture in the congregation, it must be stated that culturally distinct congregations do not and cannot reflect the kingdom Christ so clearly portrayed in His life and teaching. Cultural difference is no legitimate basis for either inclusion or exclusion from the body of believers. The gospel teaches that in Christ we can find the power to be saved from sin, healed from disease, delivered from things that bind us, and set free to know and to do God's will as we commit to serving human need.<sup>5</sup>

Planting and growing a multicultural congregation is a daunting but truly desirable challenge. It requires us to create rituals and symbols that incorporate both the indigenous and the foreign-born experience. The pastor, through preaching, prayer, workshops, and seminars, has to challenge the church to encourage and allow different cultural representatives to move into positions where they will have opportunities to participate in decision making. They have to share equally the responsibilities for mission and ministry. This could be accomplished through the creation of structures that will guarantee their involvement in leadership and decision making. At All Nations, during our early years, we pushed our congregation to see Advent-

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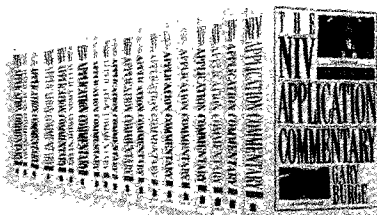
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ism through something besides American eyes. We talked about creating new ways of doing the business of the church so that its life was continually being renewed as we experienced together new life and new ways of worshipping the Lord. As difficult as it is to nurture and maintain a multicultural congregation, doing so holds the greatest promise for vital, vibrant congregational life and witness.

### **Not a melting pot**

One of the fundamental lessons we need to learn is that a multicultural church is not a melting pot in which all the unique features, styles, and behaviors of different cultural groups disappear so that we could achieve unity in diversity in Christ. This is without doubt one of the most difficult issues to deal with in building a multicultural church. The tendency is for the dominant indigenous group in the church to feel that the minority cultures should give up their cultural identity once they become part of the congregation. But that is not multicultural ministry. Multiculturalism is a dynamic process that allows many cultures to maintain, embrace, and respect their cultural identities or uniqueness while engaging in constructive communication that builds trust and fosters Christian love.

This could be reflected in the way we, among other things, assign responsibilities, provide opportunities for ministry, plan programs, and conduct board and elders' meetings. No one group in this dynamic process should be allowed more privileges and opportunities than any other group. Maintaining the balance is important. The congregation needs to genuinely support and respect the different cultural group's needs and desires for sharing and experiencing within the comfort of their own boundaries. The pastor or leader of a multicultural congregation needs to keep his or her antennae tuned to the concerns of the various cultural groups. The gift of discernment is essential.

At All Nations, we work a great deal through committees and teams. The

committees report to the board of elders, and the elders recommend to the church in business sessions for final decision or action.

On one occasion, the worship committee decided it was time to make some changes in the worship service. The committee had representatives from all the cultures in the church. But when it presented its report to the church there was stiff opposition, largely from new immigrants. The majority of the congregation was excited with the new liturgy and was determined to implement it. But I realized that it was creating hard feelings and had the potential of being divisive. So I ended the meeting. The following Sabbath I brought the different cultural groups together for a long discussion on worship. After discussion and some minor adjustments, the entire church accepted the new liturgy.

This experience taught us, once again, that even when we think we have arrived at being a true multicultural church we are still vulnerable to the possibility of cultural conflict and ethnocentrism. We learned, unlearned, and relearned that multiculturalism is not simply bringing people of different cultures and ethnicities together in one place and occupying the same space. We discovered that the different groups—those who were against the new structure and those who defended it, all had deeply held values and beliefs about worship. We also were reminded that simply putting people of diverse cultural orientations in one congregation and expecting them to get along with each other, especially on an issue as sensitive as worship, without facilitating constructive discussion, is wishful thinking. In other words, multiculturalism is a dynamic process that takes more than good will, instinct, open-mindedness, acceptance, and shared doctrinal belief.

Given our insecurity, our instinct to survive, and our win-win mentality, we desperately need to focus on God's reconciling grace and power and the all-inclusiveness of His love to maintain a growing, witnessing community. The

challenge is to move past a culture of distrust, a climate of insecurity and alienation, to see in the dynamic of human interaction a new vision of human relatedness and community-building, inspired and sanctified by the Spirit of God.<sup>6</sup>

### **Some fundamentals**

To build a truly multicultural church requires the acceptance of some fundamental principles. We can mention only a few:

1. Develop, encourage, and embrace a climate of trust.
2. Be intentional.
3. Seek the authority of Scripture for the direction and counsel regarding the nature of a multicultural congregation (Acts 17:24-26; Acts 10:34, 35; Mark 7:24-29; John 4:1-42; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 5:7-10).
4. Respect, embrace, and celebrate differences.
5. Have a deep, consistent commitment to work through the challenges and problems of different cultural groups within the congregation, without making judgments about any culture and without expecting any minority culture to be subject to any majority culture.
6. Provide equal opportunity for each cultural group to be represented and to participate fully in the life and ministry of the church.
7. Have a willingness to be vulnerable.
8. Have a commitment to learn, unlearn, and relearn as more and more cultural and racial issues surface in the congregation.
9. Depend totally on the Holy Spirit to lead in the transformation of lives and structures that will enable the congregation to mature, recognize, and affirm the presence of God.
10. Evaluate the process from time to time.

### **Barriers to overcome**

A multicultural church must also overcome barriers, such as:

1. Avoidance. It appears easier and less painful to avoid, rather than deal

with challenges and problems in the congregation.

2. Ethnocentrism. Multicultural churches constantly have to deal with the feeling that the worldview of one culture is superior to the others.

3. Fear of sharing power and responsibility creates enormous problems for the multicultural church.

4. The instinct to survive, to win, to be at the top is an attitude that makes it difficult to trust and affirm all members of the congregation.

5. Being judgmental on the basis of color, culture, and ability creates an environment of accusation and suspicion.

6. Lack of compassion.

7. Lack of discernment.

8. The inability to listen to other accents with respect and appreciation.

9. The desire or need to categorize on the basis of culture, color, or ability.

10. Resistance to change personally and as a group.

The purpose of our effort to overcome these barriers is the acknowl-

edgment that God made us all and loves us all as bearers of His image.

### The challenge

To be sure, planting and pastoring a multicultural congregation is a daunting challenge. It can only be done if we have the will to do it, inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit. It is a risky undertaking, but it is also a biblical and theological imperative.

Multiculturalism is not a buzz word. Preparing for a multicultural ministry is not easy. The multicultural impetus should not be understood as merely an effort to bring diverse cultures together or simply to include minorities and women in the life and ministry of the church. But rather it is what the church should strive to accomplish on this earth because this is what the church will be in the new heaven and the new earth.

If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and if we are indeed saved, then it should be possible for us

to celebrate differences in skin color and culture as evidence of the divine artistry of creation and redemption and not as grounds for continued separation, exploitation, and prejudice. ■

<sup>1</sup> Such congregations are found across North America. Ghanaian, Filipino, Korean, Indian, Haitian, West Indian, and Chinese churches exist in the same locations as Caucasian and African-American churches. Many of them feel that separate congregations preserve their cultural identity and they are no longer made to feel that they are "foreigners."

<sup>2</sup> Census Bureau projections suggest that the proportion of all children who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups will reach 50 percent by 2030, a doubling from 26 percent in 1980. See *The New York Times*, June 6, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> See John 4:1-42. Jesus leaves us a classic example of how we must break down cultural barriers without destroying a person's identity or culture. See also His dealing with the Syrophenician woman who was a Gentile in Mark 7:24-29. We see another example in Peter's dealing with Cornelius and his household in Acts 10:1-48. Acts 2 relates the story of Pentecost and the multicultural nature of the audience who received the gospel. We cannot underestimate the impact of this message on the early church as an emergent multicultural community.

<sup>4</sup> Cheryl J. Sanders, *Ministry at the Margins: The Prophetic Mission of Women, Youth and the Poor* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 98.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>6</sup> Fumitaka Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith: Building Community in a Multicultural Society* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 4.

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# MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY:

## *Differences and similarities*

**S**ince childhood I have been fascinated by different cultures, languages, and countries. Having grown up in New Zealand of a Dutch father and a Kiwi mother of Lebanese descent, I'm no purebred myself!



*Phillip Leenhouders  
is a Seventh-day  
Adventist pastor in  
London, England.*

Geography was one of my favorite subjects, and I always wanted to travel, which I did, having lived for a year or more in five different countries: New Zealand, Australia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. I have also visited other countries, such as Papua New Guinea and Switzerland. Thus, it's not surprising that I find myself facing the challenge of pastoring a multicultural church in the heart of cosmopolitan London.

### **A theological base for multicultural ministry**

Whatever its challenges, multicultural ministry has its precedents. Jesus, for example, did not limit Himself to a particular ethnic or language group. His ministry embraced all cultures and peoples. "Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon" (Mark 3:7, 8, NIV). During His ministry, He reached out to Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, and Romans.

The Great Commission, in Matthew 28:19, commands that we make disciples of "all nations." Christ's apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit to minister to all peoples (Acts 1:8). At the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2), Jews and Gentiles from various places gathered to hear the gospel. Paul was sent to the Gentiles, and yet he preached in the synagogues to both Jews and Gentiles. "At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed" (Acts 14:1).

Paul's ministry in Athens reaffirms its multicultural nature. "So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there" (Acts 17:17). So, Jesus illustrated multicultural ministry, and it was further endorsed by the apostles' work and Paul's extensive missionary endeavors.

Along with this, the "eternal gospel" is destined to be preached to "every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6, NASB).

## A philosophical base for multicultural ministry

The world itself is rapidly becoming a melting pot, a cosmopolitan, multidimensioned society. This trend is noticeable in large cities, particularly in "inner city" areas. In some of these environments, it may not be feasible, or even desirable, to conduct church any longer only for "our kind of people." Ethnically speaking, the church should, as far as is possible, reflect the makeup of society. Therefore, in a multicultural setting, nationalities and cultures will blend in the church as in society. It has been said: "God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose."<sup>1</sup> "We are to demonstrate to the world that men of every nationality are one in Christ Jesus. Then let us remove every barrier and come into unity in the service of the master."<sup>2</sup>

## Principles for pastoring in a multicultural setting

In a multicultural setting certain principles should serve as guidelines. The most crucial one, perhaps, is to be able to see things from a different cultural perspective from your own. "Transcending one's culture of origin does not mean turning one's back on it. We live in a world that is irreversibly plural where culture is concerned."<sup>3</sup> At our church we celebrate the diversity of cultures. We try to include and build friendships between the various groups. We try to include all peoples in our worship services and in our church-officer positions.

"Communication between people in different cultures does not take place in a vacuum, but always occurs within the context of social relationships."<sup>4</sup> It is important to build friendships in a multicultural setting. People coming to a new country and a new church feel awkward anyway; thus we must especially extend a friendly hand and show unconditional love. "The call for recognition of the equal value of different cultures is the expression of a basic and profound universal need for unconditional acceptance. A feeling of

such acceptance including affirmation of one's ethnic particularity as well as one's universally shared potential is an essential part of a strong sense of identity."<sup>5</sup> People want to maintain their identity and still be accepted. It's like British people in Australia or the Irish in America or West Indians in the United Kingdom. Each group becomes an integral part of society and yet manages to maintain much of its ancestral identity. So, people in the

*It's like British people in Australia or the Irish in America or West Indians in the United Kingdom. Each group becomes an integral part of society and yet manages to maintain much of its ancestral identity. So, people in the church can still be who they are—nationally and culturally—and yet be part of the larger church community.*

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church can still be who they are—nationally and culturally—and yet be part of the larger church community.

Within a multicultural setting there is always a need for interpersonal accommodation. At the same time a fair amount of assimilation must also take place. As cultures establish themselves in a given setting, second- and third-generation children begin to feel more closely linked to their birthplace than to the nation of their parents' or grandparents' origin. It is important to

be able to embrace people at whatever point they are in this transition.

"We cannot ignore our racial and ethnic difference, nor should we view everyone in the same way. The wonderful heritages that all cultures bring to the membership and work force are added values that equip and enhance the church."<sup>6</sup> A culturally diverse church has the ability to embrace a wider spectrum of society and use those people to effectively evangelize among their own people groups.

## Challenges of multicultural ministry

In a setting of many cultures, the possibility of misunderstanding is always present. What is acceptable in one culture may be offensive in another. Racism, where one culture feels it is superior or better than another, is always a lurking, potential negative factor, even in the church. When felt in the church it can be even more destructive, because people do not expect to experience it there.

"Living today in a world which has become a global village we come in contact with people representing a variety of different cultures. To communicate the Gospel in cross-cultural settings it is necessary to develop a bicultural perspective. The capacity to understand and accept the cultural ways of other groups of people, while at the same time recognizing the validity of one's own cultural heritage, may be called a bicultural perspective."<sup>7</sup>

If we can accept cultural differences that we don't understand or even agree with, then we will be able to coexist in harmony. Our church has about forty nationalities. I must be very careful not to appear to favor one group. When selecting church officers or board members, we try, as much as possible, to reflect the ethnic makeup of the church.

Around two hundred people attend the Central London Church. The biggest groupings are Whites and Blacks. There are more or less equal numbers of these two races. The Whites are mainly British, Europeans, Aussies, and Kiwis. The Blacks, largely from the

West Indies and Africa, are about equal in number. There are 30 Filipinos and a growing number of Romanians and French-speaking people. Yet in this diversity we have been able to fellowship in unity. Partly because there is such a variety of nationalities, it is possible for most anyone to feel at home here.

Though operating from a British base and having adopted a contemporary approach to our worship, we endeavor to be all-inclusive and sensitive to every culture present. We hope to encourage a person's individual identity and discourage any form of racial superiority. We are all on an equal footing and treated similarly regardless of race or language. "To challenge race and racism, educators must move away from an infatuation with fixed racial identities and toward a thoughtful reconsideration of racism as a 'total social phenomenon' that obscures the ideological foundations of identity."<sup>8</sup> In God's eyes we are all unique individuals with special gifts and abilities, while we are at the same time one in Him.

We need to go out of our way to try to understand one another and see things from a different angle. Accepting that we are all a product of our family background and the society in which we grew up, we can accommodate differences in cultural behavior. For almost half the people in our church, English is a second language. We must speak slowly and clearly, using simple language. Language-designated classes for the study of the Sabbath School lesson are also helpful.

Another challenge is to accept customs and practices that seem strange. We need to exercise tolerance and sensitivity. No challenge is too big when there is a willingness to learn and adapt.

### Dealing with the challenges

In multicultural churches we need to ask, "If a local church is situated in a multiracial community, does it pattern its evangelistic outreach, bearing in mind the various ethnic groups that comprise the local community?" And, "If a local congregation is multiracial, in what ways can and should its wor-

ship reflect a multicultural influence?"<sup>9</sup>

No doubt the answer to the first question will depend upon how willing ethnic members of your church are in reaching out to those of their own community. This can make a big difference in successful soul winning. They feel a sense of worth in doing this, and the church is benefited by these skills.

Further, when it comes to the matter of worship, there is the potential for a variety of styles and cultural expressions. We use all kinds of people in our worship services. These services include everything from public prayer to singing in different languages. Having such a variety of cultures adds flavor to the worship service. Many of our people enjoy a worship service full of diversity in culture and worship style.

Though pastoring in a multicultural setting isn't for everyone, it does give one the opportunity to experience firsthand all kinds of approaches to evangelism and worship activity. It also provides a better appreciation of other people's lifestyles and worldview. It inspires a bigger picture of God's family; as a rich blend of peoples, colors, and customs demonstrates to the world how the gospel can unite many peoples into one people.

"The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church contains the three el-

ements of proclaiming, nurturing, and serving; all essentials of a relational church. Undergirding these three elements is love, a love of the Triune God and our brothers and sisters in Christ—regardless of their ethnicity."<sup>10</sup> As God's love motivates us, we are enabled to meet and deal with the challenges of a multicultural ministry. ■

*Unless otherwise noted, Scripture texts are from the New International Version.*

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1948), 9:180, 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>3</sup> David Theo Goldberg, *Multiculturalism* (Oxford, U. K.: Basil Blackwell, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1985), 227.

<sup>5</sup> Steven C. Rockefeller, "Comments" in *Multiculturalism and the "Politics of Recognition"* 97.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Reaves, "What Unity Means to Me." *Adventist Review* (4 Dec. 1996), 18.

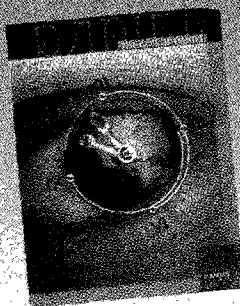
<sup>7</sup> Lyman E. Reed, *Preparing Missionaries for Intercultural Communication* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1985), 143.

<sup>8</sup> Maria P. P. Root, *The Multiracial Experience* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1996), 353.

<sup>9</sup> Roy Joslin, *Urban Harvest* (Welwyn, Herts, England: Evangelical Press, 1982), 256.

<sup>10</sup> Reaves, 18.

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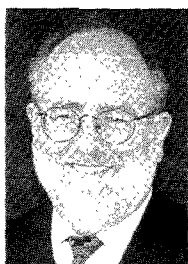
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# ANAHEIM

## *One Congregation's Multicultural Experience*

**T**he decision to combine our English and Spanish speaking congregations was unexpected. At a well-attended business meeting, we were considering the future of our church.



*Ernie Furness, D. Min., is the Ministerial Secretary of the Southeastern California Conference. Until recently, he was the senior pastor of the Anaheim church.*

The issue centered on whether or not we should sell our church property and relocate with the possibility of combining with several other churches to form one large congregation that would offer a variety of effective ministries. Another possibility was to stay in place, continuing as we were in one congregation with two separate worship services. In the midst of the discussion, a rather unexpected motion suggested that we join our English and Spanish-speaking congregations into one worshipping group. The motion passed with a two-thirds majority. Beginning in June, we would worship as one congregation. But let me tell the story from the beginning.

For ten years, Larry Downing and I served the Anaheim, California, church as co-pastors. The church was struggling, as many urban congregations do. Our efforts were directed toward building membership and attendance.

### **Spanish and English**

When a new member suggested we begin a Sabbath School class taught in

Spanish, we considered this an opportunity for growth. This class was designed to appeal to several groups. There were parents who wanted an English Sabbath School for their children but preferred their lessons taught in Spanish. This we could do. Some, for various reasons, did not fit in with any of the nearby Spanish speaking churches and were looking for a more comfortable place to worship. We encouraged the class.

Thus Anaheim came to offer two separate adult Sabbath School programs, one in Spanish, the other in English. At the same time we provided children's Sabbath School divisions in English. This arrangement benefited the entire congregation.

The presence of the Spanish group brought an excitement and intensity to congregational life. Whenever the church was open, they were there. They came late, as was their custom, but they also stayed late. Their commitment to church life and their enthusiasm for evangelism was encouraging. They gave new life to Anaheim. In our excitement, however, we overlooked some of the

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ERNIE FURNESS



early indicators of future problems.

The next request was to expand the Spanish language adult Sabbath School class to a full-length church program. Eventually, we added Spanish language worship services, prayer meetings, and Adventist youth meetings. Since neither Larry nor I spoke Spanish, speaking responsibilities were handled by lay leaders, guest speakers, and the occasional presentation by one of us. Our presentations were translated into Spanish. As the Spanish congregation grew, we arranged for various retired or unassigned pastors to serve as Spanish coordinators. In essence, the coordinator became the pastor for the Spanish members of the Anaheim congregation.

At one point we encouraged establishing an adult Spanish Sabbath School class that would use the *Easy Reading Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. This class was intended for those who were interested in improving English language skills. This class never came into being. A few Spanish leaders firmly believed it was wrong to do anything that simulated secular education on the Sabbath. Ironically, on one Sabbath, we sponsored a very effective afternoon pediatric clinic. The program was arranged by our parish nurse, physicians, and health cabinet. We screened more than one hundred children from our church and from the community. We found several significant medical problems that needed attention. Those who opposed the English language study guides saw no problem with sponsoring this program during Sabbath time. Thus we pastors learned that any semblance of education was out but medical screening was acceptable.

In an effort to maintain our unity, we administered the Spanish and English groups as one congregation. There was one church board. All monies were co-mingled. Projects, needs, and issues relating to the separate worship groups were part of the planning and action of the entire church. We also met together for joint worship on special occasions, such as our Christmas and Easter programs, Communion, church school programs, and when we had

special guest speakers. Our monthly potluck dinner and socials were functions for the entire church.

### Challenges to unity

In spite of these combined efforts, the groups began growing farther apart. Since the two worship centers were located at opposite ends of our church complex, the distinction between groups was eventually characterized as “our side” and “your side”—or, from the perspective of the speaker, “the other side.”

**T**hey demanded  
*that we rescind the vote before  
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taking away our opportunity to  
worship in our own language.”*

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So, contrary to our vision of a unified multicultural church, we were becoming two distinct and separate congregations. Several of the English-speaking members were becoming disenchanted with the cultural differences and the direction the church was heading, while the Spanish-speaking members were oblivious to the English members’ concerns and were happily pursuing their independent course.

It was in the midst of these challenges that the business meeting was called to discuss the proposal to sell the church. The concept was promoted

by the English speaking “side” of the congregation that one large joint church would provide for an enhanced ministry. The motion to sell was tabled for one month. It was at this time that the surprise motion to have *joint services* was made and passed overwhelmingly, while at a second business meeting, an orchestrated effort by the Spanish-speaking “side” soundly defeated the motion to sell, as the vote to worship together remained in effect. Before the proposal for joint worship could be properly planned and executed, Larry Downing received a call to join another congregation. I faced the daunting task of unifying “our side” and “the other side” into one church family.

### Orchestrating the new togetherness

A month following the business meeting, some among the Spanish members began to lobby against the idea of meeting as one congregation. In a short time momentum gathered among those wanting to return to a separate Spanish-speaking worship service. They demanded that we rescind the vote before the joint worship had been given a viable chance. Petitions were presented. Demands were made for the groups to be separated, claiming “You are destroying our church! You are taking away our opportunity to worship in our own language.” Some even claimed that the church’s decision and my leadership had its basis in demonic powers.

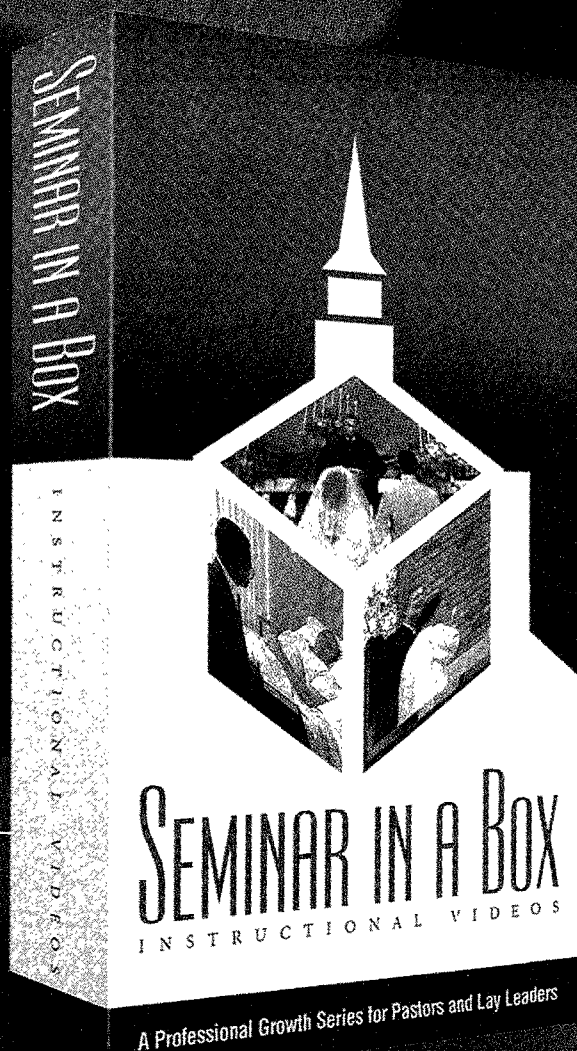
As the elders reflected on what was happening, they encouraged the church to continue its efforts to begin joint worships. In their discussions, they emphasized the two recent votes of the congregation to unite. The vote encouraging joint worship was ultimately approved with the simple recognition that this was the right thing to do. God had given us the opportunity to do something unique for the people in our community. It would be redundant to replicate nearby Spanish-speaking churches. Nearly all the elders agreed to make this process work.

Not everyone in the congregation agreed. The Spanish coordinator re-

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signed. Responsibility for all programs was left in my hands. Providentially, Carlos Camacho, a recent graduate with a theology degree from Central American Adventist University, in Costa Rica, began to attend our congregation. He was fluent in both English and Spanish. We asked him to become the Spanish coordinator and volunteer pastor. His enthusiasm and pastoral skills were and are a great benefit to the congregation in bridging the cultural gap.

### **Building community in the congregation**

Our next focus was to build community within the congregation. How could I in fact bring this multicultural group together?

Six weeks after our first worship service as one congregation, my wife, Edith, and I invited a Spanish-speaking family into our home for Sabbath dinner. They were surprised by the invitation. A pastor had never before invited them home. We shared a meal and listened to stories they told of their country. With the help of *The National Geographic*, we located their homeland and community of origin. They spoke of their fond memories. It was a good experience.

My wife and I determined that we would repeat this the following week. Instead of having one family, however, we planned to have a mixed group of people representing the cultural blend of the congregation. While dining, we purposely asked each person to tell about their place of birth, their migration to America, and some story from their personal experience. It was so successful that we continued our cross-cultural Sabbath meals, averaging from ten to fifteen people each Sabbath for nearly a year.

One particular Sabbath, we thought we had invited the usual 15, but because of communication difficulties, one family brought everyone in their family, including married children and their spouses and grandchildren. There were 22 additional people to somehow fit around our already crowded table. For the moment it was overwhelming,

yet we were able to take it in stride and have an enjoyable experience. These dinners, which involved our entire family, were a significant undertaking, yet they proved to be the starting point for cohesiveness in our church.

Our worship services were simple and traditional. The majority of the congregation could speak English, yet proficiency ranged widely. Worship leaders were encouraged to use the language they were most comfortable in speaking. Often the calls for the morning offering or the pastoral prayers were presented in Spanish because this was the language of the presenters. These parts of the service were not translated. At first, some members who spoke only English objected. We encouraged them to be open and to affirm the blessing of being part of a diverse congregation.

Music transcended all language barriers. We endeavored to use hymns that could be sung in both languages. They were chosen from a four-page listing of hymns and tunes which were found in both the Spanish and English hymnals. Singing was an experience. We indeed made a joyful noise. You could hear some singing with majesty, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" while others, with equal enthusiasm, sang "Santo, Santo, Santo; Dios Omnipotente." The babble was beautiful.

The language used for the special music was at the discretion of the vocalist. We listened to music in English and Spanish. We occasionally heard it in Korean, Russian, Romanian, German, or one of the many other languages found in our congregation.

### **Language and culture translation**

We translated the worship service into Spanish—but not in the traditional way. A synchronous translation more than doubles the time of worship. Since the majority of members were proficient in English, we chose to provide translation by radio. We used a small FM transceiver that would broadcast in our buildings over a set frequency. Those wanting to hear the worship service in the Spanish language wore headphones connected to small "Walk-

Man" type radios provided by the church. This proved to be a time- and cost-effective way to make worship available in Spanish.

All of us learned to make adjustments. Worship was noisier. There were more children at worship, which added to the excitement and to the noise level. There was more movement, especially from our Spanish-speaking saints. Those used to a more sedate and quiet form of worship were awakened to a new reality. When they complained, we encouraged them to sit toward the front. We talked about the importance of reverence and how we wanted to respect not only God but others who were present in worship. Things settled down to a dull roar. At times, the translation was uneven, for it was dependent on the ability of the translator. Some older members had trouble adjusting to the radio station. Occasionally, a local jazz station strayed into the frequency we were using. This gave new life to a few of the listeners! But all these issues were solvable.

### **An overarching vision**

In our vision it was our hope not to replicate the homogeneous area churches but to affirm the ideals of God's kingdom to come. In God's kingdom we will be one people. At Anaheim, we hoped to demonstrate a bit of God's future by worshiping as one people and by celebrating our cultural differences. Perhaps our worship could begin to answer the separateness that nationalism, tribalism, culturalism, and racism brings.

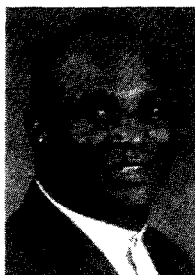
Paul's classic affirmation began to take on some definable character among us. He envisioned that within the church we are one people in Christ, with no definitive cultural, economic, or gender distinctions beyond that great overarching reality. His magnificent argument is that justification simply comes to us by faith in Jesus Christ, as does our new identity and unity. This New Testament vision was articulated by Paul directly in response to a powerful philosophy of worship that

*continued on p. 28*

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# NOT REALLY A “MIRACLE” CHURCH

**O**n Sabbath, July 23, 1994, a “miracle” happened: Two highly diverse congregations—one predominantly African-American, Hispanic, and Brazilian, the other primarily Anglo and Asian—melded into a single church.



*J. Anthony Boger is pastor of the Westminster Good Samaritan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Westminister, California.*

Today, Sabbath after Sabbath almost a thousand members embrace the campuses of the Westminster Good Samaritan Seventh-day Adventist Church (WGS). People from different walks of life pack the pews elbow-to-elbow, some with tears, others with smiles, many crying out “Amen” in praise and worship. Some are kneeling at the altar, some holding hands, others with arms around each other . . . Whites, Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics. That 1994 Sabbath was a miraculous occasion for two South-eastern California Conference churches that had worshiped separately for decades—divided not only by miles, but incomes, cultures, and, yes, prejudices. The two and the many are now one.

Many have declared the merging of the old Westminster SDA church and the former Santa Ana Good Samaritan SDA church a “miracle.” This is the first such recorded merger within the Adventist denomination; it may well set the pace for future church structures.

## How did it happen?

The Westminster Good Samaritan (WGS) Church is founded on two fundamental presuppositions:

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ has power to transcend differences of ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomics, challenging the congregation to seek and save the lost from all walks of life.

2. Worship and praise are rooted *not* in the subcultural experience of ethnicity but in the transcendent experience of authentic Christianity.

These two simple presuppositions have caused many members to reevaluate the “hang-ups” that have hindered them from accepting those who do not look like, talk like, or act like what makes them most comfortable. If there is a “miracle,” it is not the joining of the two congregations but the willingness of the people to be challenged and molded into something different from what they were.

Presently, the WGS church con-

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J. ANTHONY BOGER



ducts five worship services, two in English and one each in Japanese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. The church aims to preserve the first generation immigrant language, while providing second and third generation children an opportunity to choose where and how they worship as they adapt to mainstream American culture. Once a quarter the church conducts joint services, using interpreters or electronic devices to translate into each person's language and to communicate to the hearing impaired. It is not the goal of the church to make race and culture insignificant; on the contrary, the goal is to educate and celebrate the gifts that make us special.

### Breaking down walls

As pastor of this congregation, I have witnessed extraordinary changes in practical Christian living in many of God's people. Too often churches focus on what makes them different from other groups, without realizing that people have more in common than what appears on the surface. The issues of disease, divorce, and death are common to all, whatever their racial, ethnic, national, or cultural roots. The negatives of drugs, alcohol, and unemployment have affected every home in one way or the other. People of every color are hurting; all seek healing. The church has been called and given the opportunity to present the specific, spiritual, and practical hope that Jesus offers to the broken and the fallen.

If we fail to believe that the "impossible" is, in fact, possible through the power of God, then we need to stop calling ourselves the church. It is time to shake up the status quo, which is often rooted in the meaningless traditions that have divided us. This is not to say that tradition is unimportant; what is necessary is to find new ways to bridge tradition with what is relevant and meaningful for people today. The leadership and the people of the church should not pit one tradition, culture, or mode of worship against the other. Instead, we should create an environment that allows the Holy Spirit to move in

peoples' lives and is devoid of destructive criticism and judgment of any individual.

The secular world has benefited through corporate downsizing, merging, and discovering new ways of conducting business on an international scale. How much more the church needs to develop such things! Our small children interact with each other daily without regard for color or economics; how much more should those adults who profess the name of Christ and have been baptized into His death do the same! Most people in today's workforce spend time among diverse groups on a professional level, but the church seems to be comfortable with "separate but almost equal."

### The fellowship factor

Many members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have made spiritual decisions that have caused them to be separated from family and friends who despise their new faith and lifestyle. This "spiritual decision" leaves many people wanting fellowship with fellow believers of like mind. This is one of the reasons we feel such kinship to others around the world who are also members of the body of Christ—that feeling of being safe and comfortable around brothers and sisters who understand our choices because they have made the same ones. This "spiritual decision" makes us long to be close to others who do, indeed, understand. Church members want to be close to one another in mind, body, and spirit, regardless of the color of their skin or other shallow dividing factors.

Jesus gave us examples of forming relationships with "undesirables." Whether with a prostitute, tax collector, thief, Jew, or Gentile, Christ did not allow the criticisms or judgments of his day to dictate with whom He would fellowship. This example becomes our challenge: to love, accept, forgive, fellowship, worship, and praise God together with those whose race, culture, and background differ from our own.

Of course, this form of ministry will not work everywhere or in every situa-

tion. But we owe it to the glory of God and to the edification of the church to exercise the gift of diversity wherever possible. We can achieve "association without assimilation."

In Ephesians 2:14 we are assured that we are made one by Christ, "who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us." The physical barriers of wealth, power, and privilege are real, but in Christ these walls must come down. No longer can they be used to separate and segregate the household of faith.

### The personal factor

Unity is a personal, spiritual choice that each individual has the opportunity to make. When we make a spiritual choice to be brothers and sisters, we are hurled into the dwelling place of some others' experiences. We come to genuinely care about each other's victories and burdens and jointly fight the good fight of faith.

The WGS church is not some kind of accidental miracle. It is the result of a choice made by a group of people willing to take God at His Word. The challenge is believing. There is no need to believe in any one human being. Our greatest need is to believe in God and what He says He can do in, for, and among us.

Many people have been on the receiving end of racial prejudice or some form of discrimination. When the haunted houses of our memories are stirred, they can lead to feelings that may very well endanger our minds and souls. Even within the walls of the church, inequities have caused great pain and hurt, so much so that groups find it necessary to live, work, and die with "their own." There is an enormous amount of dissatisfaction when people are purposely "shut out" for racial or ethnic reasons. Within the hallowed walls of the church this cannot and should not be tolerated by leaders and laity alike. We know the problem is real and that we are the ones who can, and must, through God's power, do something about it. ■

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# A WELL-SERVED TABLE

**L**a Mesa means “the table.” Three main activities characterize the Christian dinner table: grace, communion, and feasting.



*Julio Tabuenca, Ph.D., is pastor for outreach and nurture, La Mesa Seventh-day Adventist Church, La Mesa, California.*

La Mesa Adventist Church, a 750-member predominantly Caucasian congregation in Southern California, is deliberately and relentlessly searching for God's grace as they enjoy rich fellowship at a banquet table.

#### **How do we enrich our fellowship?**

*First, Christ is central.* David said, “You prepare a table for me.” The table is the gift of Christ! Christ is central at the La Mesa table. His grace-oriented message is preached and taught from the pulpit, through the media, on a one-to-one basis, electronically, “in season and out of season.”

*Second, prayer gives power.* Our awesome God, as He is often referred to in word and in song, is the undisputed power base for the remarkable 100-plus-member prayer partners' ministry. This ministry began over six years ago. It was initiated to find and provide healing and reconciliation in people's lives. It has grown and expanded beyond local church, denomination, and geographical boundaries. Literally, hundreds of prayers have been answered. However, the ministry's greatest bless-

ing has been the spiritual empowerment experienced by the intercessors themselves and the invigorating confidence that God does answer prayer today.

*Third, our worship emphasizes grace.* Christ's amazing grace is the recurrent theme in Sabbath worship services. Four different singing groups, ages 15 to 30, alternatively lead the congregation in joyful adoration as they sing a mix of praise songs and traditional hymns. Quite often, interviews and personal testimonies replace announcements. We enhance prayer in a variety of ways conducive to an atmosphere of meditation and spiritual beauty. We acknowledge the importance of children with drama and well-prepared stories. Preaching is biblical, evangelical, and redemptive. A youthful and talented team of film makers and computer technicians videotape the service for the benefit of shut-ins and others. A keen awareness of God's quickening presence permeates the 90-minute Sabbath worship experience.

*Fourth, we emphasize Christ's love and joy.* Our church conducts Happiness Seminars that unveil twelve

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JULIO TABUENCA

fundamental joy principles, involving a consistent, personal, and loving relationship with God. The five-week series consists of four meetings the first week and then two each week through the remaining four. Two identical sessions are offered on the first Sabbath. Those attending the 11:00 a.m. meeting stay for a vegetarian meal. The evening class provides children's activities, such as free Suzuki violin classes, crafts, Vacation Bible School, etc. Morning sessions are usually well-attended and very friendly. When it comes to baptismal results, the evening meetings are more fruitful than the morning meetings. On four occasions, a vegetarian cooking class precedes or is conducted along with the series. Each seminar is advertised by an attractively designed four-page, full-color flier distributed by two major local newspapers. Preregistration is required. Those attending 80 percent of the lectures become proud owners of the beautiful Bible they used during the five-week series.

*Fifth, the Bible is featured.* The *Explore the Book* seminar is a once-a-month meeting year-long project intended to motivate the participant to "hear" the Word of God. Those who register are asked to commit themselves to take twelve minutes a day to listen to the assigned tapes from the dramatized New International Version, 54-cassette, *Faith Comes by Hearing* series. A once-a-month identical morning and evening session is conducted. The youth version goes along with the adult. Each class is divided in two parts; one pastor presents an outline of the books to be "heard" or read for the month ahead, and another pastor provides the spiritual application. No distinctive doctrines are presented. A well-designed four-page, full-color flier is used to promote the seminar.

*Sixth, we focus on Christ's deeds.* Sabbath School has been used very effectively as an outreach agency, highlighting God's deeds with a variety of creative approaches. Major events have been advertised in the media. Some of the most successful three-month series have been on the subject

of Creation, conducted entirely by non-Adventist instructors from the Institute of Creation Research; and the subject of archeology is conducted by renowned Adventist and non-Adventist archaeologists. Church history, prayer, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit are a few of the subjects presented in both traditional and nontraditional formats.

Midweek activities are available for the church family and community to enjoy. There are presentations on parenting and family finances (budgeting, wills, living trusts, etc.). Then we offer college credit classes (through La Sierra University) in crafts, gardening, aerobics, how to give Bible studies, and family relations.

*We seek to be representative of Christ's compassion.* Last year alone, an army of member and nonmember volunteers donated 9,600 hours of service in running one of the most effective community services in the area. These services were instrumental in helping 94,368 people with 200,000 pounds of bread and food worth \$316,000. Six hundred seventy boxes of clothing were donated to Adventist Development Relief Agency for overseas disasters. The program enjoys such

respect in the community that Protestant, Catholic, and secular agencies have joined efforts under the La Mesa church's leadership.

*Grace, communion, and feasting.* After crediting God for preparing the table, David declared that his cup overflowed. La Mesa church has been the recipient of grace upon grace to the point of overflowing. God's Spirit prevails, and the people seated at the table have more than doubled in the last six years. A significant percentage of those joining the ranks are former members and young couples. God's grace has touched people's lives in truly remarkable ways. There has not been one divorce among the 29 couples who reached out to God through the intercessory ministry of the prayer partners and feasted with the One who is Love. Finances are solid, and support for outreach is generous. A half-million-dollar endowment fund has been established for future ministries.

La Mesa church members look forward with great anticipation to the day when they will have the unsurpassed joy of being with the redeemed of all time, feasting at the heavenly table headed by Jesus Himself. ■

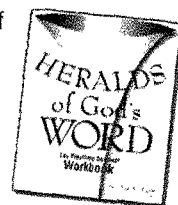
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# A FAITH TO LIVE BY

**W**orking on a daily basis with engaged young people drawn from a variety of backgrounds, I have accumulated a number of impressions about how they think; what they wonder about; what kind of future they anticipate; their worries, fears, hopes, and concerns; and what might be my role as a Christian in this environment.



*Iris M. Yob, Ed.D., is the academic coordinator for Collins Learning Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.*

These impressions have been gained through conversations, observations, assigned journal writings, and an exploratory questionnaire over the past three years at a residential college of Indiana University. In sharing these impressions, I am left with questions but hope that my reflections will be helpful as we seek to minister more constructively to this university generation.

## **Contours of a spiritual quest**

My first impression is that today's thoughtful young people are serious about their spiritual quest. Only one respondent out of 193, in an anonymous questionnaire about personal meaning and spirituality, gave nonsense responses throughout. To the query "What are your big questions about life's meaning?" just a smattering of respondents gave cliché answers such as "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" and "Where am I going?" The greater number by far gave rich and highly personalized answers ranging from "Why is my mother dying of cancer?" to "Is there any real point to hurtling through space on this desolate rock?" or "How can I find balance between simple liv-

ing and living how I want to?" Many answers were sincere, poignant, and moving.

These young people, by and large, are not searching merely for sweetness and light. They want to explore the dark side as well as the bright. I see this in the kinds of studies they pursue when they have the freedom to choose. Last semester they put together their residence curriculum with course titles including "Culture Wars," "The Meaning of Death," "Holocaust Memorials," and "Hystopian Literature of the Late Twentieth Century." Currently they have, among others, "Gothic Revivals," and next semester, "Apocalypse." This attraction to the grotesque and horrific is reminiscent of young children's fascination with fairy tales. They are "indirect yet effective ways for children to externalize their inner anxieties and to find ordering images and stories by which . . . to shape their lives."<sup>1</sup> This search, I suggest, continues into young adulthood.

Another impression gained from my questionnaire is that while every quest is individual, some discernible patterns emerge through the successive

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IRIS M. YOB



college years. As one would expect for the question about the meaning of life, responses about purpose, identity, and place predominated (48 percent, but a significant number asked about the role of faith in their lives and the development of a personal code of values [11 percent]). Responses related to the matter of origins (Where did I come from?) do not appear at first to loom large compared with questions about destiny (Where am I going?), but if the responses about the nature of human beings, wisdom, evil, and the existence of God are folded in with responses about where everything came from, then many of this group of young scholars can and do think in cosmic terms.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, freshmen and sophomores were more inclined to think globally and reflectively. They evidenced significant reflection about issues such as international peace, the meaning of suffering, ultimate happiness, absolute morality, the spiritual quest, and the existence of God.

Upperclass men and women were more pragmatic in their responses and more immediate in their focus: "What career will make me content the rest of my life?" "How can I be a better artist?" "Will I ever get a job and leave Indiana?" Senior students were also more preoccupied with the passage of time: "Even though I am almost 22 years old, I am not even sure of my direction or my ultimate goals in life." "What experiences do I wish to have that I haven't already had?" "Am I on the right path or wasting time on what I am doing?" The least substantial answers were offered by juniors, a finding that suggests they may be in transition from the certainty and idealism of the early university years to the realism of graduating students.

There were also some relatively distinct differences between genders. Predictably, questions about relationships (including love and family) were raised ten times by women to every three times by men.<sup>2</sup> While men students were more inclined than women to give silly answers (e.g., "I've solved

the meaning of life" or "I try not to have any big questions"), women were more inclined to say that the question was too big to answer. In both cases, I suspect that these students were avoiding the question in their own way; men by bravado and the women by acting helpless.

It was encouraging to discover that by a ratio of approximately 2:1 the students believed their studies at the university would help them answer the

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big questions of life, with a higher proportion of women than men expecting this to happen. Most students added a precondition or caveat, such as, "I am fascinated by life, and my studies can point me in certain directions," "They will make me more aware so I can find the answers." Those who replied negatively argued that the answers can never be known by anybody or school has never answered the big questions or college isn't real life.

While a majority reported that their studies would help them, the caveats offered placed the responsibility on the students themselves. This was

more than borne out in the answers given to the question: "To whom or what would you turn for help in finding answers?" Forty percent of the students replied, "Myself." "Friends" was a distant second (26 percent). Seven times as many students indicated not knowing where to turn for answers than those indicating they would turn to religion. Teachers were not as popular a choice as friends or family, but they did better than God.

When asked to identify the big issues their generation must deal with, issues such as sex and sexuality—sexual identity, abortion, teen pregnancy, peer pressure, love vs. sex, premarital sex, and marriage—were identified most often (32 percent). Drugs came a close second (30 percent), followed by health issues, including AIDS, STDs, and cancer (29 percent). Human rights, race, and gender issues (24 percent), environmental questions (22 percent), crime, especially rape and violence (16 percent) followed. Next, in order of issues most frequently identified, were: Identity (referring particularly to success), labels, having a voice, being independent (11 percent), and international relations (10 percent). Employment and the economy were surprisingly low on the scale (10 percent). Other issues named dealt with questions about government: its moral paucity and the resulting lack of trust, national polarization (9 percent), the new millennium and its challenges and opportunities (8 percent). A few identified the downside of technology, poverty, the generation gap, broken families, materialism, and the media.<sup>3</sup>

### Spirituality and religion

While spirituality and spiritual development were largely assumed to be a personal and individual responsibility, service to others is clearly evident as a subtheme in the thoughts and practices of this student group. Service learning courses are always enrolled to the maximum, philanthropic activities and activism around issues of sex, social ills, human rights, and the environment are a significant part of the extracurricular

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A challenge for this generation lies in resolving the paradox between postmodernism, with its distrust of grand totalizing theories and activism with its universal and dogmatic convictions about rights, oppression, and liberation.

A final set of observations has to do with the relationship of this generation to religion. From my perspective, these young people confront this subject from two distinct directions: They either dismiss religion altogether, or they blindly embrace it. Regarding the first of these, I observed the students in the course selection committee become excited by the "Tibetan Buddhism," "Chinese Mythology," and "Hindu Art" course proposals, while they disparaged the proposal entitled "Marian Apparitions." The Marian apparition course would not appeal to many students, they argued, because there were not many practicing Catholics in the college, and besides, they wondered if courses on religion should be taught at a public university—a doubt that didn't enter the conversation when they contemplated the course on eastern religions.

In a similar vein, university students happily approved a series of worship services conducted by the Unitarian Universalists, a Passover Seder for all to attend, and a Wiccan ceremony at Halloween. At the same time, there was an outcry when a Christmas tree was decorated not with the usual baubles but with ornaments illustrating the birth of Christ.

Stephen Carter, author of *The Culture of Disbelief*, may be right when he claims that for religious people, "the public square can indeed seem a cold, suspicious, and hostile place."<sup>4</sup> However, he is only partly right, as is Warren Nord when he writes, "It is a striking fact that in American public schools and universities students can . . . earn high school diplomas [and] college degrees. . . without ever confronting a live religious idea."<sup>5</sup> They are wrong if their

generalizations are meant to include non-Western and other exotic religions, but they are largely right if they are commenting about the reception of Christianity.

In discussion groups led by peer instructors, I have witnessed denunciations of religion, which when it comes down to it are primarily targeting the Christian tradition, which they judge to be hypocritical, polarizing, and overzealous in sharing its particular faith

University  
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with others. When asked who they would go to for help with answers to the big questions of life, only a handful of students (10 percent) indicated religion in some form, and as many said they would consult the Dalai Lama or eastern religious teachings as they would their priest, minister, or rabbi. Almost as many seem as willing to turn to Buddha as to God the Father or Jesus Christ.

The second religious challenge

comes from the kind of responses given by students who openly profess to be Christian. When this group was asked what the big questions about the meaning of life might be, they generally gave responses such as "I don't have any questions—Jesus is the answer" or "I let God answer all my questions." These kinds of answers are also disturbing but for a different reason. Essentially, they exhibit a lack of reflection and take on a dogmatic tone, the very two qualities that Israel Scheffler identifies as signs of "epistemic apathy." These attitudes, he remarks, "are perhaps more accurately described as poses or pretenses, the effect of which is, however, perfectly real—to aid the denial of responsibility for one's beliefs and so to block the possibility of their improvement through the educative medium of surprise."<sup>6</sup>

### Three crucial challenges

While these findings are richly provocative, as even this brief overview suggests, I would like to focus on just three sets of questions they pose to educators and ministers whose calling is to serve this generation. These are the "three Rs" that strike me as most significant.

1. *Relevance.* How relevant are the church programs we offer our young people? Have we asked them recently what their big questions and big issues might be so that we can address them in a fresh and timely way? Are we giving them the critical and creative tools for articulating their own questions and pursuing their own answers? Do we treat our students as a monolithic body or are we sensitive, for instance, to the new openness and curiosity of freshmen and sophomores, the confusion of juniors, and the immediate concerns of graduating seniors? Do we make room for a wide spectrum of different perspectives and interests, reflecting the diversity of our churches along gender and ethnic lines? Have we tapped into the current streams of awareness, such as the resurgence in the call to service and activism, the individuality and particularity of the spiritual quest?

2. *Renewal.* How can we renew re-

ligion in the lives of young people, given the fact that religious faith is preeminently situated to address the big questions of life and empower responses to the major issues of today? Christianity in general (and Adventism in particular, I suspect) clearly does not have the cachet with many young people which it once had.<sup>7</sup> The renewal of religion requires more than simply attempting to expose its relevancy. This may accomplish little more than ad hoc connections between a tradition and the contemporary situation—a fragmented, randomized methodology at best. A fuller rehabilitation of our faith for this generation will have to be deeper and more systemic. How can we reinstate reason in aid of faith for those who are afraid of doubting while at the same time they are driven to discover? How can we encourage an active dialogue among the great faith traditions so that Christianity is seen to be patently viable and at the same time rejuvenated by a critical reevaluation? How can we help our young adults negotiate a path between the dogmatism of the old tribal gods and the diffuse shallowness of too many gods? How can we facilitate individual spiritualities and at the same time provide for the valid traditions and particular values and verities of the past?

3. *Reaching out.* How can ministers and educators reach out to this new generation of spiritual pilgrims, especially those outside of our faith community? Are we willing to be serious about serving this generation in meaningful ways, even though it might mean learning a new language of discourse and finding new modes of being in the world without being of it? Are we willing to ask the hard questions and risk exposing our fallibility while rediscovering and reclaiming the foundational essentials of our faith and the source of our spiritual inspiration, for in so doing we might become fellow pilgrims with our youthful contemporaries?

Finding the relevance of religion, renewing religious faith, and reaching out to contemporary searchers for a liv-

ing faith are not discrete categories but parts of a continuous whole, interdependent, and mutually implicated. Somewhere along this continuum each educator and pastor has a place and a calling, requiring the utmost in critical and creative capacities applied in the service of the next generation for the new millennium. ■

<sup>1</sup> James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 130.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), and others.

<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising that the residence curriculum developed by the students has included courses such as "Our Culture

Wars," "The AIDS Crisis in America," "The Arab World," "Environmental Activism," "Ancient Greek Men and Sexual Identity," "Art, Sex, and Scandal," "Women in Art," "Families in Crisis," and a raft of service-learning courses that integrate community service and academics.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 53.

<sup>5</sup> Warren A. Nord, *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 43; Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols* (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews, and McMeel, 1952), 151-178; and others, a generation ago identified the beginnings of this trend. They suggested that the forms of religion; its system of symbols, rituals, and methods; once powerfully evocative of hope and trust, eventually become old and tired and lose their potency.

## Anaheim *continued from p. 19*

encouraged separate Communion, in which honorable and respected leaders such as Peter at first formally chose to no longer associate with the Galatian Christians. Paul saw Peter's action as a foreign gospel. By contrast, God's great work through Jesus Christ calls all people to sit at the table and receive together the emblems of His broken body and spilled blood. Paul said that the true gospel was one in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NIV).

It has been nearly two years since the Anaheim church began joint worship. We have lost some Spanish-speaking members to other congregations. Yet others who like our approach to worship have replaced them. English-speaking members are adjusting to the multicultural experience. We have not yet found smooth waters. There are still some difficulties. Some continue to say we should return to the old ways of

separate worship services. Some want a quieter worship while others still desire to hear their own language.

Yet many share the vision and the hope that our efforts can continue and may actually contribute to the desegregation of other churches. Mario Perez, Southeastern California Conference vice president for Spanish Ministries has encouraged other multicultural congregations to consider developing similar worship intentions.

At our last Communion, Pastor Pedro Chambi, a member at Anaheim and a retired missionary to the upper Amazon River in Peru, was responsible for leading the congregation in the prayer for the emblems. His Spanish is excellent. His English, however, had always come through a translator. But at the table that day we bowed as he prayed, "Our father who art in heaven . . ." It was heavily accented, but it was English, and it was beautiful. "Our Father! We are family. We are one people. We are one church community. We are all the children of God." ■



**Y**ou are invited to a special pre-session World Ministers' Council just prior to the 2000 session of the General

Conference in Toronto.

How appropriate for Adventist pastors, their families, local church elders, chaplains, evangelists, and administrators, along with guest clergy of all denominations, to gather for several days of worship, fellowship, continuing education, professional development, and encouraging motivation for service.

The theme of our council, "The Way of the Cross Leads Home," emphasizes the Cross as the central focus of history and the necessity of allowing Christ's grace to permeate every aspect of ministry. Plenary session topics include presenters from every world division, simultaneous translation into various languages, and the following topics: *The Primacy of the Cross, The Way of the Cross and Mission, The Way of the Cross and Service, The Way of the Cross and Unity of Believers, The Way of the Cross and Creation, The Way of the Cross and God's Word, The Way of the Cross and Worship, The Way of the Cross and Christ's Coming, The Way of the Cross and Personal Growth, The Way of the Cross and Stewardship, The Way of the Cross and the Sabbath Experience, The Way of the Cross and the Church, The Way of the Cross and Salvation, The Way of the Cross and Hope, The Way of the Cross and Professional Ethics, The Way of the Cross and Sanctification, The Way of the Cross and Judgment, The Way of the Cross and Restoration, The Way of the Cross and the Lost, The Way of the Cross and Victory, and The Way of the Cross and You.*

This council is an event for the entire family. Each morning's "Family Worship" will feature an international

# You are invited!

JAMES A. CRESS

environment of worship suited for all ages to share together. Several pastoral families will be attending the pre-session compliments of their child's winning the PK Contest. Special afternoon seminars and events for children, including child care for infants and toddlers, will make it easy for parents to participate and enjoyable for the youngsters.

Each morning will also feature a unique family-oriented plenary session with Dr. Archibald Hart, dean-emeritus of Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Psychology. Attendees will also have opportunity to personally interact with Dr. Hart.

Over sixty different seminars will be featured in the afternoon along with in-depth Bible study sessions and special sessions for pastoral spouses. Almost all of the presenters, which include an international array of individuals from every division, are currently-practicing pastors who won a special *Ministry* magazine contest designed to discover the best of the best of pastoral teachers.

Exciting topics on virtually every aspect of pastoral ministry will make it a challenge to choose which seminars to attend. You may also purchase tapes and handouts from any of the seminars you cannot attend.

Almost all of the General Conference Departments are also hosting a track of seminars for those interested in developing in-depth skills in a specific ministry emphasis.

Evening sessions will feature dynamic music, including a full worship orchestra, evangelistic

preaching, instruction in church growth principles, and encouraging reports from all over the world. In fact, video reports will feature a typical "day in the life" of a pastoral family from various cultures around the world.

Dozens of display booths will feature the latest in church resources. You can interact with professionals in every area of church life. In fact, there will even be an area where you can bring your own ideas and display the good things that are happening in your area of service with others who wish to network.

Who should attend? If you are a pastor, evangelist, chaplain, administrator, or Bible teacher, you should come! If you belong to a pastoral family, you will enjoy the family-friendly atmosphere. If you are a local church elder or have an interest in developing ministerial skills for yourself or improving them in your congregation, you will discover growth opportunities abounding.

What about cost? Because of favorable exchange rates, Canada is a financial bargain with almost 40 percent benefit on the U.S. dollar. Pre-registration is just U.S. \$79.00 per individual and \$39.00 for spouses with no charge for children. An on-site refundable deposit will be required for child care which will encourage you to retrieve your child on time.

Many conferences are sending all their pastoral families with special financial savings for group registration. Also, congregations may choose to sponsor their pastoral family's attendance.

Watch the September issue of *Ministry* for a full World Minister's Council brochure, registration forms, and complete information.

Remember, you are invited, and your ministry will benefit from your participation! ■



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# I JUST WANT TO GO HOME

**M**y husband held me as I sobbed in his arms. "I just want to go back!" I cried. "I want to go back to Cambridge."



*Mary Barrett is a pastor's wife and freelance writer living in Gloucestershire, in the United Kingdom.*

We had just moved from Cambridge to Cheltenham. Leaving our home, where we had lived for six years, was hard. How painful to just walk away from family, friends, and church members.

As Rima (our eldest daughter) and I drove out of the driveway for the last time, I desperately wanted to slam my foot on the brake and exclaim, "No, I am not moving!" But I made myself keep moving.

Moving—even under the best of circumstances—is not only stressful but often heart-wrenching. Yet it is the usual lot of a pastoral family. What can we do, then, to minimize the emotional upheaval when we wave Goodbye to one home and say Hello to a new, strange, and empty one?

## **Make sure your foundation is secure**

To begin with, no matter how trite or dogmatic it might sound, to best survive a move, one needs a solid, daily relationship with the Lord. Whatever the trials that inevitably come with such a transition, a close walk with Jesus, in which we are always in an attitude of prayer, thanksgiving, submission, and repentance, can make all the difference in the world.

Our move has taught me some-

thing invaluable concerning my friendship with God. Home is not a house in Cambridge or Cheltenham; rather, "home is where I hang my heart," and I choose to hang my heart where the Lord would have me. Making sure that our bond with God is strong provides the firm foundation on which we need to build our new experiences.

## **Maintain the familiar**

My husband loves to jog. Before we moved he joined a running club in our new location. At first, I thought he was crazy; now I see the wisdom of this decision. Four weeks after our move he was regularly jogging with his new acquaintances. The stability of doing something he really enjoys has helped to minimize the instability and lack of routine that accompanies every transition.

I found that even shopping in the same brand name stores can give a sense of constancy. Trying to find a new dentist, doctor, and music teacher can be quite frustrating, adding to the pain of the move. I suggest maintaining as much of the familiar as possible before tackling those tricky issues. One pastor's wife said that the most difficult part of her move was finding a swimming pool similar to the one in her previous home-

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MARY BARRETT

town. She felt unsettled until that piece of the puzzle was put in place.

### Be open to new possibilities

Every move offers new opportunities and exciting challenges, a chance to make new church friends and to introduce unchurched acquaintances and neighbors to God. A new church can call for fresh ideas, a different way of doing things. It can help us not to become stale in our approach to ministry.

Mike and May discovered that in each church they pastored, each nurturing and outreach program had to be adapted. Rather than being annoyed at this change, they found it fascinating to watch how God took their programs and used them differently in various churches. Yes, they went through the frustration of filing away treasured programs, knowing they would never work with them again, but they were able to have a ministry that was based on God's leading and not their plans.

As far as my husband and I are concerned, our move has revived our desire to depend on God more than ever. We pray together, as regularly as we can, and we make a conscious effort to hand our churches over to God. When God doesn't answer our prayers the way we would like, we make a more determined effort to praise Him.

### Adjustments

Getting a new home in order can be difficult. Tim and Sarah had so much to do that they finally sent an SOS to Sarah's dad, who spent a week helping out. Asking for help allowed Tim and Sarah the freedom and time to deal with their move more comfortably. In short, don't be afraid to ask for some help. It

can make a big difference.

Tessa, in contrast, adjusted to her new pastoral home by simply using the same color schemes as in her previous homes. She updated her new house with inexpensive new accessories. It gave her a sense of belonging and security and yet the freshness of a new start.

Often one of the best things you can do after a move is make an effort to be a part of the new community. Set aside time to join a club, bake a cake for your neighbor, and go out and talk to someone on your street when you see them gardening or washing the car. Volunteer at a local charity. Any one of these can quickly help you acclimate to a new environment.

### Being there for your children

Whatever adjustment pastoral couples face in a move, it is nothing compared to the trauma that children may experience.

For instance, we have lived at our new address for 12 months now. Rima and Sharna still hanker after their old home, friends, and familiar surroundings. At times, their requests to "go home" leave us guilty and helpless.

Listen to your children. Do everything possible to help them adjust. Encourage them to maintain contact with old friends. If possible, take them to your previous location and allow them to say Goodbye once more. Spend time with them discovering fun and exciting places in your new area. Encourage them to do things with their new friends. Be patient as they establish new routines. Maintaining contact with other pastoral couples gives PKs a chance to share their similar joys and struggles.

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### Finding your niche

Adjusting to a new role in a new church isn't easy, either for the pastor or his or her family. But neither is it easy for a church to adjust to a new pastor. Step back and get to know your members, what motivates them, and what they need. Surrender your pet ideas, how you plan to work for God in your new church, and listen to the way in which God directs you. Be dependent on Him to lead you to the particular niche, that new way of evangelism, that different way of doing things. What worked well in your old church might flop in your new one. When we truly abandon ourselves to God in our ministry, He can give us satisfaction as we serve Him, even if surrounding circumstances tell us otherwise.

Moving is a part of ministry that we dread; yet it's a part of ministry we all face. Whether from Miami to Los Angeles, Cambridge to Cheltenham, or Botswana to Singapore, it's not easy. All we can do, through the grace of God, is attempt to make the transition as smoothly as we can. ■

# Moving?

Let *Ministry* move with you! Send address changes to Jeannette Calbi, *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904, or e-mail us at [calbj@gc.adventist.org](mailto:calbj@gc.adventist.org). Please notify us eight weeks in advance.

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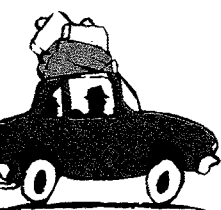
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