

MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors

May 2003



Celebrating 75 Years of
Ministry Magazine

A central illustration of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, reaching towards each other and holding a glowing white cross. The background is a vibrant, multi-colored gradient of purple, red, orange, and yellow, with light rays emanating from the cross. The overall effect is one of divine light and creation.

CREATION, CHRIST, AND THE CROSS

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Creation, Christ, and the Cross

The connection of Christ and His Cross to God's work of world creation

Randall W. Younker

Burnout's refining fire

An experience of ultimate ministerial distress and its potential positive outcome

Austin Miles

Get over it!

Working through traumatic experiences in ministry

J. Grant Swank, Jr.

The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus

Keys to understanding the Apocalypse: Final of a three-part series

Hans K. LaRondelle

Learning from the marketplace

An interview: Practical principles for effective public speaking

Patricia Fripp and Derek J. Morris

Retirement: Time to serve again

A constructive, suggestive view of the ministry that may be done after retirement

Perry Smith

Make your church volunteer-friendly

How the pastor can engage and nurture effective volunteers in the congregation

Teena Stewart

The "why" of Paul's preaching

Getting at the heart of what makes Christian preaching live

R. Leslie Holmes

The irrelevant, powerless, unpopular leader

Getting beyond the desire to control and impress

Jeff Gang

IN EVERY ISSUE

Pastor's Pastor
28

Resources
30

PASTORS . . . NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE ILLNESSES.
THEY NEED TO TALK TO THE SUFFERERS IN THEIR FLOCKS
AND GET TO UNDERSTAND THEM MORE CLOSELY.
TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS THAT THEY CAN AND CANNOT DO.

May 2001 issue

In the May 2001 issue of *Ministry*, Gregory Dodds wrote that Luther and Calvin had the same view of predestination. In fact, their differences on this teaching were so different that Calvin called his doctrine *decretum horrible*, the "horrible decree," whereas Luther found great comfort in his doctrine. This is because Luther taught only single predestination—of the believer to salvation. Calvin taught double predestination, that of the damned had been inevitably foredoomed. Luther's teaching makes salvation utterly dependent on the grace of God. Calvin's makes damnation to stem from God's unquestionable sovereignty and hidden will.

The chief differences between Calvin and Luther may be summarized as follows:

Calvin taught: (1) total depravity; (2) unconditional (seemingly arbitrary and double) predestination; (3) limited atonement (Christ died only for the predestined); (4) irresistible grace for the predestined; and (5) perseverance of the predestined (*once saved, always saved*).

Luther taught: (1) Total depravity; (2) God causes salvation; the sinner causes damnation; (3) unlimited atonement; (4) Christ died for all; (5) grace can be resisted; and (6) salvation can be lost by persistent impenitence.

Obviously this is not the place to argue which position is more correct or beneficial, but *Ministry* readers may want to understand what is taught. It should be emphasized that liberals of

both denominations have largely lost the teachings of both Calvin and Luther. The third main stream in Protestant thought is Arminian, which combines some features of both Calvin and Luther. Nor is this list exhaustive. Catholics would agree with Luther in each point listed above, but if I may say so, "the devil is in the details." Most crucially, salvation becomes the work of the Third Person of the Trinity just as much as the Second—and assurance of salvation becomes the feeling of the Holy Spirit in one's heart. "By grace and faith and my good works," in other words.

—Roger Kovaciny, professor, Saint Sophia Seminary, Reedsburg, Wisconsin.

January 2003 issue

I receive *Ministry* as a birthday gift each year and thoroughly enjoy reading it. However, I must ask if the January 2003 edition was edited (at least partly) with tongue firmly in cheek! The reason I ask is because the article "Schizophrenia: What a Pastor Needs to Know" was written by two people! Was this intentional or did it just slip through?

Seriously, though, it was good to see an article (albeit only covering one illness) which addresses the problems of members who are long-term sufferers of some illness that does not allow them to work at their full capacity, if at all. As a sufferer myself of a long-term illness and having been unable to work for the last seven years, it is gratifying to see even implicit support for an ever-growing group of people.

Pastoral staff, not just the pastors themselves, need to learn more about these illnesses. They need to talk to the sufferers in their flocks and get to understand them more closely, to find out what it is that they can and cannot do. Then find them something within their stated capabilities so that they still feel alive and part of the family of God, not just spectators watching from the grandstand. If nothing else, ask for their advice on subjects they know well, involve them even if it is only on the cerebral level. Remember one thing: In most cases of long-term illness, the sufferers do not lose all their ability to function; they just can't work at full capacity. Their functions are impaired, not nonexistent.

—Adrian Lethbridge, Milton Keynes, England.

Jo Ann Davidson's article in the January issue was excellent. However, a paragraph at the bottom of page 7 and beginning of page 8 hit me in the eye and reminded me of aspects of our discussion concerning the topic of "law," and the confusions that can arise. The author quotes Jesus as asking, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (Luke 10:26-28). She then presents a startling statement: "The lawyer answered with a direct quote from the *Ten Commandments*, and Jesus said, 'You have answered right . . .'"

This quote was *not* from the Ten Commandments, but from the Book of *continued on page 19*

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Hunter and farmer embrace!

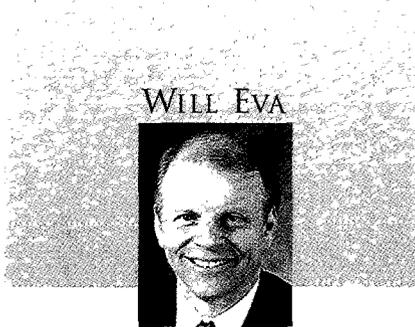
Hunters and farmers embracing? What in the world? Educational psychologist Thom Hartmann has done some controversial work on “attention deficit disorder,” or ADD. Instead of viewing this mental learning mode as a deficit or disorder, he views it as simply being a different learning pattern. He compares ADD and “normal” learning patterns to the underlying way in which a hunter approaches life and learning, versus the way a farmer does.¹

Briefly, and with our purposes in mind, this analogy says that any population can be divided between those who approach life and learning as hunters on a hunt and those who approach it as farmers on a farm.

Slanting Hartmann’s metaphor even more to our purposes, the farmer protects, processes, and produces from within the bounds of a given acreage. He becomes thoroughly conversant and efficient with everything inside the borders of the farm.

The hunter, on the other hand, is restless. He’s not content within defined boundaries. To him, bounds are bonds. Therefore, he is constantly jumping the fence, eager to see what more is out there. The itch to explore drives him. It’s almost a compulsion for him to scout, delve, and inquire.

The hunter’s behavior worries the farmer, who fears the hunter will return from one of his excursions contaminated with microbes that will disease the sheep or tarnish the crop he is so painstakingly tending. When, in turn, the hunter encounters the farmer’s hesitations and suspicions, it disturbs him. He feels he knows the merit and value of what he sees out there. He believes that if his discoveries could be embraced and adapted to the farming enterprise, they would improve life and productivity on the farm and elsewhere.



Of the many biblical examples of these two mentalities, two spring to mind immediately: Esau as hunter and Jacob as farmer, are actually defined that way (Gen. 25:27). It’s hard to ignore the fact that these twin brothers were uneasy with each other from the moment of birth (verse 26).

The second biblical example is the proverbial angst that perpetually simmers between the biblical prophet . . . comparable to our hunter, and the priest . . . our farmer. The disquiet between these two callings as they struggle to relate, runs like a turbulent stream through the heart of sacred story. Perhaps the best example of this is seen in the mortal contention between Jeremiah the prophet and his priestly brethren.

The prophet, though consistently compassionate, constructive, and responsible, fulfilled God’s call to confront what was wrongly established in Israel, and to challenge the nation with her misdeeds. The priest, on the other hand, was more pastoral, had more of an institutional bearing, and adopted the role of keeping the nation on an even keel. In the ensuing tension, the prophet frequently bore the wrath and reprisal of the priest.

The point of all this, of course, is that the hunter/farmer tension is still present

among us. Some of us are more priestly, and some more prophetic. And that, I’d contend, is how it should be, as long as we can genuinely validate one another.

The hunter/farmer analogy can be taken one more step: In the early pioneering period of any movement of faith, it is logical that the prophetic (hunter) voice is more vocal and respected, while the farmer’s priestly voice is less so. As the movement matures, the priestly voice rightfully ascends in its influence. Ultimately, however, it can take on a dominance that may all but mute the prophetic voice. The more powerful and established the organization becomes, the less it feels the need for a prophetic voice. This is not as it should be.

Actually, one of the reasons for the decline of a movement is that the hunter’s prophetic voice becomes progressively hushed and devalued in the organization. This state of affairs may advance to the point where, when the prophet does speak, he or she is considered eccentric, intrusive, and even destructive to the enterprise. This scenario often becomes full blown right at the time when such a voice is most needed.

In Jesus, however, the hunter and the farmer—that is, the prophet and the priest—are perfectly blended. Thus, in Him the ideal minister and the ideal ministry are flawlessly expressed. Much of what makes Jesus so surpassingly impressive, so superb and sublime, is this seminal blending.

This is a time when it is just this blending the Church and our communities need. May the prophet find his or her voice, and so may the priest. May hunter and farmer embrace! ■

¹ Thom Hartmann, *Attention Deficit Disorder: A Different Perception* (Grass Valley, Calif.: Underwood Books, 1997), xxiii-xxxvii.

Creation, Christ, and the Cross

RANDALL W. YOUNKER

Seventh-day Adventist Belief #6: God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heavens and the earth" and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good," declaring the glory of God.

Probably no single biblical doctrine challenges the contemporary worldview more than the doctrine of Creation. Whereas science tells us that life on this planet gradually evolved through natural processes that occurred over hundreds of millions of years, the Bible boldly proclaims that God created life on this planet in the more recent past, in six literal days (Gen. 1).

While contemporary geology describes a highly protracted, natural origin for the rock strata that cover the earth's surface, the Bible describes a sudden, global post-Creation catastrophe that destroyed terrestrial life and drastically altered the planet. The description of the Flood's damage to the original creation was so massive and complete that many scholars describe this catastrophe as a "de-creation."

The biblical teaching of Creation has intimate bearing on other seminal biblical tenets, not the least of which is the proclamation that Jesus Christ is, in fact, the active Creator God of the Old Testament (John 1:1-3, 14), and that it is His act as Creator that, in part, guarantees His role as our Savior and Redeemer (Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Isa. 65:17-19; Rev. 21; 22).

It is not the purpose of this brief arti-

cle to provide scientific answers for the many questions that evolution might pose for Creation.¹ Nor do we wish to minimize the significance and difficulties of some of these questions. Rather, in concert with Seventh-day Adventist faith, our goal is to examine the significance of the biblical proclamations of a recent, literal Creation week and worldwide Flood and how these interface with our understanding of Christ's death on the cross.

While our belief in a recent Creation week and global Flood emerge, from our traditional view of Scripture, which accepts these narratives as historical accounts, such beliefs are also held because of their coherence with other clear biblical pronouncements about the nature of God, the origin and nature of humans, the origin of sin, and the means of salvation.

Major challenges from science

Before we consider the importance of a recent six-day Creation to our understanding of the Cross, it will be helpful to briefly note two main reasons why this view is so unacceptable to so many people today.² This twofold challenge rises from the geologic column and radiometric dating.

The Geologic Column and the Fossil Record. The geologic column refers to layers (or strata) of rocks that cover much of the earth's surface. Many of

these rock strata contain the remains of dead organisms known as "fossils." These fossils include both plant and animal remains.

The specific challenge of this "fossil record" is that the fossils in the lower rocks appear to be what might be expected as "earlier" life forms (such as invertebrates) in the evolutionary progression, while "higher" life forms, such as mammals and flowering plants, appear only in the upper rock strata. Human fossils are found only in the very highest strata.

This fossil sequence seems to correlate with the sequence in which life forms would be expected to evolve, according to evolutionists. This view obviously conflicts with the Genesis 1 biblical teaching that God created life on this planet during the Creation week.

Radiometric Dating and Deep Time. In addition to the fossil sequence in the geologic column, creationists are confronted with the problem of the radiometric dating of these fossil-bearing rocks. Scientists rely on several techniques to arrive at dates for inorganic rocks. Some of these techniques include potassium/argon and uranium/lead dating methods. These methods seem to show that rocks get progressively older at deeper levels. Why this seems to be so is a challenge that confronts the creationists.

Aside from this, virtually all these different radiometric-dating techniques come up with very similar dates for any given layer of rocks. For example, no matter what radiometric dating technique is used, scientists find that the uppermost Cretaceous rocks (the end of the "Cretaceous" Period) date to about 65 million years. Scientists refer to this as a concordance of dating methods. The long ages that appear to be supported by radiometric data, thus constitute the most serious challenge to the biblical

teaching of a recent six-day Creation.

Dealing with the challenges from science

How may Christians face this challenge? Many biblical scholars, including otherwise rather conservative evangelical Christians, have found the geologic and radiometric data so convincing that they have felt compelled to suggest that the original author of the Genesis Creation and Deluge accounts did not expect his readers to take literally or historically those biblical texts that speak of a recent six-day Creation and a global Flood.

They conclude, rather, that these passages should be reinterpreted in a nonliteral, nonhistorical manner. Thus, the days of Creation are not literal 24-hour days, and the Flood is only a local inundation and not a global catastrophe. The result of this interpretive approach generally leads to one of two positions—progressive creationism or theistic evolution.

It is interesting to note that those who propose that Scripture should be reinterpreted to accommodate the findings of science generally tend to come from the “evangelical” ranks of Christianity. These scholars usually place a high value not only on Scripture and Jesus’ saving ministry but also on science’s ability to interpret and explain the world around us.

In evangelical scholarly literature, scholars who attempt to bring the consensus views of science into harmony with the Bible by reinterpreting the latter are sometimes referred to as “accommodationists.”³ But is this a good hermeneutical approach to Scripture?

Why accommodation doesn’t work

Exegetical problems. One reason why Adventists have generally not found accommodation theory acceptable is that careful exegesis of the biblical text does not support such a position.

For example, the argument that the Genesis writer did not intend the six days to be taken literally as six 24-hour days, does not stand up to close scrutiny.⁴ When the Hebrew text uses a

definite (ordinal) number, it always means a literal 24-hour day. Even liberal exegetes such as Gerhard von Rad acknowledge: “The seven days [of Creation week] are unquestionably to be understood as actual days and as a unique, unrepeatable lapse in time in the world.”⁵

Similarly, a study of Genesis 6–9 does not support the idea that the Flood was understood by both the original author and his audience to be only a *local* flood.⁶ The unique geographical expressions associated with the biblical Flood account, such as “the face of all the

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earth,” the universal context of the Flood narrative within Genesis 1–11, and an analysis of the word for “flood” (*mabbul*, which expresses an undoing of creation) are among numerous reasons for believing the original writer intended to describe an expansive catastrophe and not a local event.

Again, even liberal exegetes such as von Rad, who don’t accept the historicity of the Flood, acknowledge what the writer *intended to say*. According to von Rad, “We must understand the flood, therefore, as a catastrophe involving the entire cosmos.”⁷

Thus, a careful exegesis of the original Hebrew text of Creation and Flood narratives shows this: The interpretation that the six days are figurative and that

the Flood was only a local occurrence appears forced, and is motivated more by a desire to harmonize the understanding of science with the claims of the Bible than by a hope to get at the original meaning of the biblical text.

Philosophical problems. A second reason why Seventh-day Adventists have not accepted an accommodation theory is a reluctance to subjugate a clear reading of what the Bible says on origins to a purely scientific understanding.

Adventists do have a great respect for science, as is evident from the prominence science plays in their colleges, universities, and medical institutions. However, Adventists have refused to restrict their quest for truth to science. They have long held what many astute philosophers have said, that there are other methods (epistemologies) outside or beyond science for discerning truth. Science alone is not adequate to explore, understand, and analyze all aspects of human reality and experience.⁸

Adventists believe that it is rational and even essential to leave the door open to realities beyond what science itself is able to detect. These realities include God’s existence, His creation of the universe, His personal and caring nature, His love, and His desire and ability to communicate to human beings through the Spirit, the Son, and the Bible. To Adventists, these concepts are not mere philosophical notions, but experiential reality, grounded in the teachings of Scripture itself.

When there is a conflict between the findings of science and the claims of Scripture, Adventists will respect the claims of science, study them, and hope for a resolution. This does not preclude an ongoing return to Scripture to verify if it is being properly understood. However, if a resolution is not immediately forthcoming, Adventists recognize that it is not valid to hold Scripture’s claims hostage to the assertions of science (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20).

Theological problems. A third, and perhaps the most important, reason why Adventists have been reluctant to accept the accommodation theory is the theological implication this

approach holds for key Christian beliefs, especially the trustworthiness of the Bible, the relationship of the entrance of sin to our planet, the origin of death, and the relationship of the fall of humanity to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Each of these is related and thus inevitably affected by an effort to accommodate a less literal understanding of Genesis 1-11.

As we have seen, the accommodationist position requires questionable exegetical approaches that seem to go well beyond what the writers of Scripture intended. Adventists recognize the challenges that come with reading a text that was written years ago in a very different historical and cultural setting, and in ancient languages. That is why they train their scholars and ministers to become adept in those skills necessary for good interpretation.

These skills alert careful Bible students to the great lengths that some scholars go to to explain away the clear meaning of the text; these stretched interpreta-

tions appropriately strike the average reader as suspect. Adventists prefer to give the benefit of doubt to the Bible's testimony about its trustworthiness.

Furthermore, Adventists hold that God is quite capable of effectively communicating to the average human being through His Word (Isa. 43:10-12). The challenges of science are not enough to dissuade Adventists from accepting what the Word of God clearly says. Therefore, we continue to believe in a Creator who created life on this planet in six literal 24-hour days.

The second theological concern with the accommodationist position is that acceptance of the evolutionary interpretation of the origin of the geologic column and fossil record requires the dismissal of the biblical position that death came into this world as a result of sin (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 5:12).⁹

According to evolutionary presupposition, humans have appeared on the world stage only in the most recent phase of evolution, preceded by mil-

lions of years in which only animals lived and died on the planet. According to these assumptions, death had long been a companion of the life forms of this planet. Before the human Fall described in Scripture, the death that is proclaimed by the Bible to have been sin's inseparable companion, existed on the planet.

The argument of some that the Bible is concerned only with human death is contradicted by, and is seriously incongruent with, Paul's argument (Rom. 8:20-22) that it was human sin that brought about death on this planet—a death that affected the entire creation (*ktisis*) and plunged this world into a bondage of decay.

Some Old Testament scholars have persuasively argued that the violence (*camas*) that filled the earth prior to the Flood, was concerned as much with *animals* as humans (Gen. 6:11-13; 9:5, 9-11; note that the post-Flood Noachian covenant included capital punishment for animals that kill human beings!).

This year's conference is a gathering of pilgrims who are learning to hear the music of the gospel and dance with God. We are a network of friends conspiring to change the church and the world around us by first changing ourselves. We'll offer practical teaching, stimulating conversation, and time to practice the presence of God in a breath-taking mountain setting. And you can always count on the laughter, joys, and surprises that are an integral part of sharing life together.

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Perhaps the most serious theological challenge that accommodation theory poses to the Christian who holds to the more literal-historical view of the biblical account of origins, is that it questions the foundational reason for humanity's need for Christ—the historic chronicle of the Fall.

Through the ages Christians have understood that the main biblical reason for being Christian is that they have accepted Christ as their Savior from sin. Sin is a historic reality that has reigned since Adam and Eve's fall (Rom. 5:12, 19), a fall completely enmeshed in the Creation account of Genesis, and a fall from which Jesus Christ came to save or redeem humankind.

Theologians have hotly debated exactly how this happened and what it means—the debate over "original sin" is part of this discussion. While a full discussion of original sin is beyond the scope of our discussion here, Adventist position has been well summarized: "Adventists do not stress the idea of original sin in the sense that 'personal, individual moral guilt adheres to Adam's descendants because of his [Adam's] sin. They stress, instead, that his sin resulted in the condition of estrangement from God in which every human being is born. This estrangement involves an inherent tendency to commit sin.'"¹⁰

This statement, based on careful examination of the Scriptural evidence, shows that belief in the historic Fall is essential to the Adventist understanding of salvation. It is this sinful condition that resulted from the historic Fall—humanity's estrangement from God and their inherent tendency to commit sin—that necessitates humanity's acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior.

That acceptance includes a belief in the efficacy of Christ's actual death on the cross—the shedding of His blood for humanity—and His literal, physical resurrection. By its nature, theistic evolution has no place for a historic Adam and Eve, or for a historic Fall.

To fully appreciate this, it is important to understand how most physical anthropologists explain the origin of humans. In brief, they do not believe

that a single pair of human beings evolved into existence. Rather, it was an *entire population* of hominids that somehow became isolated from a "parent" population, and due to a variety of factors, evolved into a new species that they define as the "first" modern humans.

Some theologians immediately recognized the implications of this view of human origins and suggested a variety of solutions: Some saw the fall of an entire population; others redefined "fall"; and still others suggested that God picked two of these new, modern hominids and infused them with a "soul," making them truly human, after which the two chose to rebel against God.

There are still other explanations, but all of them have emerged from the springs of speculation, outside of the biblical text. They require rather creative "exegesis," and pose as many theological problems as they solve. The only common thread among them is that they agree that the biblical depiction of the Fall cannot be understood in the simple manner in which the text reads.

Adventists, on the other hand, find the biblical position—on Creation, sin, the Fall, the plan of redemption as wrought by Jesus on the cross, and the eschatological eradication of sin—the most complete, convincing, and satisfying explanation of the mysteries of life.

Conclusion

Thus we see that the biblical doctrine of Creation does not revolve simply around the question of long and short chronology. Rather, all aspects of the biblical view of Creation, including the idea of a six-day Creation and a global Flood, are inseparably interconnected to other teachings that reach right into the heart of what Christianity is all about—Christ's ability to save humanity by His death on the cross.

While there is no doubt that many findings from the world of science challenge the biblical view of origins, the Creation view cannot simply be cast aside so that the church looks scientifi-

cally credible—the theological stakes are too high. These stakes include nothing less than the efficacy of Christ's death on the cross for humanity.

Moreover, Seventh-day Adventists believe that this question will be one of the defining issues that will identify God's eschatological people. The call of the first angel of Revelation 14:6, 7, is to "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water." It is a call for our time—a time when God's very existence is questioned by so many, and yet a time when God has never been more needed. ■

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- 1 Recent works that deal with these issues in detail include: Leonard Brand, *Faith, Reason and Earth History* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 1997); Ariel Roth, *Origins* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1998).
- 2 It is not just the secular scientific community that rejects the idea of a recent, six-day Creation and a global Flood. An increasing number of Christians who otherwise may share Adventism's high view of Scripture also question the historicity of these two biblical events. Indeed, these positions are now almost unique to Seventh-day Adventism.
- 3 For a definition of "accommodation," see Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Macmillan), 12.
- 4 See Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/EPOCHS' of Time," in *Creation, Catastrophe and Calvary*, ed. John Templeton Baldwin (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2000), 40-68.
- 5 Gerhard von Rad, "The Biblical Story of Creation," in *God at Work in Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 99.
- 6 See Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Evidence for the Universality of the Genesis Flood" in Baldwin, ed., 79-92.
- 7 Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 128.
- 8 For an insightful discussion of this see J. P. Moreland, *Christianity and the Nature of Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1989).
- 9 For a fuller discussion of this problem see John T. Baldwin, "The Geologic Column and Calvary: The Rainbow Connection" in Baldwin, 108-123; and Marco T. Terreros, *Theistic Evolution and Its Theological Implications*, Andrews University Ph.D. dissertation, 1994.
- 10 John M. Fowler, "Sin" in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2000), 265.

Burnout's refining fire

Austin Miles

To suddenly find yourself piled up in an ash heap of burnout is, by its nature, a defining moment. It's a significant point in one's life that seems to offer no choices, a place where natural impulse easily takes control.

Whether the burnout arises from the stress of overwork, lack of time for oneself, trying to be too many things to too many people, or callous mistreatment and injustice by others, the symptoms are the same: severe hurt; an intense, growing feeling of hopelessness; betrayal; self-doubt; anger; bitterness; outrage; and often a thundering passion for revenge. I went through it all, and every one of those reactive traits developed rapidly within me.

Not possessing the maturity to assess the lesson that might be learned through the experience and what role my own personality may have played in the events, I automatically chose to retreat instead of regroup, and began to strike out at everyone who had hurt me. I did this publicly, taking the dispute to national television.

I defiantly left the ministry vowing never to return. The worst years of my life followed. My rebellion grew to the point that God found it necessary to send me to the pit, the only place where I could truly hear His voice.

Early experiences

When I first entered the ministry, I had plenty of money and recognition. I was doing

most of it in the strength of my own flesh, not really looking to God to guide and empower me. My self-sufficient attitude had blocked me from true usefulness in ministry. I came to the place, without knowing it, of course, where all this had to be stripped away.

When my pride and mutiny would not subside, my wife, Shirley, who had been trying to get me to focus on God instead of people, finally said, "You are like Moses out in the desert. He was kept there for 40 years while God tried to work out something in his life.

"Now if you want to keep wandering around in this desert for 40 years, I will stay with you, but you could make it so much easier for all of us if you would just relinquish your pride and do what it takes to find out exactly what God wants to do with your life." But I continued as I was, and life became meaningless.

I had been in show business and went back to it, finding it empty and unfulfilling. Then there were growing health problems. All the internal conflict was taking its toll, which only increased my anger.

As an outlet, I published a scathing book titled *Don't Call Me Brother*. It detailed all that had happened to me. The book immediately became a bestseller, creating a furor in the church world, which led to harassment and death threats against me. This only served to turn my anger toward Christians into hatred.

While the book had done well, this had not given me the peace or satisfaction I had expected. Panic attacks became prevalent. The anxiety became unmanageable. Death would have been welcome.

The whole experience seemed to become a merciless boot camp, through which I felt I had to struggle endlessly.

My friends and a funeral

In the midst of the chaos, God had a plan to get me back on track. It involved three men and a poodle!

One of those men, David Balsiger, who was working on the CBS TV special, *Ancient Secrets of The Bible*, called me after reading my book. He asked me to appear on the special as a skeptic, which I eagerly did. David was a true Christian who treated me with refreshing acceptance, warmth, and respect.

Two other men, Rev. Lee Regier, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Concord, California, and Rev. Rick Hahn of Sebastopol (California)



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Christian Church, reached out to me with unreserved love when I was at my worst. They showed me profound understanding while exemplifying what a Christian should be.

And my poodle, Deputy, defined what unconditional love really means. This may sound trivial, but for me, during this time, it was not.

I TRIED, BY GOD'S GRACE, TO UNDO ANY HARM I HAD CAUSED BY MY DENOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHURCH AND RELIGION IN GENERAL . . .

It was the unexpected death of Lee Regier, with whom I had formed a close relationship, that turned the tide. Even though I had vowed never to enter a church again, I performed his funeral.

The 500-seat church was packed to overflowing, with people spilling out into the street. This was not just a gathering of people fulfilling a funeral ritual. The people who squeezed in and around the church had each been deeply touched for the good by the life and love of this gentle giant who walked with God. His congregants reflected what kind of man Pastor Lee was. These Christians were not fanatical or hate-filled. They were loving, beautiful people.

The crowd consisted of weeping teenagers, old people, rich people, poor people, a couple of mentally handicapped people, two disabled persons in wheelchairs, an attractive woman on crutches; all had been deeply touched by this pastor. They all felt equal, at home, and loved by him. His departure left an enormous gap, and deep sorrow.

What a loss. Right then, at his funeral, I felt that I had realized the full extent of his value too late.

I got angry. I thought of how I had allowed my bitterness to rob me of the blessings I could have received at the hands of Pastor Lee. I chose my times with him, so I could unload on

him all my anger and resentment toward everything he represented, instead of tapping into the wellspring of knowledge and spiritual uplifting that was there for the taking.

Pastor Lee had graciously allowed me to dump these things on him while he continued to love me. He was interested only in my spiritual welfare.

As that service went on, I realized how much I had missed. Oh, I was blessed greatly by knowing him, but I could have enjoyed him more had I not been in a state of blindness, a state that I voluntarily entered.

A perfect example of Christian conduct and responsibility had been presented to me. And unknown to me, God had sent me a mentor and an example to follow.

I vowed then and there that I would return to my calling and seek God unlike any time in my life. I vowed to make peace within myself, a work that I knew would take some major internal housecleaning.

Turning to Shirley, I said, "You may think that I am crazy, but I am going to return to the ministry and God's service."

Human ego and forgiveness

During my time in the pits I had come to the realization that I would have been hard to take in these days of my previous ministry. My attitude had provoked much of the hostility against me. I was full of myself, along with a strong ego, which had carried over from my life in the ego-driven environment of show business.

It is our ego that can't take criticism and causes us to strike back at any perceived slight and to stand up and vigorously defend ourselves. I could identify with St. Augustine who

said that he had an uncontrollable lust to vindicate himself.

My ego demanded that I be constantly recognized. This resulted in too much attention being directed my way, which stirred up a lot of resentment among those around me, even my Christian colleagues. That ego had to be tossed out the window. As Oswald Chambers wrote, we must give up all rights to ourselves.

God at work in me

God commanded me to forgive those who had hurt me and to ask for forgiveness. This was the toughest assignment of all, and I had to ask for God's strength and love to attempt to do it. I really had to put myself aside to accomplish this. I traveled to many places to do this personally, and the blessings that resulted surpassed anything I could have imagined.

I gave away all the money I made from my book, actually more than I earned, to various ministries until I had nothing left in my bank account.

I tried, by God's grace, to undo any harm I had caused by my denouncements of the church and religion in general, hoping desperately to reach any soul I may have turned off.

While the attacks and persecution from the church were severe, I now understood how I had managed to bring out the worst in people through my own self-centeredness.

During another attack from an unexpected source, God spoke to me and said that He would not change the problem, but He would change me through the problem.

Then He said, "Through this you will have the opportunity to develop character, humility, and grace. You have never excelled in grace. I will walk with you through this, and if you will obey Me, you will come out the other side in victory and then be truly fit to be My servant. Until you learn what I am trying to teach you, I will keep sending you problems."

Starting over with nothing, not even a favorable reputation due to the stories being circulated about me, I

devoted two years to working with the homeless and addicted, preaching, teaching, helping serve food, and cleaning up afterwards.

It was there that I really learned how to preach the Word rather than making a presentation.

I enrolled in college for the first time to begin a degree program, and graduated with honors.

The ministry has been restored, and it is more fruitful than ever. I have never enjoyed it more, and my relationship with God is finally on solid ground.

I have been asked to do a second television series on *Ancient Secrets of the Bible* for CBS. For this one, I have worked as a researcher, writer, and technical consultant.

I had brought on the burnout because of my lack of focus on God. My own insecurities, precisely because my focus was in the wrong direction, made me appear overbearing and self-

centered. The grace that God wanted for me to exhibit was not there.

Yes, I can see I would have been hard to take! This is why I have deliberately not elaborated on what was done to me or by whom. That is all over and buried. Thank God my old self has finally been buried as well; cremated through the flames of burnout. *The defining moment* became a refining moment.

I have learned that burnout, properly handled, can indeed be a refining fire that allows you to regroup and come forth as gold. Remaining in the smoldering ashes of burnout is to experience hell without much reprieve.

I now urge all who might be in the midst of burnout, and those who may be approaching it, to take charge of it without delay instead of allowing it to take charge.

We need not throw in the towel, or even think of quitting. Instead, we

can consider burnout a time of learning and a time for expansion. Dare to examine yourself critically. Be honest with yourself. God is trying to do a new thing in your life through the pressures you are experiencing. Let Him have His way. Consider any trial the beginning of a new miracle.

Let the ashes of burnout return to ashes . . . dust to dust. Which takes us back to square one, a place and time for a new beginning. Then rise from those ashes with a new purpose, a regrouping, and a new you. With your diploma from God's boot camp, you will be able to experience what real spiritual power is.

The boot camp required of me was tough but essential. It has proved to be the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I no longer need people's approval or acceptance; I am serving Him on His terms. And my entire ministry today is for me joy unspeakable and full of glory! ■



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Get over it!

You've been beaten up and left for dead. Who did it? The very churchly dancers you had thought you could trust. They hugged you. They prayed over you. They sent you memos and left messages on your phone machine. They sent you Christmas greetings with nice sayings scribbled all over them.

Then they flashed the name "Brutus." His knife went squarely to your heart. Your blood spilled into the alley as they sauntered away, never looking back.

When you began studying for the ministry, you never dreamed that such treachery was "out there." You thought that those in authority over you were to be believed and admired, leaned upon when you needed to open your heart in counseling and camaraderie. And so you told them everything in trust.

You never thought that those wearing ecclesiastical titles could seem to be in league with those who lie in wait.

Nor did your spouse. If anyone trusted the stalkers, it was your spouse. She believed in them completely, looking into their faces with childlike admiration.

So did your children.

But now you all are much smarter than you once were. Or can you call it "smartness"?

Getting over it

So then how do you "get over it"?

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.



You allow yourself to be human with all the emotions stirring about within you: anger, anguish, disappointment, feelings of revenge, wanting to settle the score, nightmares of getting even.

You are not in your perfect heavenly body yet. A part of all that is having a host of emotions on the dark side. Realize that and deal with it . . . in time and patiently.

Go easy on yourself. Bring your tattered self to the good Lord, who has also been treated unbelievably shabbily, over and over again. If there is anyone who surely can empathize with your state, it is He. After all, until the close of this earth's stay, God always will be weeping over those who promised to follow, yet reneged.

Dump your weary self at His feet. Cry. Wail. Stomp your feet. Rant and rave. And then let go. Only when you do all that, can you eventually "get over it."

I know. I have been there. The memories are horrible. They sting to the depths. Yet I can witness that time is the gift of grace that heals wisely. God has seen to it that the clock keeps ticking, and with each tick new tissue comes to the wounded parts.

This matter of God and His blend of time and circumstance is a much more profound healing reality than our impatient souls want to admit.

In time, God will put all that madness behind you so that you actually will talk about the horror, and without raging as perhaps you do now. But that occurs only after time—and with each of us, the timing is different.

Nevertheless, we may be sure that God will take care of us, as we move toward "getting over it," and as we arrive at a place of healing. He will see to it in His own masterful way. And when you do "get over it," you will discover a new ministry. It will be that of caring for others in like suffering, genuinely comforting them along the way, saying to them, "I know exactly what you are going through for I have traveled that journey."

That's what "getting over it" is all about. ■

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The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus

Hans K. LaRondelle



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Final of a three-part series on the keys to understanding the book of Revelation

The Apocalypse builds on the truth that God sent His Son to testify of His true character. John underscores the vital importance of the *testimony* that Jesus gave before the court tribunals of both Jews (John 5:31-37; 8:13-18) and Gentiles (John 18:37). He describes Jesus as “*the faithful and true witness*” (Rev. 1:5; 3:14; cf. 19:11) who, because He remained faithful to His confession of truth, even to the point of death, thus conquered the world (Rev. 3:21; 5:5; John 16:33).

In its historic setting of persecution under Emperor Domitian (Rev. 1:9), John gives the whole concept of Christian “testimony” a prominent forensic thrust. Allison Trites explains: “Christians [to whom John is writing] are about to face a time of severe testing and persecution, and John as a faithful pastor seeks to prepare them for it.”¹ George Caird adds: “In the Revelation the courtroom setting is even more realistic; for Jesus had borne his testimony before Pilate’s tribunal, and the martyrs must [now] face a Roman judge.”²

John’s twofold key phrase

John introduces a key phrase that sums up God’s revelation to Israel and His revelation through Jesus Christ in one indivisible unit: “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:2, NIV). John uses this twofold

phrase, with minor variations, six times in Revelation. The phrase links all his visions together for one pastoral purpose: to remind the church of the ages of her sacred calling to be faithful to her Lord till the end.

For John “the testimony of Jesus Christ” was the authoritative extension of the word of God (1:1, 2), because Jesus’ testimony is also inspired by the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev. 19:10). John testifies that he suffered on Patmos because of “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9, NRSV). Here he evidently refers to the earthly testimony of Jesus, as found in the Gospels, because he had preached the gospel “as a testimony” (see Matt. 24:14, NIV) long before he was condemned by a Roman court.

John’s twofold phrase serves both a theological and a moral purpose in the Apocalypse: It determines the faithful believers in Jesus Christ during the turbulent church age, and serves as the ultimate norm to test all prophets who claim to have visions from God, such as “Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet” (Rev. 2:20; cf. 16:13, 14; 19:20).³

Ellen White notes that her book *The Great Controversy* was not written “to present new truths” beyond Scripture, but to illumine “the pathway of those who, like the reformers of past ages, will be called, even at the peril of all earthly good, to witness ‘for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.’”⁴ She also notes that the Albigenses, the Huguenots, and the Waldenses were witnesses of the “Church of the Desert,” who “laid down their lives ‘for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.’”⁵ Thus Ellen White clearly understood John’s key phrase “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” as a reference to the Bible in its twofold witness of the Old and the New Testaments.⁶

John’s “two-witnesses theology” in the Fourth Gospel

Kenneth Strand, Adventist scholar in apocalyptic studies, recognized that John’s twofold phrase in the Revelation expresses the same theological theme as John’s Gospel: a “two-witnesses theology.”⁷ The theme of two divine witnesses is prominent in John’s Gospel because this Gospel emphasizes the essential harmony and unity of Jesus’ testimony and that of His Father: “I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf” (John 8:18, NRSV); “The

one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak" (John 12:48, 49, NRSV); "I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf" (John 8:18, NRSV).

that Jesus Himself is the revelation of God (John 1:14, 18) is the foundational truth of the Christian faith.⁸

The "two-witnesses theology"

In Revelation John strongly emphasizes his two-witnesses theology. The letters of the resurrected Jesus state seven times that Jesus' testimony to the churches was: "what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7,

Spirit of prophecy and thus has divine authority.

Beale comments: "This episode [19:10] is recorded to underscore the divine source of John's visions and to put in proper perspective the nature and function of angelic intermediaries. The warning ["Worship God!"] stands as a warning to Christians, not merely against worship of angels in particular, but against idolatry of any form in general, which was a problem in John's readership (e.g. 2:14, 15, 20, 21; 9:20)."¹⁰

Robert Mounce affirms: "The message attested by Jesus is the essence of prophetic proclamation."¹¹ Caird explains: "To hold the testimony of Jesus is to stand by the principle which governed his incarnate life, to confirm and publish the testimony of his crucifixion with the testimony of martyrdom. . . . The testimony of Jesus is the spirit that inspires the prophets. It is the word spoken by God and attested by Jesus that the Spirit takes and puts into the mouth of the Christian prophet."¹²

Beasley-Murray points to the established fact that the expression "Spirit of prophecy" was well-known among the Jews, for "their favorite name for the Spirit of God was precisely 'the Spirit of prophecy.'" He concludes: "We should, therefore, interpret verse 10 [of Revelation 19] as meaning that the testimony borne by Jesus is the concern or burden of the Spirit who inspires prophecy. Such is the chief thrust of the teaching on the Paraclete in John 14-16."¹³ According to the New Testament, the prophet of God was moved by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:25; 2 Peter 1:21).

Among Seventh-day Adventists, Roy Naden's comment is notable: "John's equating of 'the testimony of Jesus' with 'the spirit of prophecy' highlights the Testimony's divine origin and authorship. . . . Thus He [GOD] is the originator of this testimony to Christ just as He was the originator of the Word of God. . . . In Revelation 19:10 John asserts that the testimony of Jesus is divine prophecy

WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS VALIDATED IN HER APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION SOLELY BY HER FAITHFUL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD AS ATTESTED BY JESUS.

Jesus called attention to the law of witness in Deuteronomy 19:15 (see John 8:17) to indicate that His witness was not alone. John connects his two-witnesses theology directly with the Holy Spirit's role in communicating Christ's words to His disciples (John 14:26). Jesus thus predicted that the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father "will testify on my behalf" (15:26, NRSV), and "will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (16:14, NRSV).

John's Gospel thus teaches that what Jesus spoke, the Holy Spirit spoke, and therefore God Himself spoke. The Fourth Gospel states explicitly that the earthly testimony of Jesus was inspired by the Spirit of God: "For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit" (John 3:34, NIV).

Indeed, Jesus was anointed with the Spirit of prophecy at His baptism, when the Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16; Acts 10:38). Jesus was inspired by the Spirit of God and therefore spoke His testimony with divine authority to Israel. The New Testament testimony

11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22, NIV). This repeated reference to the Spirit of God stresses the divine authority of Jesus' seven testimonies.

At the end of the book, the angel informs John that both angels and Christian prophets "hold the testimony of Jesus," and therefore are "comrades" in proclaiming the testimony of Jesus and in worshiping God (19:10; 22:8, 9, NRSV). The angel then adds this clarification: "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (19:10, NRSV). This information corresponds with the statements of the seven letters that the testimonies of Jesus are "what the Spirit is saying." This correspondence is one of the many parallels in the broad chiasmic structure of the Apocalypse.⁹

This means that part and counterpart clarify each other. Both passages affirm that the testimony of Jesus is inspired by "the Spirit of prophecy," or the Spirit of God, not as a replacement for "the testimony of Jesus" but as a clarification of its divine origin. The angel does not teach that the "gift" of prophecy is a substitute for the testimony of Jesus, but states that Jesus' testimony is inspired by the

that shines its reassuring light equally on the past, the present, and the future."¹⁴

Beatrice Neall likewise concluded in her dissertation: "The word of God and the testimony of Jesus must be understood as the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection (Rev. 1:18), His power to save from sin (1:5; 12:10-11) and transform men into His likeness (14:1) through the blood of the Lamb (7:14; 12:11)."¹⁵

The testimony of Jesus as "the faith of Jesus"

Revelation 12-14 consists of a self-contained unit of Scripture, in which each chapter progressively develops the previous visions with an increasing focus on the end-time generation.¹⁶ This means that the remnant people of God in 12:17 are more fully described in 14:12.

"Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17, NRSV). "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, NRSV).

God's people keep not only His commandments but also "hold fast to the faith of Jesus" (14:12). This "faith of Jesus" is more than their subjective faith in Jesus—it is their faith, or testimony, of Jesus Himself.

William Johnsson's comment on Revelation 14:12 is worth noting: "They keep the faith of Jesus. . . . Jude may provide a parallel: 'the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.' When God's loyal followers keep the faith of Jesus they remain true to basic Christianity—they 'keep the faith.'"¹⁷

In other words, the expression "the faith of Jesus" in Revelation 14:12 serves as a clarifying equivalent to "the testimony of Jesus" (12:17) and not necessarily as a third characteristic of the remnant church. To keep "the faith of Jesus" implies to faithfully

witness to Jesus' testimony. Because they bear the "testimony of Jesus," the end-time saints are prepared to witness against the antichrist until death, as John predicts: "who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God" (Rev. 20:4, NASB).

Desmond Ford stated aptly: "When men die for the testimony of Jesus, as 12:11 and 6:9 imply, we should recognize here the everlasting gospel."¹⁸ The priceless value of the Christian martyrs lies in their faithfully holding fast to the gospel testimony that Jesus gave in His earthly ministry.

John's millennial vision reassures the divine vindication of their faithfulness to the Word of God as attested by Jesus, in the courts of heaven. Such martyrs will share with Christ the exercise of regal and judicial power in His millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:4).

The "two witnesses" in Revelation 11

Revelation 11 portrays God's two united witnesses who are authorized "to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth" (11:3, NRSV). These two symbolic witnesses of God are also identified as "the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (11:4). If "the seven lampstands are the seven churches" (1:20, NRSV), then two "lampstands" must also represent the church, this time the church in her vocation to "prophesy" or proclaim her legal "testimony" (11:7) to all nations (see Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; John 8:17).

This understanding is confirmed by the parallel symbols of the persecuted "woman" (in 12:6) and of the "holy city" trodden underfoot (in 11:2). All three symbolic figures suffer for their "testimony" during the same length of time (11:2, 3; 12:6, 11). These portrayals indicate that the true saints not only hold fast to the "testimony of Jesus" but also faithfully witness to Jesus, willing to "lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel" (Mark 8:35, NRSV).

The portrayal of "two witnesses" in Revelation 11 dramatizes Jesus' call and promise to the church in Smyrna: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10, NRSV). In this respect they are called to identify completely with Jesus in His witness and death, and will also share in His vindication (11:9-12). More important, the power of their prophetic ministry will result in the repentance and salvation of many in the world (11:13).

This prophetic ministry is the calling of the entire church. All believers in Jesus Christ are called to "hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17, NASB), while only some of them are chosen to receive the particular "gift of prophecy" to build up the church, to speak to the saints "for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" (see 1 Cor. 14:3, NRSV).¹⁹

We need to realize that the church of Christ is validated in her apostolic succession solely by her faithful proclamation of the gospel of God as attested by Jesus (Matt. 24:14, NASB; Rev. 12:17; 14:12). To illustrate the unbreakable connection between the church and her gospel testimony, John is asked to take and "to eat" a heavenly scroll (10:9, NASB) so that he can "prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations" (10:11, NASB), just as God had asked the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah to "eat" a heavenly scroll with His divine words and then to proclaim His message publicly (Ezek. 3:1-3; Jer. 15:16).²⁰

Consequently, the two witnesses of Revelation 11 do not represent the church in isolation from the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. As has been explained by earlier expositors, these two indivisible witnesses of God symbolize "the church preaching and prophesying through the two Testaments of Scripture."²¹

Kenneth Strand's meticulous study of John's "two-witnesses theology,"²² as found in the entire book of Revelation, comes to this significant conclusion: "In the book of Revelation, faithful-

ness to the 'word of God' and to the 'testimony of Jesus Christ' separates the faithful from the faithless, and it brings about persecution that includes John's own exile and the martyrdom of other believers (see again Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 12:17; 20:4; etc.). These two witnesses are, namely, 'the word of God' and 'the testimony of Jesus Christ,' or what we today call the Old Testament prophetic message and the New Testament apostolic witness."²³

The supreme test of faithfulness to God

Christian believers in every age have lived and died, and will in the future die for the gospel testimony of Jesus (Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 12:11; 20:4). Their "testimony of Jesus" is not just the testimony of their personal conversion to Jesus, but their witness to the apostolic gospel; that is, to "the testimony of God" (1 Cor. 2:1, NKJV), or "the testimony of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:6, NKJV), regarding His life, death, and resurrection (Mark 8:35; Acts 1:8, 22; 4:33; 1 Cor. 15:1-4, 15).

Paul declared that the ministry he had received from the Lord Jesus was "to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24, NASB). He warned that those who "distort the gospel of Christ" will fall under a divine curse (Gal. 1:1-9, NASB). John predicts that the church will have to go through times of severe persecution and suffering (see Rev. 12:11, 17).

Paul counseled that Christian believers should "not go beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6, NIV), and advised that all prophets in the church

be tested by this canon of Scripture (1 Thess. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 14:29, 32).

Ellen White likewise called for the same focus: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged."²⁴

"What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day . . . Let the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ be in your minds continually and let them crowd out worldly thoughts and cares."²⁵ "God calls for a revival and a reformation. The words of the Bible, and the Bible only, should be heard from the pulpit."²⁶

These stirring words call for faithfulness to the biblical standard, which is summarized so impressively by the angel in Revelation 14:12. This programmatic key text became the founding platform for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1861. This text combines the law of God and the saving gospel of Jesus Christ "as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand."²⁷

When in 1888 Adventists discovered that "the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, NKJV) implied faith *in* Jesus, the full theological implications of the three angels' messages were understood and the denomination had its "loud cry" message.

Many revivals began to take place, and in 1892 Ellen White claimed that "the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the

beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth."²⁸

It may all be summed up in this challenging exhortation: "Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world."²⁹ ■

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- 2 George B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*. Harper's New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 18.
- 3 For a more extended treatment, see my *Light for the Last Days* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1999), "Appendix C."
- 4 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1939), xii.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 271.
- 6 See also her comment on 1 Peter 1:10, 11, "It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1958), 367.
- 7 Kenneth A. Strand, "The Two Witnesses in Revelation 11:3-12," in *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 19 (1981): 127-135.
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- 9 See Strand, "Foundational Principles of Interpretation," in *Symposium on Revelation—Book 1*. F. B. Holbrook, ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1992), chapter 1.
- 10 Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 946.
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- 13 George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation: New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 276. The historical evidences in Judaism can be found in Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum New Testament*, 2:127-129.
- 14 Roy C. Naden, *The Lamb Among the Beasts* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1996), 266. See also his Excursus on Rev. 19:10, pp. 270-1; also LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 287-290.
- 15 Beatrice S. Neall, *The Concept of Character in the Apocalypse with Implications for Character Education* (Washington, D.C.: Univ. of America, 1983), 158.
- 16 For an in-depth treatment of the structure of Rev. 12-14, see my *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 263-271, and the article "The End-Time Message in Historical Perspective," *Ministry*, Dec 1996, 10-13.
- 17 William G. Johnson, in *Symposium on Revelation* (Hagerstown Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1992) 2:38, 39.
- 18 Desmond Ford, *Crisis!* (Newcastle, Calif.: D. Ford Pub., 1982), II. 696.
- 19 See Naden, "Contemporary Manifestations of the Prophetic Gift," *Ministry*, June 1999, 9-14.
- 20 See my *End-Time Prophecies*, 204-208.
- 21 R.L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of 'Two Witnesses' in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 17; and LaRondelle, *End-Time Prophecies*, 221-227.
- 22 See Note 7.
- 23 Strand, 134.
- 24 White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1945), 78.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 58.
- 26 White, *Prophecy and Kings* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1943), 626.
- 27 White, *Manuscript 24*, 1888; quoted in George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2000), 108.
- 28 White in *Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892.
- 29 White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn. 1948), 156.

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Learning from the marketplace

Interview with Patricia Fripp



Patricia Fripp is an executive speech coach and award-winning professional speaker and former president of the National Speakers Association.



Derek J. Morris, D.Min., is senior pastor of the Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist Church in Yucaipa, California.

Derek Morris: As an award-winning professional speaker and executive speech coach, you have learned many practical pointers in the marketplace that can help preachers connect more effectively with their audiences and congregations. Let's start by considering the opening sentences of the sermon. You encourage your clients to "start with a bang" and "come out punching." Why is a strong introduction so important?

Patricia Fripp: Today's audiences have very short attention spans. The first and last thirty seconds have the most impact. Don't waste those precious seconds with trivialities. Come out punching.

In my speakers' schools, I teach 32 ways to open a speech. These would also be true for a sermon. You might start with a story, an interesting statistic, a startling statement—anything rather than something predictable. Being too predictable can be boring.

With the advent of the TV remote control, no one watches anything that stands still long enough to bore. Today's audiences will forgive you for anything except being boring.

We must keep our audience's needs in mind. In the first sentence or so, you want people in your audience to elbow their neighbors and say, "This is going to be good. I'm glad we're here!" When a sermon is immediately compelling, it's as if you forget everything else. It's important to memorize

the first three or four sentences of your introduction. This allows you to start fluently, connecting with your audience.

DM: A common question that clients ask you is how to relax before a talk. What are some practical ways that a preacher can relax before the sermon and start "warmed up" rather than taking precious moments at the beginning of the sermon to get up to speed?

PF: It's totally natural to be nervous, but there are some physical exercises that can help you channel your nervousness into energy before you speak. Comedian Robin Williams does jumping jacks! I would suggest that you at least physically shake the tension out of your body. Find someplace private and wave your hands in the air. Shake your hands to shake out the tension. This will help your hand movements to be much more relaxed and appropriate.

Shake your feet. Stand on one leg and shake the other. When you put your foot back on the ground, it's going to feel lighter than the other one. Now, switch legs and shake the other foot. Relax your jaw and shake your head from side to side. I shake my face so my lips and face are relaxed. Warm up your face muscles by chewing in a highly exaggerated way.

Facial relaxation is particularly important if you're speaking at a place where image magnification is being used. These simple exercises will help a preacher to channel nervousness into energy.

A wonderful preparation technique for small meetings is to go around shaking hands and making eye contact with everybody beforehand. For larger meetings, shake hands with people in the front row and some of the people as they are coming in the door. Connect with people personally prior to your sermon. Once you've met the audience, or at least some of them, they become less scary.

DM: You emphasize the importance of connecting emotionally and as well as intellectually with your audience. What are some of the ways in which a speaker can do that?

PF: In three ways. This first is *eye contact*. I would suggest that a preacher begin the sermon by focusing on one person for the opening sentence. During the sermon, make sure your eye contact is at least three seconds

per person, and often longer, depending on the size of your congregation.

If you are speaking to a large congregation, then look in certain directions for 3-5 seconds, and people will think that you are looking at them. When you have extended eye contact with one part of the congregation and then look to another part of the congregation, people will follow you. If you have notes, complete your thought, then look down at the next note. Allow that pause to be a time for

DM: Let's go back for a moment to the matter of telling stories. You challenge speakers to develop their storytelling abilities. What are the ingredients of a good story, and how should a person relate that story for maximum impact?

PF: The ingredients of a good story are interesting characters, sparkling dialogue, and a dramatic lesson learned. The dramatic lesson learned is the point of the story. The funniest

in your presentations. What are some guidelines for using humor?

PF: Humor can add a lot to your sermon, but it must fit you and your topic. Use humor with caution. Before you use humor, ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ Is it appropriate to the occasion and for the audience?
- ◆ Is it in good taste?
- ◆ Does it support your topic or its key points?

Avoid telling generic "funny stories." Rather, find and build humor within the context of your own stories. Jokes may get a laugh, but a humorous personal story pertinent to your talk will add freshness and will be memorable to your audience.

DM: Many preachers receive little or no training in the area of nonverbal communication. What practical pointers can you share that would help preachers to communicate effectively through body language?

PF: Body language is an essential part of your message and can help you enhance the words you use to create pictures in the minds of your audience. Move on purpose. Let your movement be phrase specific. If you are saying, "Moses came down from the mountaintop," or "Jesus returned from 40 days in the desert," those would be appropriate times to move.

Avoid repetitive use of the same movements or gestures. Practice a variety of movements. Try practicing a sermon by clasping your hands behind your back to avoid meaningless, repetitive arm and hand gestures. It will be tough at first to concentrate on your sermon without using your hands, but it will help stop superficial flailing and gesturing.

You can use movement for emphasis. To emphasize a shift in your sermon content, move to the left or right of the lectern. If you have a strong point to make, use that moment to take a step or two forward to emphasize that issue. When you are making

THE INGREDIENTS OF A GOOD STORY ARE INTERESTING CHARACTERS, SPARKLING DIALOGUE, AND A DRAMATIC LESSON LEARNED.

reflection for the congregation.

A second way to emotionally connect with your audience is by *telling stories*. As screenwriter Robert McKee says, "Stories are the creative conversion of life itself into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience." Stories need to be populated with flesh-and-blood characters that the congregation can relate to. And stories need to be told well. An audience will always prefer a trivial story well told, to a brilliant story badly told. Relate your stories to the needs and interests of your congregation.

A third way to emotionally connect is what I call *the I-You ratio*. Involve your congregation in your sermon. Instead of saying, "When I was growing up, my father gave me this advice," you might say, "I don't know what advice your father gave you when you were growing up, but mine always said . . ." In that way, you have involved your audience. When they walk away, they have the advice your father gave you and the advice their father gave them. You might say, "Imagine how Jesus felt when . . ." or "Let's go back together to the fateful night when . . ." You're taking your congregation along with you.

or most exhilarating story will be pointless if you don't tie it into your theme and provide a lesson learned.

Let's imagine that a preacher is going to tell a biblical story. The Bible is full of sparkling dialogue. It doesn't say, "Jesus went out and had a conversation with the crowd." No! It says, "Jesus went out and said . . ." That's a perfect example of sparkling dialogue. Let's just imagine you are telling the story of Jesus turning the loaves and fishes into a feast.

- ◆ List all the characters who are part of the story.
- ◆ Determine the point of the story.
- ◆ Tell the story as sparkling dialogue.
- ◆ Give your characters flesh-and-blood personalities that your audience can relate to.
- ◆ Make your stories come alive.

Good stories should be edited down to the nub and then acted out for greatest impact.

Learn to affect the role of that character on stage by shifting your position, changing your head movement or facial expression. In this way the audience can *see* the story and appreciate it more.

DM: I notice that you use humor

that key point, stand still and deliver. After making a point or delivering a punch line, accentuate it by standing still and shifting only your eyes. The impact will be much greater.

Movement rehearsal is essential to ensure your gestures are relevant and not superficial or redundant. It is important not to overdo the same gestures or to stand inert before your audience. Movement keeps your presence fresh.

DM: What lessons have you learned as a professional speaker that have been most helpful for you?

PF: One of the most exciting elements of presentations I have learned is the art of not using my voice.

Pausing at exactly the right moment in your sermon is often more effective than anything you could do with your voice or body movements. Learn to pause more often. Knowing your material very well may cause you to talk too fast. Your audience may be hearing your information for the first time, so it is important to slow down and give them the opportunity to catch every word. Using pauses and silences to punctuate your material will draw in your audience.

I've also learned the importance of packaging and polishing.

When working on a new talk, develop the habit of reciting it to yourself repeatedly. You can do this while driving the car, walking through the park, waiting in an airport. After every statement or segment of material, ask yourself "Who cares?" If no one really does, don't say it.

Ask yourself, "Does this material dilute the message or enhance it?" "Does this material make the sermon more interesting, or does it make the sermon so long that the audience loses the point?" This is a great way to see if you are saying anything of value. Use short, simple declarative sentences and cut out useless words. Sound bites can be more effective than lengthy dissertations. Do this until the words form a harmonious

pattern with which you are comfortable. Then dictate it on a tape recorder and have it transcribed on paper.

Now undertake the tightening, fine-tuning, polishing process. Check for grammatical errors, delete unnecessary words, highlight the punch words, and find the emotion you want behind the words.

Then run it by close friends or associates for their feedback. Keep an open mind to constructive criticism, continue to make refinements, add pauses or gestures to draw in the audience, and insert ideas from others that enhance the integrity of the material. Once you've completed this process, proceed to final rehearsals until it is second nature to you and you can relax with it in front of your audience.

Remember that words are not enough. People always work on the words, but they seldom work on how they say them. Always look for ways to add pace, spice, energy, and polish.

Try it! You will be amazed at how dynamic a sermon can become by doing your homework dutifully and taking the time to craft it into a polished piece of work. ■

Letters *continued from page 3*

the Law, as written in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. In another place (Mark 12:29-31), Jesus identifies these as the two greatest commandments. "There is none other commandment greater than these."

It is easy for an author to make a slip, and it may seem picky to point it out. But considering all that Seventh-day Adventists have published concerning "Two Laws" rather than recognizing the whole law as a single unit, it invites the query as to whether Davidson may still have some confusion in her mind on the subject. ■

—Bruce Battye, Australia.



At the Westpoint of Evangelism Council, jointly sponsored by The Voice of Prophecy and the Pacific Union, the General Conference Ministerial Association honored veteran evangelists for their significant contribution to soul-winning endeavors through so many years. Pictured (honorees names in bold) are: (front row) James A. Cress, General Conference Ministerial Secretary; **Dorothy Oster**; **Byron Spears**; **Bruce and Marianne Johnston**; Cathy Payne, Ministerial Resource Center Coordinator; (second row) Julia Norcott, *Ministry* Managing Editor; Lloyd Wyman, Pacific Union Ministerial Secretary; **Ken Oster**; **Gordon and Betty Jenson**; **Ione Spears**; **Wayne and Harriet Hooper**; **Audray Johnson**; **Sharon and Bob Edwards**; Peter Prime, General Conference Association Ministerial Associate Secretary.

Retirement: Time to serve again

Perry Smith

Caleb's story has always been a challenge and an inspiration to me. Three times Moses refers to Caleb serving the Lord "wholeheartedly." This was when he was a prime 40-year-old (Num. 14:24; 32:12; Deut.1:36).^{*} When Caleb was 85, that affirmation was reaffirmed and Joshua "gave him Hebron because he" followed the Lord "wholeheartedly" (Josh.14:6-9, 13, 14).

Retired and in my mid-70s, I choose to identify with the wholehearted Caleb. Like him I want to "give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings."¹

Aging is inevitable. Ministers, however, should learn to grow old graciously not grudgingly, winsomely not woefully. Some people are old at 40, others are young at 80. The difference is in having a grateful and praising heart. We cannot afford to endure aging; we must enjoy it. We are not to be fearful, but faithful, positive, and creative.

Such a desirable attitude in our older years as Christian pastors, can lead to fruitful activity as we draw on the assurance of our Lord who has said: "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence: "The Lord is my helper!" (Heb. 13:5, 6).

I know of one minister who at retirement said he would never preach again or accept church responsibilities. I could not adopt that attitude. I have always had a passion for the gospel of Christ and for the Christ of the

gospel. My activity must continue and be modified, and of necessity toned down as time passes.

Converted at 15, God led me into children's ministry, and into lay preaching at 17. Then followed National Service in the Navy, insurance work, Laymen's Bible College, Theological College, and ordination in 1956 in England. I have actually preached for 58 years. My highest joy is to serve my Lord. I echo Charles Wesley's hymn: "Happy if with my latest breath I might but gasp His Name; preach Him to all."²

In 1965 God led us to Australia. Here He opened many and varied doors of ministry in significant pastorates plus wider calls to serve around Australia. Since retirement, my sense of call, joy, and fulfillment in ministry has not diminished.

Two psalms declare the fact, faith, and fruit of older years. I long to "bear fruit in old age . . . proclaiming 'the Lord is my Rock'" (Ps. 92:14). Youth and age are linked in Psalm 71:5-8 and 17, 18. We must not suddenly seize up and "shut up" at the moment of retirement. We have walked with God many years, and we can go on growing in grace, accumulate knowledge and wisdom, and continue developing our developed gifts of ministry.

In retirement, energies may not be as dynamic and our pace may need to be slower, but fruitfulness can continue. "Even to your old age and gray hairs . . . I am He who will sustain you" (Isaiah 46:4). Indeed, we must still proclaim the faith by lip and life.

Ministry after retirement

A positive attitude in the transition from a full-time, fully-demanding ministry to the years of retirement is vitally important. Some speak of re-tire-ment as being "re-treaded." My own retirement activity has worked out well and fruitfully as God has led and blessed.

In Australia we have what is called "Supply" ministry—standing in for a resident minister's "Long Service Leave," usually for three months at a time. Eight such calls have come my way.

My priorities all through the years have always been preaching and pastoring. The preaching of God's Word has been scriptural and evangelical. One is aware of the privilege of the call experienced by us, the proclamation of the gospel entrusted to us, the



Perry Smith is a retired Uniting Church minister in Australia.

perfecting of the instrument expected of us (see 2 Tim. 2:15), and the power of the Spirit available to us. What a high calling!

The other focus has been pastoral visitation, being a shepherd “of God’s flock that is under your care” (1 Peter 5:2), which we promise in our ordination services. There is a rather tragic quip about ministers with *foot-and-mouth disease*; those who cannot visit and cannot preach! And yet visiting and preaching are so basic to ministry.

After my calls to Supply Ministry, I requested a Members and Adherents Roll and a local street map. The roll helped me to anticipate the families to be met and lift them to God in prayer. The map gave an insight into the area and streets where the people lived. These documents laid prayerful and practical foundations for the new ministry.

When *supplying*, there are often fewer administrative demands, allowing more time for vital pastoral care. That has proved a special joy, and was gratefully remembered after I left. However, the membership rolls have often needed updating, adjusting transfers in and out, and receiving new members.

Caring does count. I began visitation almost immediately with priority calls to those in sickness and special need, but also to encourage the fit-and-wells. It is good to read the Word and pray in each home if at all possible and convenient. We cannot possibly know people in depth with a handshake at the door. However, when they know you really care and relate warmly, they will naturally turn to you when in need. After such visitation, each family usually feels stronger spiritually, and the congregation as a whole benefits.

As a member in your own local church

In full-time ministry we are at the helm, taking the lead and launching initiatives. After retirement it’s different. We still have the opportunity to

serve and support the minister or ministerial team. However, there must be no competition, no rivalry.

For this reason, most ministers, after retiring, move away to live in another area. Some members can retain too strong a bond with the retiree rather than relate to the new

know our neighbors well—older and younger, married and single—and we try to relate to and support them well.

At one time, two people in our village died at about the same time. There was no pastor to conduct a funeral. I offered my services. Not only the two families but the entire

MY WIFE AND I CONTINUE TO LEAD A GROUP OF MAINLY SENIOR CITIZENS WHO MEET IN LOVING, PRAYERFUL FELLOWSHIP AND SHARE A BIBLE-STUDY SEGMENT.

pastor. Wherever we are, as retired ministers, we should prayerfully and practically support and encourage the church leadership.

Some churches allow for a “minister-in-association” status when it comes to pastoral retirees. This role involves some preaching, pastoral care, and other ways of serving by mutual agreement.

If not, an associate can, of course, still serve. With the pastor’s approval there are still various ways to support the ministry and the lay leadership. Opportunities for preaching, pastoral care, and witnessing are always abundant. Churches in rural areas and of other denominations constantly look for speakers. My wife and I continue to lead a group of mainly senior citizens who meet in loving, prayerful fellowship and share a Bible-study segment. This has met a real need, and our attendance has grown from 17 to more than 40. We share fun and humor too—important factors when growing older.

Opportunities for ministry and service are almost infinite.

Being a good neighbor

Besides church-related activities, retirees can get involved in various community activities. We live in a small village that has no church. We

village appreciated our service and the opportunity it provided for bringing comfort to the grieving and a feeling of togetherness to the entire village. It was a bridge-building experience, and from then on witnessing in the village and sometimes preaching to them became easy.

We share in the togetherness of our home area by attending meetings of Neighborhood Watch, our community association, and the Environment Protection Society. It is good to show interest and support in this way, mixing not as a professional minister, but showing interest and friendly support for the benefit of our community.

We now have open doors to minister in retirement—in our village, our nearby small town, and the wider district.

With John Henry Newman and Charles Wesley, I can say: “So long Thy power has blessed me, sure it still will lead me on”³ and “We’ll praise Him from all that is past, and trust Him for all that’s to come.”⁴ ■

** All Scripture references are from the New International Version.*

1 Australian Methodist Hymn Book (W. P. Merrill), 535.

2 Australian Hymn Book, 150.

3 Ibid., 494.

4 Ibid., 153.

Make your church volunteer-friendly

Teena Stewart



Teena Stewart is a freelance writer from Benicia, California.

Someone has said that 90 percent of the work of a church is done by ten percent of the members. No matter how hard you try, you'll never get everyone to commit to serving. Some are simply more interested in taking than giving, but you can increase the percentage of those who serve by being more proactive.

In Mark Twain's book *Tom Sawyer*, young Tom is given the chore of whitewashing his Aunt Polly's fence. Tom grudgingly sets to work. As he paints, several acquaintances stop by. Each friend invites Tom to come and play, which certainly sounds like a lot more fun than painting a fence. Tom formulates a plan. If he can recruit some of his friends to help, the work will get done in half the time.

"Boy, your plans sound tempting," says Tom, "but I'm having way too much fun painting this fence." The idea that fence painting could be fun never occurred to Tom's friends until he made it look like an adventure.

If you know the story you'll remember that Tom ended up with a whole row of fence painters while he simply stood by and watched.

Tom figured out something that lots of church leaders haven't. It takes one person a lot longer to complete a task than when many people pitch in. If we want to recruit help, we must make the task look so appealing that people can't refuse helping. It also shows the value of fellowship. Working alone

can be rather lonely. Working with others can actually be enjoyable.

Radiating a contagious vision

How do we get people to see lay ministry as an exciting service opportunity rather than an unwelcome chore? It all depends on how we present it.

We can start by offering engaging ministry *discovery* courses that help people identify their gifts and abilities. There are many resources available. A good ministry discovery class explains spiritual gifts, and helps individuals identify theirs. In addition, it should offer some sort of self-assessment where people have the opportunity to evaluate their own abilities and experiences and look at where they are best suited for ministry.

At the end of the class, it's wise to have information available on ministry opportunities within your church. Our church even has ministry consultants who are specially trained to meet with individuals and help them find where they are best suited to serve.

Educate attendees so they catch the vision. Many church attendees today are newcomers; people who either haven't previously been exposed to church on a regular basis, or who haven't attended at all. These young believers often have a misconception of church operations. It never occurs to them that they should be involved.

We must educate members to see staff as trainers and equippers rather than those hired to do all the work. "[God has given pastors and teachers], to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11, 12, NIV).

Helping members catch the vision involves instilling within them a new belief system that includes the conviction that every believer is uniquely gifted and is expected to serve. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10, NIV).

Motivation

Motivating people to serve in ministry is an ongoing challenge. Just as people walk away from a sermon and forget what they've learned, if you want people to acquire a concept, you have to put the idea before them in as many ways as possible.

Once people begin to get the idea that every member is a minister, remind them,

every chance you get. The idea of service through volunteering should be an ongoing campaign. Preach it from the pulpit, teach it in classes, mention it in printed media and through other venues.

Sell the congregation on the benefits of volunteering. What are those benefits?

First, when you volunteer, you step outside of your world and learn to touch the lives of others. People often complain of feeling unconnected despite the fact that they are attending church. Remind them that volunteering provides an opportunity to fellowship and socialize.

Another significant benefit of volunteer service is that it encourages a person to develop his or her gifts and skills; a very valuable asset that may be adapted in other settings, such as careers. Volunteering also performs a badly needed service in the life of someone in need. Show potential volunteers that when they get involved, they become a part of a larger picture.

Make them aware of the needs. A key reason people fail to get involved in ministry is because they don't know there's a need.

Think of your church as a target. Inside the inner circle are a few select staff members and leaders who know what's happening and the direction your church ministry is taking. There's another circle outside of that, most often composed of leaders and additional staff, who are somewhat in the know. The further away you move from the core, the fewer people in the crowd who know about the actual ministry opportunities and openings.

Too often those who know the needs don't get the word out past the first ring of leaders. If you don't tell someone your needs, or the needs around them, how will they know?

Not only do you need to get the word out, you need to be specific. For instance, rather than saying, "We have openings in the children's department," you might say, "We have openings for a greeter—someone to meet parents and children at the

door once a month" or "We need someone to help lay out arts and crafts for the five-year-olds during the second service."

You can run ads in your printed programs, publish them in newsletters, make announcements, and more. However, the most effective way to get people to step up and agree to serve is to issue a personal invitation. When you talk with them personally, it makes the needs seem more important, and it gives the person the opportunity to ask questions. Plus, the personal invitation makes them feel special, that they really matter.

Provide opportunities and training

Give them permission to try and fail. People are often reluctant to volunteer because they are afraid they either won't know how to do the job or they might fail completely. One of the best ways to dispel their fears is to allow them to try short-term volunteer opportunities. This helps them gain confidence.

Most people find that when they actually do step into a ministry position, it's not as scary as they had imagined, and most stick with it once they've decided to try it.

Provide coaching and training. Potential volunteers want the reassurance that they won't be abandoned when they get involved.

Don't put someone into a new position, hand him or her a book, and close the door. Do a talk through/walk through. First talk to them about what is expected and how the job is to be done. Then, if possible, have them observe someone doing the job so they can see how it is currently being managed.

Follow up periodically to see how they are doing.

Avoid volunteer burnout

Get rid of sacred cows. Long-established churches often have programs that are being run simply because they have always been there . . . and are most likely sacred to someone!

The more programs you have, the more volunteers you need to run them. No program should be so precious that it cannot be eliminated.

What might have been a highly effective ministry five or ten years ago, can end up being a draining maintenance ministry today. Needs change. Churches grow and shrink. Demographics change. People and their needs alter. This means ministry needs are always in flux.

Make it a habit to periodically evaluate programs and their purposes to see if they are still effective. If not, consider implementing something else that would be more effective and utilize fewer volunteers.

In addition to obsolete programs that stretch churches beyond their volunteer capacity, churches might consider setting limits to lengths of service tenure, so dedicated volunteers don't burn out from doing the same thing year after year.

Show appreciation

Show volunteers they are appreciated. Many people function in their roles, wondering how effective their work is, or how well they are, in fact, doing it. Besides this, volunteers may enjoy serving, but no one wants their work to go unnoticed. There are many ways to show volunteer appreciation. It can be as simple as saying "Thank you," or as formal as a recognition ceremony for outstanding service. The important thing is that you show you appreciate them. By respecting your volunteers, you'll increase the likelihood of retaining them.

To get more people involved in ministry, we need to make our churches more volunteer friendly. What barriers are preventing people from volunteering in your church? Is it time you began working to remove those barriers? ■

Attention: If you receive *Ministry* through your conference and you transfer to another conference, be sure to contact your new conference to make sure you are added to their subscription list.

The "why" of Paul's preaching!

R. Leslie Holmes

I am captivated by the "why" of the apostle Paul's preaching. His motivation to preach was so compelling in him that twice he refers to his appointment as "a herald and an apostle," placing his call to preach or be a herald, ahead of his call to apostleship (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). Paul has a lot to say about preaching. He mentions it at least 45 times in his epistles. To understand his motivation to preach, we need to consider two related matters.

Paul's mandate

First is Paul's *mandate* to proclaim the gospel: "Necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16, NKJV). The apostle has a divine directive. Every authentic preacher must begin there. Someone went up to the Iron Duke of Wellington and asked, "Sir, should we preach the gospel to every creature?" The Iron Duke replied, "Sir, what are your orders?"

We preach under orders, "as a dying man to dying men." We have a message to proclaim, a story to tell: 2,000 years of it is scripted on the pages of history and opened for all to see. There was a time when the center of this faith we preach was Jerusalem. The next great center of Christian faith was Antioch. For a while, the church at Antioch sent out missionaries such as Paul, Silas, Barnabas, and John Mark. Then formalism and indifference polluted their zeal and the light went out.

After this, the hub was at Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire for 300 years. Preachers such as John Chrysostom made the eastern Roman Empire glow in God's glory, but the light went out, and the center moved to Rome. Out of Rome came those great missionary movements that evangelized the Picts, Scots, Irish, Anglos, Saxons, Gauls, Germans, Titans, and Belgians, and all of Northern Europe came to faith in Christ. But as with the others, Rome fell with a multitude of aberrations and errors, and the great centers of faith became Germany and Geneva and Edinburgh.

Under the Reformers, there was a new welling up of faith in Jesus. Then the Reformation bogged down in theological minutiae and the great heart of things moved to England. But England became staid and indifferent and the flame went out.

After England, God raised up America. Throughout the twentieth century America was the mission center for the Christian faith. It influenced every continent for Christ and His kingdom. But today it seems that America is rapidly becoming a theological melting pot, where the principle theological tenet may be expressed in the plaintive cry of Rodney King, "Can't we all just get along?" than to anything like the message Paul preached and wrote about.

Again, the church has softened in its missionary zeal, and we are miscarrying our mandate. Once more, the lamp is growing dim. Many of our seminaries have become more like schools of psychology. Paul knew what his orders were: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . . God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:18, 21; cf. Matt. 28:19, 20). Do we still know our orders, our authority and the content of the message we are to herald?

Paul's message

Second, Paul knew his *message*. "We proclaim Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23, NRSV). Paul was a brilliant academician who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, a recognized scholar and philosopher of the time. To be a student under Gamaliel was an honor reserved only for the brightest and most promising.



Robert Leslie Holmes, Ph.D., is pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Yet, having met Christ, Paul knew that he was not called to philosophize or moralize but to deliver the message of the Cross, a word from God that carried the authority and power of heaven itself.

Paul's motivation

Then, of course, there was Paul's *motivation* for preaching, the focal point of this article. The apostle told the Corinthians, "Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died" (2 Cor. 5:14, NIV).

To more fully understand that compelling love, we must turn to Paul's letter to the Galatians, where he writes, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20, NKJV).

Before we look directly at what this verse says about God's love, see how many first person pronouns are employed in these few phrases. Five times he uses "I." Three times he speaks of "me."

For Paul, Christian faith is nothing if not personal, inward, individual, particularized, and exclusive. Just as no one can sleep or eat for another, so no one else can become a Christian for another. Nor can someone else be called to preach by proxy!

Now, there are two parts to Paul's motivation to preach. The *first* is gratitude for past love: "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me." Paul uses the Greek aorist sense to denote a fully accomplished act. The aorist, like a photo in a picture album, is completed history, a moment passed.

The sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary was a once-for-all-time action. For Paul, the fully accomplished sacrifice of Christ on Calvary was, among other things, a separating, historical moment for all of us. Our sins were taken away in one action that stands still as the centerpiece of history.

God's Son died. When He died, our sins were paid for, lock, stock, and barrel! Nothing else we, or any other, can do can make that action more effective or more complete. Paul's realization of the meaning of that act of love created in him a compelling gratitude.

At the same time, Christ's death brought death to Paul. He uses the Greek *tauromai*, which literally means "co-crucified." "When Jesus was crucified, I was too," he says. "The death I deserved for me took place on that cross." "When He died, I died." Part of the wonder of Paul's epistles is that he frequently writes them to dead people: "We died with Christ" (Rom. 6:8, NKJV). "You died with Christ." "You died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 2:20; 3:3, NKJV).

The *second* part of Paul's motivation is framed in the words, "Christ lives in me." This is grace for present living. When we die with or in Christ, we come alive in ways we never experienced before. It is a life so different that the Greeks used a new word to describe it: *zoe*. That is, eternal, vibrant, abundant life. This kind of life, rather than mere *bios*; that is, organic, measurable; terminal life!

The benefits of the "in-Christ" relationship

The "in-Christ" relationship permeates Paul's letters. Paul says believers are intricately joined to Jesus as though they (we) share a kind of spiritual DNA.

At least six benefits come to us from this relationship:

First, *salvation*. We are saved to newness! "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV). Second, *advocacy*. We have a great spiritual cheerleader: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Rom. 8:26, NIV). Third, *strength in trial*. We have supernatural assurance

in our helplessness! "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' . . . That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses. . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9, 10, NIV). Fourth, *hope*. We are lifted above all our circumstances! "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you" (Eph. 1:18, NIV). Fifth, *life*. We are drawn to a new level of living. "[This] life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20, NIV).

These five benefits by themselves are more than sufficient to embrace Christ and preach Him with gusto.

The ultimate motivator

Yet, there is one more benefit that becomes Paul's primary motivator, the epicenter of what we focus upon here: *Love*.

In Christ we encounter love at a level not found in any other person or any other place. "I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19, NIV).

Paul employs the Greek verb that stretches far deeper than mere head knowledge. He speaks of a quality of love that is found nowhere else but in Jesus Christ.

This love is more vast than infinity. Thus this love has no limits, no horizons, no stopping places. It is a love we can never lose . . . ever, for it is always about us and ever unwaveringly focused upon us! Amazing as it may seem, this God who sent His Son to the cross for us loves us still—even now at this moment, with a love that never wanes—that no evil word or action can discourage or reduce.

That's the way we are loved and that's the "why" of Paul's preaching! ▀

The irrelevant, powerless, unpopular leader*

Jeff Gang



Jeff Gang is minister of young adults at the Forest Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church, Apopka, Florida.

As spiritual leaders, it is enticing for us to base our identity and find our meaning in what we do, what we control, or whom we impress. This was a temptation Jesus faced. What can we learn from Him when it comes to facing this threat to effective ministry?

Following His baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness where he is tempted by the devil for 40 days. Luke exposes us to the nature of the temptations and the form they took (4:1-3).

Jesus is given three opportunities to prove His identity.

1. To prove He is God's Son by what He does: *turn stones to bread.*
2. By what He can control: *all the kingdoms of this world.*
3. And whom He can impress and how: *jump off the tower and let the angels save You.*

In other words, Jesus is tempted to be relevant, powerful, and popular.

Pastoral allurements

In my own way, I face the temptation to take my identity *from what I do*. I want to be relevant and successful. These desires are especially strong at the times I feel the world doesn't care about what I have to offer as a Christian pastor. I want to do great things for God. But who is watching? Who is listening?

Too often I feel there is more criticism than praise for what I have to offer. I feel as if peo-

ple around me are saying: "We don't need what you are offering." It is at such times that I wish I could turn stones into bread. And I think the tempter capitalizes upon these insecurities!

I also struggle with the temptation to take my identity *from what I control*. I want to be powerful. All too many of my leadership decisions are thinly veiled bids for congregational control. If I can impress you with my "goodness," or my "skill," you will think well of me as a leader. Then you will be more apt to follow me.

In reality I am trying to control what you think about me. The more responsibility I am given, the more effective leader I feel I am. So I clamor for more prominent influence and grander positions.

Knowledge is power. I must know the answers, offer the solutions, and fix the problems. My efforts to convince someone of truth are all too frequently weighted with a subtle attempt to control. If I can argue my case, prove my point, show how my worldview is better than yours, tear down your belief system, or demonstrate that my ideas are better than your ideas, I have controlled you, or at least feel I have some power over you.

And I struggle with the temptation to take my identity *from whom I impress*. This is closely related to control. My reputation is important. I seek respect, welcome applause, and revel in awards and accolades. Name recognition is important. Admitting failure is a sign of weakness.

In all of this, I want to appear slick, in control, bigger than life. My decisions as a leader are based more on what you will think of me than on my convictions. I am therefore susceptible to being more political than spiritual in my leadership.

Jesus and the enticements of success

What, then, can a minister learn from Christ when it comes to these kinds of leadership enticements?

First, at His baptism, we hear the Father's voice from the heavens: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21, 22, NRSV).

Isn't this a little odd? As far as we know, Jesus had accomplished nothing by the standards of the world. No words of truth had been given. No miracles performed. No deeds of power done. No mighty acts committed.

Jesus had impressed no one. Not one person had even signed up to follow Him. Nothing. Yet the words come, "With you I am well pleased."

What a magnificent thing to hear from the Father. I am not pleased with You because You are relevant, powerful, or popular. I am pleased with You because You are *My Son*.

Jesus was able to resist the allures of power, prestige, and popularity because He understood that His identity was not rooted in these, but in His relationship with His Father, and in His Father's regard for Him.

The author of Hebrews reminds us that "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15, NRSV).

As spiritual leaders we are tempted on the same basis as Jesus was. It is by all means our privilege and it is a necessity for us to find our identity in who God says we are in relation to Him and in what He thinks of us in Christ. This goes so far beyond, and in such a different direction from what is impressive by the assessments of the world or those in the Church who tend to operate by its values.

Henry Nouwen writes: "The great message that we have to carry, as ministers of God's Word and followers of Jesus, is that God loves us not because of what we do or accomplish, but because God has created and redeemed us in love and has chosen us to proclaim that love as the true source of all human life."¹

Jesus, Peter, and the allure of power

One of the first to receive this invitation was Peter. It is quite clear that Peter (and the other disciples with keen Messianic expectations) believed change would require Someone who was relevant and powerful, who could take control of the situation at hand, and was popular. He was ready to champion the cause of Someone who could win people to Him through spectacular feats of glory. He thought

he saw this kind of potential in Jesus. But as he traveled with this humble Teacher and became His apprentice, Peter slowly learned His ways.

In Mark's account of Jesus' life there comes a moment when Jesus begins to tell His disciples that His path would not lead to glory, but death. Peter is aghast that Jesus could make such a dire prediction. It was the last thing he envisioned for Jesus, or, of course, for himself. So he takes Jesus aside and says: "No, Lord, this just can't be. Don't talk like this." And then Jesus says the most shocking thing Peter could hear: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (Mark 8:33, NRSV). Jesus knew the source of Peter's fear. He'd heard this somewhere before.

At the end of John's story of Jesus, we find our Lord having breakfast on the beach with His disciples (John 21). A conversation takes place between Peter and Jesus. After commissioning him for ministry, Jesus tells Peter where the road would lead: "Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go" (John 21:18, NRSV).

Spiritual leaders who follow the way of Christ are called to the same destiny. Like our Lord, we are to be suffering servants. Our calling is to nothing less than lives of humility, service, and sacrifice.

There is a hunger in our culture for authenticity. Many people are not interested in the kind of gospel we are communicating because of the incongruence between our actions and our message. The result: The gospel is judged by our actions.

Genuine and false power in ministry

I am reminded of a moment in the film adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien's

epic *The Lord of the Rings*. Gandalf the Wizard has returned to the Shire to warn Frodo that the ring in his possession is indeed the one ring, the Ring of Power. When Frodo realizes the seriousness of his situation and its implications for his life and all of Middle Earth, he tries to give the ring to Gandalf. In the face of this, the wizard responds, "You can not offer me this ring! Don't tempt me! I dare not take it. Not even to keep it safe. Understand, Frodo. I would use this ring from a desire to do good. But through me it would wield a power too terrible and great to imagine."

Sadly, the history of the church is riddled with leaders who chose relevancy, power, and popularity as a means of ministry. But Jesus continually reminds us that He does things differently. His ways are counterintuitive. That is the irony of spiritual leadership.

When we choose to find our identity in what God says about us rather than in what the world says, we find a sense of joy and peace, and we can then begin to have solidarity with all the irrelevance, powerlessness, and unpopularity that exist in our culture. This brings freedom to love the world as our Lord did. Then we no longer have the compulsion to find our identity in what we do, what we control, or whom we impress. We live and breathe as God's pleasure in the world. And that is really all we need. ■

** In composing this article, I have largely been in debt to the writings of Henri Nouwen and his book In the Name of Jesus.*

¹ Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 1993), 17.

Encouraging ideas!

I'm encouraged! Here are a few great ideas which may bless your own effectiveness in ministry.

Honoring heroes. Following the tragic loss of the Columbia space shuttle, Sligo Church included these two new verses, written by J. E. Volonte, for the hymn, "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" (The Navy Hymn).

*(1) O Spirit, Whom the Father sent
To spread abroad the firmament;
O wind of heaven, by Thy might
Save all who dare the eagle's flight,
And keep them by Thy watchful care
From every peril in the air.*

*(2) Eternal Father, King of birth,
Who didst create the heaven and earth,
And bid the planets and the sun
Their own appointed orbits run;
O hear us when we seek Thy grace
For those who soar through outer space.*

And speaking of heroes. Rick Husband, dedicated Christian and captain of the Columbia Space Shuttle, prerecorded 34 individual video family devotionals, for his two children to use during his scheduled 17-day absence. He promised to conduct personally their next study when he came back home. That's a promise he'll now keep in the kingdom!

Sex Education Curriculum. The first Adventist framework for sexuality education has been released by the GC Family Ministries Department. Karen Flowers, co-director, states, "Sexuality education is no longer a luxury; it's a matter of life or death due to the HIV/AIDS crisis. The local church has a responsibility to use its avenues to convey these issues—not to bypass parents, but



JAMES A. CRESS



to help them." Topics range from marriage and parenting to interpersonal relationships and biblical foundations. See Ministerial Resource Center www.ministerialassociation.com.



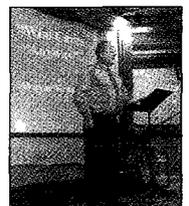
Ordination honor guard. While the ministers await on the platform to participate in the ordination service, pastoral couples in Chile are flanked by unordained pastors holding their Bibles aloft as a sign of affirmation and, no doubt, anticipation of their own future ordination.

PK Magazine. The first issue of *Increase*, a new monthly journal for pastors' kids, has been issued by pastoral couple Libny and Sara Dubreuzé with the goal of providing information and motivation for PKs to use their experiences to benefit others. Lewis Hendershot, president of the Florida Conference, says, "As a preacher's kid myself, I understand the challenges that are faced by many pastors' children who live their lives in glass houses. Any

attempt at encouraging and being redemptive toward PKs has my complete endorsement." Information at www.tagnet.org/increasepk.

Dads take daughters on date. Family ministry leaders in the Orlando Central Adventist Church organized a date for dads and their daughters as a way of promoting positive communication and emphasizing the importance of a father's presence. "Daughters need to know they should be treated at all times like a good father would treat them—like a princess." Other resources, including a *Covenant of Purity and Protection*, have been developed by Randy and Lisa Wilson of the Focus on the Family organization. This covenant, printed on a beautiful certificate and signed by fathers, witnessed by their daughters, at a special father/daughter banquet or ball, states: "I, (daughter's name)'s father, choose before God to cover my daughter as her authority and protection in the area of purity. I will be pure in my own life as a man, husband, and father. I will be a man of integrity and accountability as I lead, guide, and pray over my daughter and as the high priest in my home. This covering will be used by God to influence generations to come." (www.generationsofflight.com).

Come over to Sweden and help us! Church Planters X-Change '02, a week-long training conference hosted by Trans European Division, brought leaders, coaches, and about 120 core group members and future planters together to focus on planting new congregations in post-Christian, postmodernist Europe. Attendees heard Australian pastors Wayne Krause (pictured) and Phil Brown share system-



atic principles and mentoring insights of how they are doing it in Victoria and New South Wales.

We'll stay with you! The first permanent *Breathe-Free* stop smoking clinic has been opened in Cebu, Central Philippines. Leaders say, "We're not going away; we're here to stay. So those who face ongoing challenges resisting tobacco can return for ongoing support to the same site where they first received help."

Students dedicated. Churches in Moldova host a special dedication at the beginning of the school term for students of all ages, kindergarten through university. This feature includes recognition by name of each students' new venture, a small gift, and a special prayer for success and faithfulness.

Korean pastors to Japan. Five pastoral couples from Korea have made a long-term mission commitment to



establishing new churches in unentered territories of Japan. Along with their children, each couple has committed a minimum of six years (including one year of language study to Japan), as if paying back the debt of the gospel that Korea received from Japan about 100 years ago.

Increase Sabbath School attendance. Gracie Culpepper of Atlanta North Church reports their attendance has climbed from 30 to nearly 300 by the *World Sabbath* concept of using one program per month to emphasize various areas of mission emphasis including Mission Spotlight, World News and Prayer Projects, features about specific target areas, and guests who emphasize a mission specialty. Build anticipation

and learn how to present this exciting program by ordering a *World Sabbath* Kit for US\$25.00 which includes a video, instruction book, sample programs, and folder paks. Call Southern Union Church Ministries, 1-404-299-1832, ext. 442.

Skipping church? You'll be noticed!

Absent members in Beltsville, Maryland (USA), receive a copy of the church bulletin with a note stating, "We missed having you in worship this past Sabbath. It is our hope that this bulletin will help you stay connected with what is happening at your home church. God's blessings to you. We look forward to seeing you next Sabbath."

Adventist Reconciliation Services, founded and directed by veteran Ministerial Secretary and Christian Conciliator, Charles R. Brown, offers a peace-making ministry designed to assist people in responding to conflict in a biblical manner. For information concerning available help for individuals, businesses, churches, conferences, and supporting ministries, contact www.adventistreconciliation.org.

Straight talk to streetwalkers.

Members of Chicago's St. Sabina's Church are out on the street offering prostitutes money for their time—so they can talk about God. Pastor Michael Pfleger, says, "We have to be willing to try radically new ways to reach people." He told his members, "Instead of wasting money on going to a church banquet, let's take the \$20 banquet ticket, go find the prostitutes and drug dealers and say, 'We're going to buy your time. We want to sit down and talk about God's love for you.'"

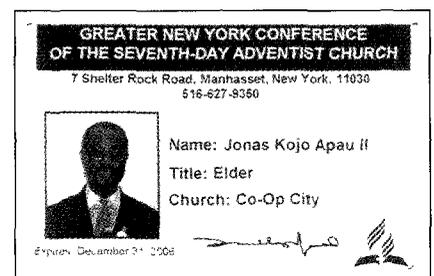
Choose Life! Real Hope for Real People, a new CD resource joint venture of Ingathering and AWR, provides a useful gift for those facing uncertainty and high stress. I recently gave a copy to each person in a group from different religious backgrounds and invited



them to enjoy the short, easy-to-use segments as stress-reducing messages to help bring focus, energy, and hope to their lives. A bonus section, "What Christians Believe," offers an introduction to Christian and Adventist thought. (Toll free: 1-888-425-7760)

Cowboy Commandments. Pastor Shannon Moreland says the Ten Commandments posted on the wall of Cross Trails Church, Fairlie, Texas (USA) are delivered with a cowboy twang in the vernacular of his attenders at the recently planted cowboy church: "Just one God. Put nothin' before God. Watch yer mouth. Git yourself to meeting. Honor yer Ma and Pa. No killin'. No foolin' around with another fellow's gal. Don't take what ain't yers. No tellin' tales or gossipin'. Don't be hankerin' for yer buddy's stuff."

Credentials for Local Elders. In view of increased security at hospitals and other public places where elders may represent their local congregation, the Greater New York Conference has



prepared personalized identification credentials designed by Pastor Rohann D. Wellington. The card's reverse states, "This card may only be used as an Official Identification in the fulfillment of your duties as an elder in the local church. If for any reason you are not able to fulfill your role, this card must be returned to the conference. Volunteer card—not an employee."

Best of the best—at best prices!

Note the special inventory reduction pricing of resources for effective ministry on the back cover of this issue. Cathy Payne, Ministerial Resource Center coordinator, has provided abundant resources at these one-time prices. ■

BOOK REVIEW

The Skeptical Environmentalist, by Bjorn Lomborg (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001). ISBN 0521010683, paperback, U.S.\$28.00.

Evangelists love statistics to prove the urgency of accepting Christ, preparing for the Second Coming and the end of the world. Yet most evangelists are not schooled in the very research methodology and statistical interpretation being used.

Lomborg posits that neither are the leaders of most environmental groups. He sees a tendency to develop a litany of statements that indicate the natural world is fast failing. He also points out that this has intensified over the last 150 years. Single, limited-scope studies are reported as absolute proof of environmental degradation and predict an imminent doomsday for the planet.

In a most stimulating first section, Lomborg addresses every tenet of the litany in a fair-minded approach, reviewing the cited studies and evaluating the conclusions of the Litanists. Contained in the first two chapters is the simplest, best, quick education for nonprofessionals that I have ever read on the use of modern scientific research tools and resulting statistical interpretations. It capably presents examples that teach! The rest of the work takes these basic assumptions and expands on them with detail (the book has 150 pages of notes numbering 2,930. Some reading of notes is fascinating as reading the text. In addition, there is an extensive bibliography).

While not a quick read, it is very worthwhile, especially for authors, teachers, theologians, evangelists, and preachers who, in their written and spo-

ken works, draw on scientific and research arenas for evidence to support their philosophical and theological presentations.

In an era of ever well-educated minds that tend to spurn spiritual matters, erroneous use of data is an "instant turnoff." The church today is targeting generations that are receptive to the gospel only when it is presented in an intellectually honest way and with the accurate use of source material. This secular work is a positive corrective for those who will read it and apply its articulated principles in preaching, teaching, and evangelism. Then, the modern generation will be reached for Christ, not turned off by sloppily used material.

Seldom does writing from such an unrelated field have so direct an impact on my calling. This is one of them! I urge its reading.

—Roger H. Ferris, Seattle, Washington.

SHOP TALK

Think link

Need church workers? Who doesn't? Recruitment means linking people who want to serve with appropriate opportunities. First, establish present and future needs. List job opportunities presently available in the church. Your list should include additional department heads, teachers' assistants, crafts, drama and music personnel, and secretaries. Once your needs are established, you have numerous options available for service. With many defined opportunities to choose from, each person should find one role that fits his or her capabilities.

Ministering in the church should be a pleasant experience. Magnify the position; don't play it down. Give it proper honor. Keep it simple. Make it something people can accomplish. If people

have good experiences, they will say Yes more quickly to future requests.

All good things must come to an end. Lay persons are often afraid that if they volunteer, it will involve them forever! A terminating date helps calm the person's fears and motivates a Yes response. Be realistic. Encourage volunteers to try the position for six months or even one quarter.

—Douglas R. Rose, Grand Prairie, Texas.

Name story

For a recent issue of our monthly newsletter, my wife and I wrote a story containing all the last names of our church members (over 250 of them!). Since it coincided with our February issue, we made it a love story. We received numerous appreciative comments, and I believe a little sanctified humor is beneficial.

There are a couple of things to keep in mind when doing such a project: (1) the names you have to work with must determine the basic story line; and (2) you have to be a good punster and do a bit of stretching at times.

We would be happy to email a copy to anyone who wishes to contact us at <kw8t@myactv.net>.

—James Hoffer, Hagerstown, Maryland. ■

\$25 for your ideas!

Send us your suggestions on how pastors can make daily ministry more effective. If we publish it, we'll pay you U.S.\$25.00. If your idea promotes a product or service, we'll be glad to consider it but won't pay \$25.00.

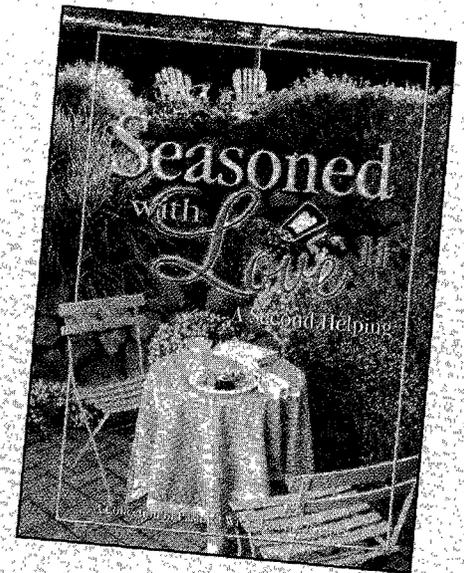
Mail ideas to *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904. All authors must include their mailing address, and U.S. citizens must include their Social Security number if they wish to receive payment.

Resources from *Shepherdess International*

Seasoned With Love and

Seasoned With Love: A Second Helping

“A collection of pastoral wives’ favorite recipes,” this wonderful cookbook is filled with recipes on everything from appetizers to breads to beverages to cookies and candies and everything else, but without meat! These recipes have come from all over the world, as ministers’ wives from every division



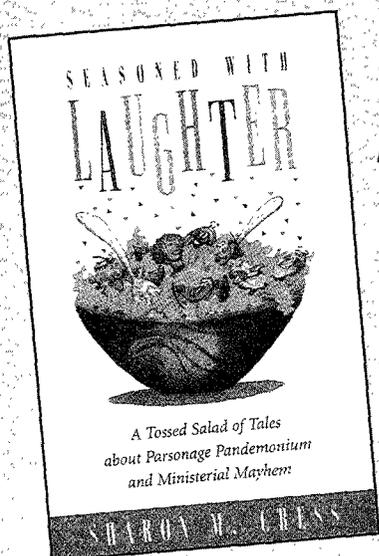
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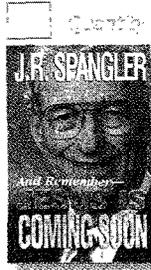
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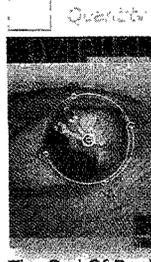
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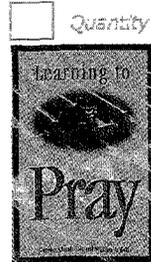
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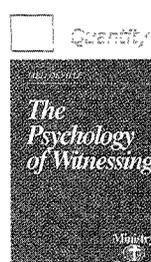
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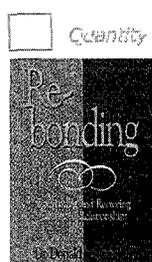
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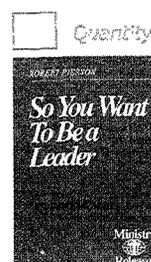
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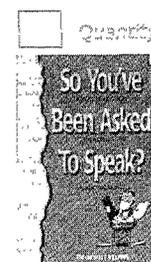
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