

# MINISTRY<sup>®</sup>

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# IDOLATRY

MAKES SENSE; IT JUST DOESN'T WORK



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# “TOO OFTEN WE COUNT AT THE WRONG END. WE COUNT THEM COMING IN THE FRONT DOOR AND IGNORE THOSE LEAVING OUT THE BACK DOOR.”

## Missionaries' kids

**W**hat Happens to Their Children?” (May 2007) is an excellent article on the beneficial gifts of missionaries—their outstanding children. There must be a lot more stories about this contribution of dedicated missionaries. I know a retired minister in southern California who was born of German missionary parents in Japan, attended a German expatriate school, witnessed the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, was befriended by U.S. military occupation forces, got his theological training in the U.S., and became president of a national reform organization in the U.S.

—Harvey Chinn, Sacramento, California, United States.

**T**he other day my wife and I were navigating the streets in Bangkok with our two younger daughters, ages seven and ten. We turned down a side street and had to walk through a brothel area to reach where we were going. The women were actively flirting with other men as we passed by; but they politely ignored me. As we exited the narrow street onto

the larger main road, I laughed and said to my wife, “What kind of upbringing are we giving these little girls?” My guess is Dr. Wheeler’s article answered it.

—Mack Tennyson, CPA, PhD, vice president for Finance, Mission College, Muak Lek, Saraburi Province, Thailand.

**H**aving grown up as a missionary’s kid, I can identify well. None of this information was available to my parents when I was a kid. Thankfully, their connection with Jesus has helped keep me stable—despite still living on a pogo stick as an adult.

To stay in one place more than seven years is anathema to me. Life is too short to live all in one place, don’t you think? I’m 60 years old now and my husband and I just moved to Orlando, Florida, United States—the sixth location in 24 years. And we’re happy.

—Dena Guthrie, Orlando, Florida, United States.

## Faith and science

**F**rank M. Hasel’s article, “How to Deal With Open Questions: Facing the

Challenges Between Faith and Science” (July 2007) is loaded with poor reason, ill-conceived philosophy, undeserved conclusions, and a fair amount of ignorance regarding the topic he covers.

He supports his entire thesis on his personal belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. At the same time, he references verses from three different versions of the Bible, using translations which best support his point of view! He refuses to acknowledge that such faith in the scriptural words is his alone, and not applicable to a world of science, which he apparently discounts.

One quote is anecdotal and unsupported: “The number of scientists who believe in biblical Creation is small (but growing) . . .” This demands some sort of proof. Hasel’s footnotes are all from those who agree with him, although he does argue with Pannenberg’s suggestion that evolutionary science deserves attention.

The biblical story of Creation can be read in a few minutes, and is admittedly influenced by a great number of other  
*continued on page 29*

**CORRECTION:** In the July 2007 issue it was incorrectly stated that the series titled “Surprises in Biblical Typology” was a three-part series. It is, indeed, only a two-part series that concludes this month. We apologize for the error.—The editors

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# What gives you hope and enthusiasm?

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER



**W**hatever your role—pastor, chaplain, church administrator, evangelist, or teacher—ministry always has challenges, real and, at times, overwhelming. But such challenges are accompanied with their own rhythm of hope and enthusiasm.

You'll find that fact inherent in the very concept that God calls us to ministry. Because He owns our ministry, He directs our path and strengthens our task. Therefore, challenges can become opportunities to affirm and experience hope and enthusiasm for ministry. Three recent experiences enabled me to make such an affirmation.

**Studying the Word.** Finding time for the study of the Word of God remains a challenge. It seems that many other things—some important—demand our attention. I recall making such a statement to a congregation I was pastoring. Several members told me that they assumed only *they* had this challenge. But those of us in ministry know all of us face it: how to find time for in-depth study. For a number of months I thought I had what seemed a reasonable explanation for not spending more time in the Word—the room where my resource books are kept was under repair and the books were not organized. During this period I studied the Word, but because many of my books were not available and the environment was not conducive, studying was difficult. One day I decided to act. I cleared some space and spent serious time in the Word. No more excuses. I did not have access to all my resources, but I had enough to enrich my study. The renewed commitment to deeper study blessed me.

What's keeping you from spending the needed time in the Word? Take action to set aside the needed time. You

and your congregation will be blessed. This I experienced.

**Passion for preaching.** Some years ago I recall hearing predictions that preaching will soon disappear. We were told that other more effective means of communicating will replace preaching. Interestingly enough, some prophets of this demise were right, but mostly in their own ministry.

Those who have a passion for preaching don't see it as a relic from the past. Their preaching still challenges, encourages, invites, and gives hope to congregations. The other day I was talking to a colleague. Recently he experienced serious challenges in his life. Instead of getting discouraged, he told me that he has a renewed passion for preaching. Each sermon has become an exciting journey for him.

Evaluate your preaching. When you stand before a congregation do you have an intense desire to share the message of hope? I think of a recent experience in a country where the people are facing what seem to be insurmountable challenges. Despite this, they eagerly wanted to hear a message from God's Word. Their enthusiastic responses blessed me. I was again reminded that preaching should not be described as a preacher *delivering* a message—rather as the preacher and the congregation *participating* in a message from God.

## Quality of those who serve.

"Another large settlement resulting from clergy abuse was announced," stated the radio announcer. Though some deny it, the problem of abuse by clergy exists worldwide and across denominational lines. Just thinking about clergy abuse can be discouraging for, after all, clergy are supposed to be individuals who responded to God's call. Whatever happened to the idea of holiness?

Without ignoring the problems of abuse and other clergy problems, we must not forget the ministers who stay faithful in God's ministry. And often, many have to do it under challenging circumstances.

Recently I had the privilege of lecturing to 19 ministers in the Sudan. This country has been in the news because of the conflicts taking place there. During the 12 days I spent with this group, I was impressed with their commitment to ministry and the absence of complaints. One pastor, for example, had to travel ten days by various means of transportation to reach his home. A number of them had churches scattered over a large area (Sudan is the largest African country) so that at times they are away from their families for many weeks while visiting their congregations. Reasons to complain could be multiplied, yet while these individuals spoke of their challenges, they focused on the opportunities God gives them. My time with this group encouraged me because of their contagious enthusiasm for ministry.

What gives you hope and enthusiasm for your ministry? I would be delighted to hear from you. **M**

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# Idolatry makes sense; it just doesn't work

Randall L. Roberts



Randall L. Roberts, DMin, is the senior pastor of the Loma Linda University Seventh-day Adventist Church, Loma Linda, California, United States.

As a child, listening to my mother read Bible stories, I would see paintings of the Israelites prostrating themselves before idols, and I just couldn't understand why the people were forever running after other gods. It just didn't make sense.

Now, though, I understand why people fall into idolatry. I'm not arguing in favor of it, of course; I'm just saying that I understand why, even today, many people worship idols.

## The Elvis factor

*Christianity Today* reported years ago that some Elvis Presley fans were revering the king of rock and roll as a god. Pockets of semi-organized Elvis worship had taken hold in the U.S.A. In New York, Colorado, and Indiana, worshipers were raising their hands and chanting Presley's name and working themselves into a fervor, praying to the deceased star. They believed that Elvis watched over them. If someone reported seeing Presley, the high priests at the Church of the Risen Elvis in Denver held Elvis worship services. They enshrined a look-alike doll of Elvis in an altar surrounded by candles and flowers.

Robbie Williams is a British pop singer who, it is said, told BBC Radio in 2001 that he prays to Elvis, asking for his oversight while the band performs. I understand that he even has a tattoo of a prayer to Elvis.

Sure, most of us would never do something so brazen as that. But idolatry can come in much more subtle forms.

## Celebrity worship

A woman entered the Haagen-Dazs store on the Kansas City Plaza for an ice-cream cone. She looked over the selections and made her choice. While waiting for her ice cream, she suddenly found herself face to face with movie star Paul Newman, who was in town filming the movie *Mr. & Mrs. Bridge*. She was staring into those steely blue eyes. Newman smiled and said Hello. Her knees quivered!

She did manage to pay for her ice-cream cone and leave the shop, heart pounding. Outside, after regaining composure, she realized that she had forgotten her ice cream! So she started back into the store only to meet Newman at the door.

"Are you looking for your ice cream?" he asked.

She nodded, still unable to speak.

"You put it in your purse with your change."

My point? Be careful, because idolatry can sneak up on you. It may not be Elvis or Paul Newman, but there just may be somebody out there that would cause you to stuff your ice cream into your pocket.

## Meeting needs

As I said, I understand why people worship idols. It's because people have needs and they believe that idols can fulfill them. Idolatry comes along and says, "I can meet those needs. I can take care of your needs. Do you need excitement in your life? Come, and I'll find excitement for you. Do you need to be noticed, to be loved, to be valued, to be accepted, to find purpose? Come. I will meet your needs."

No wonder so many people turn in that direction. If idolatry promises to meet such needs, then turning to it makes great sense.

It's just a pity it doesn't work.

Said the psalmist about the idols of the nations around Israel:

But their idols are silver and gold,  
made by the hands of men.  
They have mouths, but cannot speak,  
eyes, but they cannot see;  
they have ears, but cannot hear,  
noses, but they cannot smell;  
they have hands, but cannot feel,  
feet, but they cannot walk;  
nor can they utter a sound with their  
throats.

Those who make them will be like them,  
and so will all who trust in them  
(Ps. 115:4-8, NIV).

What's he saying? He's talking about their idols, their gods that—unlike the God of Israel, who is invisible, whom they can't see—they can see. Indeed, their idols have hands and feet and ears and mouths. They have all of the equipment to be able to do something about the human plight. In light of that, I can understand why the people turned to the idols. They thought that these idols could fulfill their needs and desires better than could a God whom they weren't able to see.

Have you watched TV advertisements lately? Advertisers are experts at telling you your needs, your legitimate needs, things like your need for permanence or for belonging or for acceptance

experience the ultimate in life? Then drive BMW, because it is "The ultimate driving machine." Notice—it's not even a car; it's "a driving machine"!

The psalmist said, "Their idols have ears, *but they can't hear your cries for love*; they have eyes, *but they can't see your needs for acceptance*; they have feet, *but they can't walk by your side*; they have hands, *but they can't hold you when you're lonely*. They promise so much, but they just don't deliver."

Idolatry makes sense; it just doesn't work.

Hideyoshi, a Japanese warlord who ruled in Japan in the late 1500s, commissioned the building of a colossal statue of his god. Then he had it set up

the question is obvious, why did they continue with idols? And, by the same token, why do we?

Preacher and author Craig Barnes, in speaking to other ministers, said something to this effect: Many of the people to whom we preach each week are terrified by the idea that they are who they are. In other words, many of us are terrified that things are not going to change; that our situation is not going to get any better. "This is who I am. And it's not going to get any better. My marriage is as good as it'll ever be. The house I live in is the best one I'll ever own. The salary I make is the most I'll ever earn. And my body? Well, it's downhill from here on out!"

## THE TRUTH IS, THERE IS A GOD-GIVEN WAY TO SATISFY THE LEGITIMATE DESIRES OF OUR HEARTS. THE PROBLEM WITH IDOLS IS THAT WE TURN TO SOMETHING THAT *PROMISES* TO FULFILL SUCH NEEDS AND YET CANNOT DO SO.

or for love or to be valued, and then promising you how their product will satisfy that need.

Are you lonely? Do you need connection? Then AT&T will help you to "Reach out and touch someone." Do you question your value? Then use L'Oreal. L'Oreal says: "Because I'm worth it." Do you long to be something more than you currently are? Then join the U.S. Army and "Be all you can be." Do you want to stand out in the crowd? Then watch CNN International, and "Be the first to know." Do you desire freedom? Then watch Showtime. Its tag line is, "No Limits!" Do you want something you can depend on, someone who's always with you even in an emergency? Then remember American Express, and "Don't leave home without it." Do you want to

in a shrine in Kyoto. It took thousands of men five years to build it, but it was finally complete, and his god had a home. But the work had scarcely been completed when an earthquake brought the roof of the shrine crashing down on the statue. The statue was greatly damaged. It is said that in a rage, Hideyoshi shot an arrow at the fallen colossus, and shouted at it: "I put you here at great expense, and you can't even look after your own temple!"

Idolatry makes sense. It makes sense because it promises to meet our deepest needs. No wonder people turn to it. But it just doesn't work.

### **Extreme makeover**

Now, if such is the case with idols—and this psalm says it is—then

And, says Barnes, this is a particularly terrifying idea in a culture like ours where we are constantly longing for something more. Sufficient evidence of that is our fascination—some would say *obsession*—with transformation and being made over.

*Extreme Makeover.*<sup>1</sup> Sound familiar? "Make me something more than what I am. Make me more beautiful, more shapely, younger, more wealthy, give me a nicer house and a newer car"—and the list goes on.

In a society like ours, idols make absolute sense. Why? Because they *promise* such things. They *promise* that you will be younger and more beautiful and more wealthy and more likeable. But the reality is, when it's all over and done, you are still the same person you were before.



The truth is, there is a God-given way to satisfy the legitimate desires of our hearts. The problem with idols is that we turn to something that *promises* to fulfill such needs and yet cannot do so. We have, for example, a desire for permanence built into us. And there is such a thing as heaven to satisfy that desire. And yet, when we become idolatrous, we turn to idols like frenetic exercise and plastic surgery in the hopes that we will somehow, because of them, be able to achieve a certain sense of permanence. And yet, it never works, does it?

So what do we do?

### The blessings of the Lord

O house of Israel, trust in the LORD—  
he is their help and shield.

O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD—  
he is their help and shield.

You who fear him, trust in the LORD—  
he is their help and shield.

The LORD remembers us and will  
bless us:

He will bless the house of Israel,  
he will bless the house of Aaron,  
he will bless those who fear the  
LORD—  
small and great alike.

May the LORD make you increase,  
both you and your children.

May you be blessed by the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.

The highest heavens belong to the  
LORD,

but the earth he has given to  
man.

It is not the dead who praise the  
LORD,

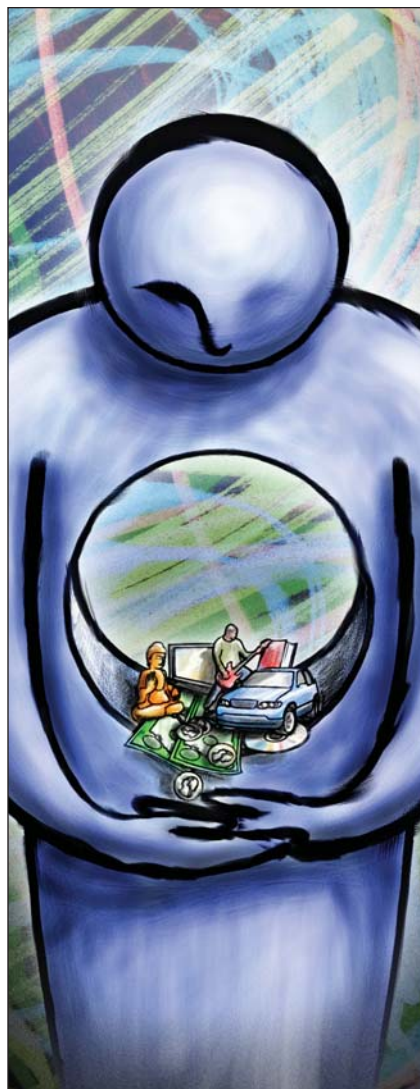
those who go down to silence;  
it is we who extol the LORD,  
both now and forevermore.

Praise the LORD (Ps. 115:9–18, NIV).

What's happening here is that when the psalmist is finished talking about the idols of the nations around them—and the fact that they will never be able to meet the needs of those who worship them—he turns to the Lord. Three times

he calls upon the people to trust in the Lord. Time and again he tells them to trust in God and they will be blessed.

Do you know what it's like to be blessed, to be blessed by God? The psalmist says, If you place your trust in the Lord, you will be blessed by Him. In other words, if you place your trust in Him, the deepest needs of your heart will find their satisfaction in His blessing.



Do you yearn for love? Jesus said, "For God so loved the world. . . ." Do you long to rest? Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Do you crave acceptance? Jesus said, "The one who comes to Me I will never reject." Do you yearn for permanence? Jesus said, "Whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life." Do you

want to be valued? John said, "Beloved, consider what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we might be called *the children of God*."

The bottom line simply is: Even your most treasured idol can't deliver what you ultimately need. But God can.

### The ultimate

Years ago, the Dallas Cowboys<sup>2</sup> had a player named Duane Thomas, a tremendously gifted athlete who became known as "the Silent Storm" because of his refusal to talk to coaches and other players. He just receded into himself, quiet, stoic, silent.

The Cowboys made the Super Bowl that year, and a large part of the media circus swirled around Thomas and his unwillingness to engage with other people. It was during that week that one of the sports writers asked him a question that finally drew an answer. "Duane," he asked, "how do you feel about playing in the ultimate game?"

"If it's *the ultimate game*," he answered, "why are they playing it again next year?"

It's a good question to ask about any idol that may tempt you. It's a question which probes the very substance and significance of what we sometimes worship. If it's the ultimate car or the ultimate house or the ultimate job or the ultimate product, then why do we continue to pursue more and better and younger and richer? If it's the ultimate, shouldn't it ultimately satisfy us?

Idolatry makes sense because it promises so much. Pity that it doesn't work. So maybe it's time to try something that doesn't make near as much sense, at least not to the world around us. Maybe it's time to try worshiping a God you can't see, because He will fulfill the deepest desires and needs of your soul in ways that all the gods you can see never will. ■

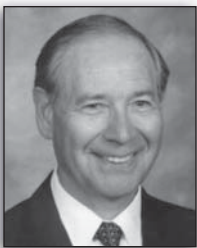
1 A popular television program in the United States.

2 A popular American football team in the United States.

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# Surprises in biblical typology (part 2 of 2)

Hans K. LaRondelle



Hans K. LaRondelle, ThD, is professor emeritus of systematic theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

**A**n enormous tension with a potential for serious conflicts exists between the Old and the New Testaments. Historically this tension has resulted in different kinds of doctrinal systems. The first extreme decision was made by Marcion who, around A.D. 140, chose to omit the Old Testament (OT) from the canon and to limit the New Testament (NT) to only one Gospel (Luke) and ten epistles of Paul. He eliminated the rest of the NT because of its “judaizing” tendencies. Marcion thus cut the Christian faith off from its OT roots.

The second extreme solution to resolve the tension between the Testaments is represented by the influential Barnabas Letter, probably from a Gentile Christian of Alexandria in the early second century. He claimed to “impart perfect knowledge,” by means of a series of allegorical interpretations of OT passages, laws, and rituals (1:5; 5:1–8:7). This document represents a “christianizing” of the OT, reducing it to a collection of cryptic oracles, and changing the Christian faith into “a moralistic-dogmatic system.”<sup>1</sup> Both radical solutions—elimination, allegorization—try to solve inherent tension between the Testaments by some unhistorical knowledge, some ideological program. Particularly in *allegory*, says Oscar Cullmann, “the salvation-historical meaning of Scripture is eliminated, making it merely a form for expressing some truth divorced from salvation history.”<sup>2</sup> Against such an abstract doctrinal approach, the

NT stresses the harmony of the Scriptures in its developing salvation history. It recognizes in the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth the new events of God’s acting and speaking (Heb. 1:1, 2). These events reveal a pattern of parallel situations that are, however, consistently Christological and accompanied by “the principle of heightening and the notion of consummation.”<sup>3</sup> E. Earle Ellis observes that such typological correspondences are not simply repetitions, but “always combined with a change of key in which some aspects of the type are not carried over and some are intensified.”<sup>4</sup> This correlation of correspondence and contrast is particularly evident in Paul’s surprising typologies.

## Paul’s theology of the Abrahamic covenant

In Romans, Paul applies Adam, rather than Moses, as a type of the promised Messiah (“a type of Him who was to come” [Rom. 5:14, NASB]). This innovative typology (Rom. 5:12–21) has been called Paul’s “creation” typology. In addition, Paul introduces an extensive covenant typology to serve his pastoral purposes. His epistles are to be understood against the background of the religious situation and moral needs of each particular audience. This counts especially for his letters to Galatians and Corinthians. Paul presents no systematic theological treatise on typology, yet occasionally he injects a typological perspective into his pastoral messages that serve to correct some misconceptions of God’s new covenant in Christ Jesus.

While it is characteristic of Paul to stress the essential continuity of his gospel message with God’s covenant with Abraham (Gal. 3 and Rom. 4), the apostle also recognizes specific changes in this process of continuity. In Galatians, Paul argues how believers in Christ enter into the Abrahamic covenant as legitimate heirs of the promised inheritance. The immediate occasion came from an acute crisis among Galatians, some of whom had become “bewitched” by a “different gospel” (Gal. 1:6–9; 3:1, 6, NASB; cf. Acts 15:1, 2). Paul reminds them of Abraham’s faith in the promises about his future offspring and their land, as described in Genesis 15:5–7. In God’s eyes Abraham was a genuine believer, and God responded by “crediting” Abraham’s faith “as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:6). For Paul, Abraham’s trusting faith stands as the prototype of saving faith that must be re-enacted presently by faith in God’s act of raising Jesus from the dead (Rom. 4:23, 24; 10:9). He concludes: “Understand, then, that those who believe are



children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7, NIV). His theology allows "spiritual" offspring from Abraham; that is, any believer among Jews and Gentiles may enter by faith into the Abrahamic covenant, without the rite of circumcision (Gal. 5:6; 6:15). Paul also takes a further step. In the light of his Christian faith, he continues, "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith" (Gal. 3:8, 9, NIV; quoting Gen. 12:3). Rabbinic teaching had restricted Abraham's "blessing" mainly to his belief in monotheism or his intercession for Gentiles,<sup>5</sup> and explained Abraham's faith as a meritorious act, so that he was really "justified" because of his work.<sup>6</sup> Paul, however, asserts that "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham" (Gal. 3:8). Paul's interpretation stresses the essential unity of his gospel message with

the Abrahamic covenant, which could be seen only in retrospect, in the light of the Christ event. Paul clarifies the salvation-historical perspective by interpreting the promised "seed" of Abraham as a Messianic promise fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:16). Thus his conclusion: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29, NIV). This astonishing implication lifts Christ and His people to the status of the Messianic age and Spirit, because in Him "the fullness of the time" of the Abrahamic promise is realized (Gal. 4:4, NASB; cf. 3:14).

Paul's interpretation presents a fundamental advancement of Christian faith over Judaism, enlarging Abraham's offspring and inheritance to universal proportions. Christ determines who belongs to Abraham's offspring: only people of faith (Gal. 3:9, 26–29). And the land of the Canaanites (defined in Gen. 15:18, 19; 17:8) becomes a prophetic type of the world (see Rom. 4:13; cf. in Matt. 5:5, "the earth"). Paul's implicit typology expands the

Abrahamic covenant to include all who exercise the trusting faith of Abraham in the new epoch of time (Gal. 3:9). To the Romans, Paul explains: "The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:23, 24, NIV). Paul's theology represents both an intensification of Abraham's faith and hope, and a change of ritual entrance requirement into the Abrahamic covenant. Belonging to Christ is demonstrated now by "baptism into Christ" as incorporation into Christ and thus to become legitimate "heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26–29, NIV).

### Paul's exodus typology

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul uses an Exodus typology for the purpose of warning some undisciplined Corinthian believers that Israel's God is also the Judge of Christians under the new covenant (1 Cor. 10:1–13).

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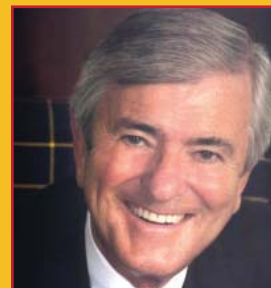
**James Earl Massey** is the son and grandson of ministers. For 22 years Dr. Massey was the senior and founding minister of the Metropolitan Church of God, a large multicultural, mission-oriented congregation in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. He was also elected for a five-year period to be the speaker on the "Christian Brotherhood Hour" — a weekly international program which broadcasted on more than 140 radio stations. Additionally, Dr. Massey has been invited to preach in distinguished pulpits across America, Europe, Egypt, the Caribbean, Australia, and Japan. More than 140 colleges, universities, and seminaries have invited him to preach or lecture. James Earl Massey has authored 25 published books and in 2006 *Christianity Today* named him one of the "25 Most Influential Preachers of the Past 50 Years."



**Laurence Turner** began his ministry as a pastor-evangelist in South England before being invited to be a lecturer in Theology at Avondale College, New South Wales, Australia. Currently he is Principal Lecturer in Old Testament Studies and Director of Research Degrees at Newbold College, Bracknell, England. Dr. Turner's main area of research and publishing has been the book of Genesis, on which he has published three books and contributed to major reference works and journal articles. He is very highly regarded as an expository preacher and enjoys expounding the Old Testament in a contemporary Christian context. In addition to Old Testament, Dr. Turner teaches homiletics at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and is regularly invited to preach internationally.



**Jo Ann Davidson** is the daughter of missionary parents. Formerly a homeschooling mom and music instructor, Dr. Davidson now lectures at the Andrews University Theological Seminary. She has the distinction of being the first woman lecturer in the Theology Department. Articles she has written have appeared in the *Adventist Review*, *Signs of the Times*®, and the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. Her column, "Let's Face It," which has a woman's slant on theology, appears regularly in the journal *Perspective Digest*. She has also authored the published book *Jonah: The Inside Story*. Dr. Davidson is a highly sought-after speaker for large national and international Christian conventions and continues to find great fulfillment in her various roles as wife, mother, daughter, sister, auntie, teacher, musician, student, and active Christian.



**Lloyd John Ogilvie** has long been recognized as having a remarkably distinguished ministry. He was the 61<sup>st</sup> chaplain of the United States Senate in Washington, D.C. Dr. Ogilvie was also the Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, California, for 23 years with a very significant TV and radio broadcast ministry. He is currently the president of Leadership Unlimited, receiving numerous high-profile speaking invitations. Dr. Ogilvie has authored more than 55 books and has been the recipient of many prestigious awards including being named in the 1996 Baylor University's worldwide survey as one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world. Recently, Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, established the Lloyd John Ogilvie Preaching Institute and the Lloyd John Ogilvie Chair of Preaching.

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"Consider the people of Israel," he urges, and sees a need to apply a specific "judgment typology" within the framework of his covenant theology. Paul points to the faithless and idolatrous Israelites as a type of faithless and licentious Christians (1 Cor. 10:7–11; cf. Ps. 78). Further, God's judgments on the Exodus generation "occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did" (1 Cor. 10:6, NIV). Then, after discussing claims of some in Corinth to have freedom to sexual permissiveness and to join idolatrous festivals (1 Cor. 6:12–20; 10:23–33),<sup>7</sup> he reminds them that God

church needs to view Israel's covenant experiences as warning types for her own covenant faithfulness to Christ. (3) The new covenant intensifies Israel's redemptive and judgment typologies for the Messianic age.

Consequently, Paul's message is characterized by its salvation-historical-eschatological perspective.<sup>8</sup> This typological perspective can be called a charismatic interpretation of the OT<sup>9</sup> under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Paul read the Scriptures "with new eyes in the light of God's revelation in Christ ... [that produced] fresh and startling interpretations."<sup>10</sup>

Mediator of His saving grace (1:1–3). To support this gospel truth he lists selected Messianic passages (Ps. 2; 2 Sam. 7; Pss. 45 and 110; Heb. 1:5–13). Inasmuch as the Davidic kings, as imperfect types, presented a partial fulfillment of these royal psalms, Hebrews extends the story of the Davidic covenant by proclaiming its superior Messianic fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

Christ's appearance has introduced the promised "last days" or Messianic age (Heb. 1:2). This progression in salvation history is the ground for the first pastoral exhortation: "Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have

## PAUL'S INTERPRETATION STRESSES THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF HIS GOSPEL MESSAGE WITH THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, WHICH COULD BE SEEN ONLY IN RETROSPECT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHRIST EVENT.

will judge the church just as He did "our forefathers" (1 Cor. 10:1, NIV). Those were "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" and ate the same "spiritual food" and drank the same "spiritual drink" from the "spiritual rock" that accompanied them (vv. 2–4, NIV), which "rock was Christ" (v. 4, NIV). These are more than coincidental analogies; they are significant salvation-historical correspondences. God's earlier judgment on the idolaters and sexually immoral ones in Israel has not become irrelevant now, but has increased its pertinence in the time of the end: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (v. 11, NIV).

To summarize Paul's exodus typology: (1) The church of Christ receives her spiritual identity from being "baptized into Christ." (2) The

### Christian typologies in Hebrews

Finally, we must turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews. This letter "offers the most elaborate Christian reading of the OT to be found in the NT."<sup>11</sup> With peculiar force the author illuminates Christ and His work through striking typological applications that cover all of salvation history. Donald Hagner explains: "It is the Jesus Christ of history who stands as the goal, the achieved purpose of all God has said and done in the OT . . . Christ, indeed, provides our author with a point of orientation from which he is able to read the OT with new understanding."<sup>12</sup> In other words, the inspired writer does not start with a historical exegesis of an OT passage, but chooses one that serves his purpose of illuminating the present salvation in Christ. Hebrews begins with the proclamation of Christ's appearance as the "Son" of God, who has come as the ultimate Revealer of God's glory and

heard," because "how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (2:1–3, NRSV). This exhortation looks as well to the future judgment which is enlarged in 12:25–28. This salvation-historical continuity of past, present, and future, structures the letter "according to an 'anticipation–consummation' motif."<sup>13</sup> Its typological applications center on three aspects of Christ's Messianic mission: His unique self-sacrifice, His heavenly priesthood, and His heirship to all things. The prologue affirms that God made His Son "heir to the whole universe . . . When he had brought about the purgation of sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:2, 3, NEB). The epistle then develops typologies as increasing realizations of God's "eternal covenant" (13:20). He focuses particularly on the Messianic fulfillment of the old ("first") covenant in the "new" ("better") covenant (7:22; 8:6, 13; 9:1, 15). He stresses two inherent



inadequacies of the first covenant: (1) The Mosaic sanctuary offered only limited access to God through Levitical high priests when they carried animal blood into the Most Holy Place (9:7). (2) Its “various ceremonial washings” were only “external regulations” that “cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper” (9:10, 13). In all these rituals the Levitical priests were serving “a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (8:5, NASB), which is “ready to disappear” (8:13, NASB). The author introduces now a new kind of typology in God’s covenant relationship by adding a celestial dimension to the historical one. He briefly enumerates the provisions of the earthly sanctuary and their regulations for cultic worship (9:1–7). How does the author arrive at his Christian applications? He does not construct them by deductions from the earthly “shadows,” but rather reveals what “the Holy Spirit was showing” him in the light of the fulfillment in Christ (9:8, NIV; “The Holy Spirit is signifying this” [NASB]). Christ’s sinless sacrifice and His superior ministry supplied the fundamental inadequacies of the old cultus—the limited access to God and the limited cleansing. The inspired writer compares first the entrance of the earthly high priests “once a year” into the Most Holy Place by means of animal blood, with the coming of Christ as our heavenly High Priest, who has entered “once for all [*ephapax*] into the Holy Place [*eis ta hagia*] . . . with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption” (9:12, NRSV).<sup>14</sup> Note how 9:11, 12 strikingly parallels 9:7 where the ministry of the earthly high priest is described.

Then the apostle proceeds to the subsequent typological fulfillment in Christ. He now compares the external cleansing by means of animal blood with Christ’s superior ministry: “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!” (9:14, NRSV; cf. also 10:19–22; 7:25). Christ’s blood thus is infinitely more effective for the new-covenant believer. The benefits of

direct access to God and of cleansing from a guilty conscience by the blood of Christ are so weighty to the apostle that he repeats them in 9:24–26, a passage universally recognized as pointing to particular ceremonies of the Day of Atonement. The apostle emphasizes their present gospel fulfillment: Christ has “entered” into heaven itself, “now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf”; “he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself” (9:24, 26, NRSV). “The apostle is telling us that we Christians are now like the earthly high priests who, alone, could come into the Most Holy Place. But whereas they had that privilege on but one day every year, we have it every day of the year.”<sup>15</sup>

The kind of benefits this privilege shall reveal in the lives of Christian believers is spelled out in the “better,” new-covenant promises (Heb. 8:6–13; quoting Jer. 31:31–34): (1) God’s promise to create new hearts in His covenant people, writing on them effectively His laws; (2) God’s gift of a redemptive knowledge of Him to each individual believer; (3) God’s assurance of His merciful blotting out of sins (cf. Isa. 45:23).

Hebrews 9 concludes with the assurance that Christ “will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (9:28, NRSV). This future “appearance” of Christ suggests an allusion to Israel’s eagerly awaited appearance of the high priest, when he officiated his cleansing rites inside the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, but finally “came out” dressed again in the splendor of his priestly robes (Lev. 16:17, 23, 24).

Christ’s second appearance will far exceed this high-priestly type, because Christ shall bring the “full enjoyment of their inheritance. The parousia is thus the key event in the realization of salvation.”<sup>16</sup> Of this Christian hope, Abraham serves again as the prototype of believers: “he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (11:10, NIV; cf. vv. 13–16, 39, 40; 13:14). The apostle closely unites past, present, and future in his Christian view of salvation history

(see 13:8). Through his Christian typologies he confirms the spiritual unity and continuity of God’s eternal covenant. Indeed, Hebrews stands out as the most elaborate typological interpretation of the OT in the New. ■

1. See L. Goppelt, *TYPOS* (Darmstadt: Wissensch Buchges., 1969), 245–48 (C. “Conclusion”). Also J. R. Michaels, in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols., rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), 1:206.
2. Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 133.
3. Ibid.
4. E. E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 169.
5. See Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum NT* (München: C.H. Beck, 1926), 3:538–41.
6. See Ibid., 3:188, 189.
7. For a comprehensive view of Gnostic influence in Corinth, see W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). Also R. Bultmann, *Theology of the NT* (New York: Scribner, 1951), 1:168–72, and his article, “Ginōskō,” in *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, 7:709–11, regarding “knowledge” without love in 1 Cor. 8:1–13.
8. See N. Ridderbos, *Paul. An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 39.
9. G. von Rad, *OT Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 2:409.
10. R. B. Hays, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, 12 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 11:279.
11. F. B. Craddock, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 12:4.
12. D. A. Hagner, “Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Literature and Meaning of Scripture*, M. A. Inch and C. H. Bullock, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 225.
13. R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 175.
14. The NKJV and NIV add the word “Most” to “Holy Place” [*eis ta hagia*] in Heb. 9:12, 25; 10:19 (or state: “Holiest”) to indicate their understanding of the intended meaning.
15. W. G. Johnsson, *Hebrews* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1994), 172. Adventist scholars acknowledge that Hebrews does not deal with Christ’s “two-phased mediatorial ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, which the letter to the Hebrews neither teaches nor denies” (*Doctrine of the Sanctuary*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 5, F. B. Holbrook, ed. [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1989], 219). “For a complete picture of the nature and timing of the fulfillment of sanctuary typology” the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation “must be consulted” (R. M. Davidson, in *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, F. B. Holbrook, ed. [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1989], 185).
16. William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13. Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 1991) 47B: 251.

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# Rediscovering the heart of God on a hospital gurney

R. Leslie Holmes



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Some lessons come hard, but their messages have consequences for life from that time forward. During the summer of 2006, God carried me on a physical journey with amazing spiritual implications. I rediscovered God's heart on what Americans usually call a "hospital gurney," one of those wheeled stretchers that hospitals use to carry patients from one place to another within the hospital. But, before I get ahead of myself, let me give you some background.

For years it had been my practice to avoid hospital elevators and run the back stairs as I made pastoral care rounds. It was my excuse-for-an-exercise program. "A busy pastor doesn't have time for a real exercise program," I told myself. That seemed to work until I began to experience shortness of breath as I ran up the stairs. On two occasions, I had to leave the stairwell and sit down before resorting to riding the elevator the rest of the way. I mentioned this to our family doctor. He immediately prescribed a cardiac stress test. So, I underwent a nuclear stress test, giving a whole morning to walking on a treadmill with special medications injected into my arms and leads running from me to machines that were designed to diagnose anything that might be wrong. I was delighted when the cardiologist who oversaw the test declared that there were no abnormalities. Two weeks later, my wife, Barbara, and I were walking along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico in beautiful Destin, Florida, when suddenly severe chest

pains arrested me. Having just received good reports from my heart tests, I was convinced that whatever the pain was, it was not heart related. When the pain returned on subsequent days, I decided that perhaps I had a hiatal hernia and thought I should have it treated at some point. It was another of those "I'll get around to it when I have time" moments.

And then it happened. One evening as I returned home around 11 P.M., after a long and busy day of ministry, I had a sense of pain unlike anything I had ever experienced before. At the time I likened it to a team of wild mustangs stampeding on my chest. What's more, I was suddenly aware that I was sweating profusely. Barbara suggested that maybe I should go to the local emergency room (ER), but Mr. Take-Control-and-Manage-It (as some of my family and friends occasionally like to call me!) decided to lie down and wait a while. I fell asleep. In the morning the pain seemed to be gone. When a similar pain returned a few nights later, not even a good night's sleep brought relief. This time when I called our family doctor he promptly ordered me to the ER. I've never heard him be firmer. He even said that Barbara should drive me there. Talk about giving up control!

That same day the cardiologist was back on the scene. When we met in the ER he informed me that he and our family doctor had decided that I should have a heart catheterization procedure, a process in which a tiny tube is inserted in the groin area and threaded up through the veins to view heart function from inside the body. Talk about a loss of privacy. The cardiologist and his assistants would be looking at parts of me that even I had never seen before! Soon after, I was informed that I needed an immediate triple heart bypass surgery because three blood vessels in the region of my heart were seriously blocked. I was told I would be in the hospital about one week and that I would spend another six to eight weeks recuperating at home. Imagine, in one fell swoop my busy schedule, pride, and sense of control suddenly were ripped from me. In fact, one of our church members whom I respect deeply came by my hospital room specifically to take away my appointment calendar. He told me I'd get it back when I was better.

Two days later, as I waited for a hospital orderly to come and wheel me to surgery, I was one scared man. Even though I had prayed and Barbara and our children, Gary and Erin, had all prayed together, as a pastor, I knew that some people die during heart bypass surgery

(actually something like 3.35 people per 100). A few years ago, one of my pastor friends died on the operating table while undergoing this surgery and he was exactly the same age I was. When a young hospital orderly came to my room and told me he had come to take me to surgery, I felt very much alone. The devil was having a heyday reminding me of all that can go wrong.

Then God came.

After I was helped out of my hospital bed onto a gurney, that young African-American orderly proceeded to push me along a hospital corridor on the way to the operating suite. I became aware that he was humming a familiar tune. It was a hymn tune; not one of those great, lively hymn

When we stopped outside the surgical suite so that he could open the door, I thanked him for those hymns. "God has used you this day to remove my fears and restore my soul," I told him.

"Oh, you know those tunes?" he asked.

"I grew up on them," I responded. "We sing them in our church."

He asked me where I went to church. I told him. He asked me who the pastor was and, rather sheepishly, I answered

of God for "If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8).<sup>\*</sup> Victory flooded my soul! I knew that God was in charge and whether I lived or died I would be in His presence.

By God's grace, the surgery went well. Now a year later, I am in better health than I was a few years before. More important, I've learned some lessons that had to come the hard way for me. Here they are:



**First, I have a new assurance of God's sovereign grace and providential love.**

Before my surgery I knew these things to be true and I preached them but now I *really* know. His fingerprint is on every molecule and

HIS FINGERPRINT IS ON EVERY MOLECULE AND ATOM THAT MAKES UP WHO WE ARE. AND HE CARES MORE DEEPLY THAN ANY PREACHER CAN EVER DESCRIBE.

tunes we think of when we think of singing in African-American churches. No, it was "Be Thou My Vision." Written by an eighth-century Irish monk, it is one of my favorite hymns. Each time I sing it, my mind floods with memories of the lush green fields and the ancient stone ruins of the land of my birth. My, that hymn flooded my soul like a fresh breath of home! When the young orderly finished humming that one, he went on to another. Now, it was Horatio Spafford's wonderful hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul." *How could he know that this hymn is my personal all-time favorite?* I wondered.

him. I'll never forget his response as, almost shrieking, he responded, "Well, glory be! I done got me a man of God!" He stepped back to some place behind my gurney, a place I could not see at that moment, and the next thing I knew he was placing a warm white towel across my exposed groin area. "Let me give you the dignity that a man of God deserves," he said. With that, we rolled again through the operating suite doors, where the doctors and their assistants waited to do their work on a preacher who, only moments before, had been scared but now knew as never before that he is, above all else, a child

atom that makes up who we are. And He cares more deeply than any preacher can ever describe. "My flesh and my heart may fail, / but God is the strength of my heart / and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:26).

**Second, I am not my own for I was bought with a price.**

My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and it is given to me as a trust from a Father who loves me more than mere words can describe. I owe it to Him to treat this body well. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you



have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

**Third, I've learned something more of the sweetness of my Savior and His faithfulness.**

He is faithful to me even when I neglect what He has entrusted to me. Paul writes that nothing can ever separate me from His love (Rom. 8:39).

**Fourth, I've been reminded of the frailty of our human nature.**

Days before my surgery, Barbara and I had been looking forward to another trip back home to see our family members in and around Northern Ireland. Within an hour all that was changed and I went from being a "Mr. Take-Charge" to being a

that many people were worse off than I was. How many times have I, as a pastor, stopped by the hospital for a quick visit, a Scripture reading, and a prayer with a member of our church and not noticed those nearby who may not have someone to pray with them and assure them that God is near and that He cares? Now when I stop at the ICU waiting rooms, instead of merely praying for "my own" folks, I ask all who wait on loved ones if they would like to join us in prayer. Through these months I've never had anyone refuse to join hands and hearts as we sought God's blessings together.

**Sixth, I've learned to live with daily gratitude to God for the blessings of my life.**

Once more, Barbara, my wife of some 40 years, proved her love by going the extra mile, always with an attitude of gladness and love. As much as any human being, she deserves the credit for my renewed excellent health. Through this ordeal our love for each other has grown even stronger and deeper. It is not being trite to say that we act more like teenagers toward one another now than when we were in our teens. Our children, Gary and Erin, dropped everything to come to

South Carolina and support us. I have a new appreciation for friends and church family and for godly physicians and hospital personnel. Theirs, too, is a call, and sometimes God comes in the one who pushes the gurney! ■

AT MY WORST  
MOMENTS, I SAW  
THAT MANY PEOPLE  
WERE WORSE OFF  
THAN I WAS.

scared little boy on a hospital gurney. "... No man knows when his hour will come" (Eccles. 9:12). Life is short and we had better maximize each day's opportunities for Christ. "My times are in your hands; / deliver me from my enemies / and from those who pursue me" (Ps. 31:15).

**Fifth, I've learned anew about the need to pray for the sick.**

In the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after my surgery, I became aware in new ways of the urgency and desperation of people who are undergoing medical crisis. At my worst moments, I saw

\* All Scripture quotes are from the New International Version.

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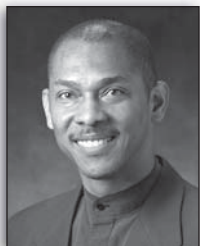
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# An interview with the General Conference Youth Department directors

**Willie E. Hucks II  
and Paul Mwansa**



*Willie E. Hucks II,  
DMin, is the  
associate editor  
of Ministry.*



*Paul Mwansa  
served as an intern  
for Ministry in the  
summer of 2007.*

*Willie E. Hucks II, associate editor of Ministry, and Paul Mwansa, summer intern with Ministry, interviewed the directors of youth ministries for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The youth ministries department was formed in 1907; and in an effort to recognize one hundred years of service, Ministry representatives have interviewed Baraka Muganda (BM), Hiskia Missah (HM), and Jonatan Tejel (JT). The following are excerpts from the interview.*

**Willie E. Hucks II:** Please share with our readers your primary roles.

**Baraka Muganda:** I am the director of the department.

**Hiskia Missah:** I am the associate director for the department of the General Conference, responsible for working with the young adults.

**Jonatan Tejel:** I am the associate director for Pathfinders and Adventurers and also the editor of the quarterly magazine for the department, *Accent*. My office is responsible for developing materials for Pathfinders and Adventurers with one curriculum used throughout the world.

**WH:** What primary responsibilities does each of you have in your particular ministry?

**JT:** Being responsible for the Pathfinder work, you have to be with them in their fields. You have

to go to visit them in their activities, including the camporees, because when you serve the world, you need to know the particulars of each field. It doesn't work in the same way in Africa as in South America as in Europe as in North America.

**BM:** In my responsibilities as head of the department, I develop strategies for the world youth program, coordinating all these strategies for the units of the church, so that we work together. Additionally I develop and coordinate youth ministries leadership programs for the youth directors, holding seminars and attending planning sessions with various youth leaders. We ensure that the youth department is focused on its goals and ensure that we have the right marching orders.

**HM:** I'm working with the Ambassador Club, a new program that started in 2006. That's a level above Pathfinders. These young people are about 16 to 21 years of age. They tried to join the adult group, but they're not ready for that. They may feel too old for Pathfinders. So they're in limbo. That's why the youth department just opened up a new level of youth organization. They are not going to wear all those uniforms like the Pathfinders. They have their own uniforms—simple ones. These young people are very active in working with their fellow young people, whether they are church members or not. At this age they really love youth congresses, festivals of faith, and service projects.

**BM:** We teach them about careers and dating. This is the age when they can be misguided by their peers, so that's why, as Missah says, it's a very important group. The young adults are from 16 to 30 years old. We have divided it now into two groups: 16 to 21, then 22 to 30. We strive to nurture and involve each young person in the mission of the church.

**HM:** I'm also dealing with the Elijah Projects, how to involve our young people in ministries for Christ and winning other young people. It's nice to know that in 2006 we planned to have 10,000 evangelistic meetings, but we actually had 17,879 youth evangelistic events involving 224,872 young people; and, as a result, 87,829 young people were baptized. Also, we are now in the process of making an Adventist youth songbook, written and composed by Seventh-day Adventist young people. These songs will be sung all over the world. We plan to have the songbook ready by the end of 2007. And we are also in the



Baraka Muganda

process of developing our Youth for Christ Bible Study tailored for the needs of our young people.

**BM:** We want to come up with songs with our message. When this youth ministry was founded, the songs reflected our theology. We are not just here to sing, "Jesus shines, Jesus shines." The songs should reflect our beliefs and our hopes.

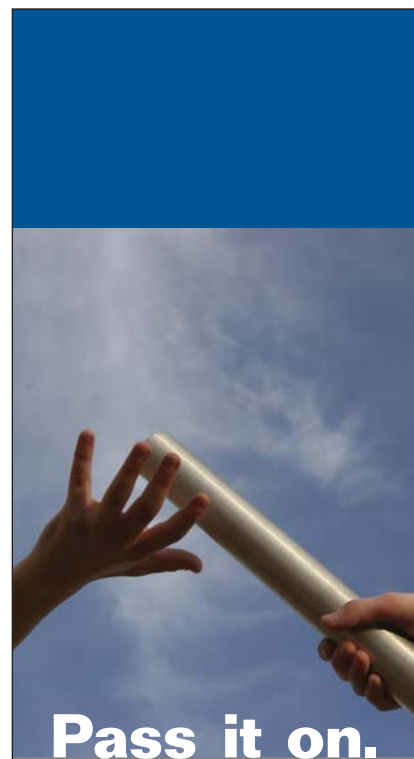
**WH:** Jonatan, you said earlier that you spend a lot of time going to camporees and various meetings. When the young people speak with you, what are some of the things they tell you? Is there a common theme, a certain message, that they want you to hear, something that they want you to do something about?

**JT:** The questions are varied and really different in one country from another country. In some countries they talk about doctrines. The kids ask about Sabbath and activities: "What can we do?" I am asked about music, about what's the best music we can sing. It's a must to meet with them because each one of them has a different need. But at the end of all the programs, you meet them in the same place, in Jesus Christ.

**BM:** That's very true. All of our young people face the same problems. I always tell them, There's no devil for

Africa, no devil for Europe, no devil for South America. They all have the same problems, the only difference is the environment because the world today has become a small global village. They watch the same movies in Nairobi as in Paris as in Chicago. They sing the songs, too. I was in one little island in Samoa, so I asked them "Do you know Jennifer Lopez?" They all shouted, "Yeah!" So, what I'm saying is that young people have the same problems everywhere. It is the same with fashions. Our young people want attention. The reason why young people dress up the way they dress up is not that they are rebels or they don't like church. They want to show off. There are the issues of drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex. And we as youth leaders have to address these issues. We have to show our young people that we have answers to those problems. That's why youth ministries is here, because we have answers. We challenge our young people to realize that they have answers for their society, too.

I have also found out that around the world young people want to serve; they want to do evangelism. In Africa, South America, Central America, the Philippines, and the South Pacific islands, they are powerful preachers. Then you have these other countries in the Western world: in North America, Europe, and Australia. They also want to do evangelism, but with their own style. They do a lot of service projects, such as going overseas to build, providing water, working with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), teaching English, and cleaning and sweeping streets. Even if it's dirty work, young people love it. We are going to Taiwan in December, and are taking 2,000 young people to do service projects. Many young people have been brought to Jesus Christ through these service projects. While they serve other people, their own lives are changed. All young people have an urge, a passion, to participate in the mission of the church; but as youth leaders, we need to come up with the right venue for these young people. This generation loves to participate. They don't want to be spectators. They want to do something!



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# ACTS 100

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- Supporting
- Encouraging
- Listening
- Accepting
- Trusting
- Respecting
- Negotiating differences

### **Seven Deadly Habits**

- Criticizing
- Blaming
- Complaining
- Nagging
- Threatening
- Punishing
- Bribing or rewarding to control

—*Journal of Adventist Education* (February/March 2007), 9.

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**JT:** One of the tools we have in our department is the *Accent* magazine. And we are trying to use this tool, this way of communication with our leaders, to answer their needs, their problems. In our magazine we talk about abortion, gang banging, and suicide. We are trying to give answers to the needs of the young people in the twenty-first century.

**Paul Mwansa:** How can we find these resources? We're not exactly familiar with some of these. How do you promote these resources?

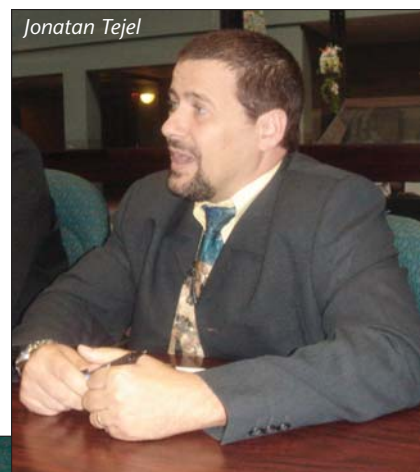
**JT:** We have our youth departments in the various organizational units of the church that are responsible for promoting them. But you can find materials like *Accent*, week of prayer materials, and main ideas on how to help young people on our Web site at <http://www.youth.gc.adventist.org>.

**BM:** Yes, on that Web site you'll find a lot of materials. We are trying to skip the bureaucracy of the church so that young people can get to the information right away. In fact, we receive so much mail written by youth who appreciate the Web site. You can find all the materials we're talking about. We have materials on lifestyle, as well as social issues that affect young people. We have materials to excite them with evangelism, leadership, discipleship, and service projects.

**PM:** As you mentioned, this is the 100-year celebration of youth ministries in the Adventist Church. How has the youth ministries department grown and developed over these past 100 years?

**BM:** Youth ministry has touched a lot of lives, not only young people,

but even church leaders. Many of us are in the church today because of Pathfinders. We have produced leaders, we have developed strong Christians, because youth ministry is nurturing the young people and involving them in the ministry, the mission of the church. And for all these 100 years, story after story, from every corner of the world, shows how youth ministry has impacted the lives of the church members—spiritually, socially, and physically. Studies show that when young people are involved in youth



Jonatan Tejel



Hiskia Missah

ministry, they stay in the church. When young people are not involved in youth ministry, they don't stay in the church. So, these 100 years is a celebration of what God has done for us, and also a celebration of our recommitment and rededication for the future. That's why

we are planting trees all over the world. We just planted a tree on May 15 at three o'clock in the afternoon when the action to start a youth ministries outreach was taken in Gland, Switzerland, in 1907. And, why are we planting trees? It's very theological, because when I read the book of Joshua, it says the children of Israel were crossing the river Jordan. He asked the elders, the priests, to carry a stone and they built an altar of stones, and he said, "When

the next generation asks you, "What do these stones mean?" then tell them how God has led us." We are planting these trees to remind our young people how God has led us, and also, to produce fruit for Jesus Christ.

**PM:** So, the trees are planted all around the world?

**BM:** Yes, we are encouraging churches to plant a tree as a memorial of the 100 years of youth ministry.

**PM:** Are there any other celebrations?

**BM:** Young people are doing service projects—evangelism, musical concerts, and other activities. Let the community know what youth ministry is all about.

**WH:** I would like for each of you to address what has been the greatest reward or satisfaction that you have gained from youth ministries.

**HM:** There is a saying that you can be young twice. If you want to be young all the time, all throughout your life, you have to work with youth ministries. Work with the young people and you will always feel young.

**BM:** One of my greatest joys is to see young people giving their lives to Jesus Christ. After twenty years, you meet them and they say, "I was at that congress where you preached." They quote you in the sermon and say, "I gave my heart to Jesus Christ as a result of that sermon." That's the greatest joy. Another joy is when they join the ministry, and they give you the credit for their decision. I was in Egypt in 1988. There I met a young man at a youth congress. He was finishing high school. When he saw me he said, "When I grow up, I want to be like Baraka, I'm going to be a preacher." Today he is a youth director in the Middle East. When I see that type of commitment, young people giving their lives to Jesus, young people deciding to work for the church because of what youth ministries is all about, I'm excited.

**JT:** When you work in the youth department and you still are young, you can understand your own children much better.

**PM:** What advice would you give, not only to young people who are struggling with their relationship to the church, but even to pastors who want to keep them in the church?

**BM:** Well, since *Ministry* is for pastors and church elders, I think our plea to the pastors is to get involved in youth ministry. Let young people see that you, as a pastor, love young people and that you care for them. Youth ministry is not just entertaining young people, but building young people for Jesus Christ. And sometimes I see pastors who don't seem to care about young people, they don't attend any meetings, they don't attend camporees, they don't attend youth congress. I think young people will be strengthened by the presence of their pastors. So, I would like to see every church giving space to young people to get involved in the mission of the church.

Pastors also need to preach sermons that challenge young people. Don't preach sermons that make young people sleep. That's my message to my dear pastors, including myself. I'm challenged every day when I stand behind the pulpit. Young people are coming with problems—drugs, alcohol, premarital sex, fighting with parents, failing in school, peer pressure. So, when they are sitting there, they are thinking, *Baraka, what do you have for me? I'm struggling!* They want to hear what you have to say about these problems they are dealing with. So the theology should be simple. When the sermons come out, it should be a simple message of salvation, of guiding these young people.

**JT:** When I finished my studies in theology, some of us thought we knew everything. I think the pastor today needs to be humble. Jesus Christ was humble. He came here to serve all people, both old and young. Our young people need to see in front of them humble pastors.

**BM:** Pastors also need to spend time with young people, just playing with them. Let young people see you as a human being. Some of us are too holy and the young people fear holy people. Some say that youth pastors waste time playing with young people. When you play with your children, it may seem like you are wasting time, not getting anything out of it. But the child says, "Daddy, that's good! Daddy, play with me more!" Pastors, spend time with young people. Come down from the pulpit to spend time playing with them.

**HM:** Give the youth responsibilities in the church. I remember when I was young my father always took me along with him. My assignment was to operate the slide projector. And you know what? I was the center of attention. And I was so happy. So, we have to involve our young people in the ministries of the church so they feel and think, *Oh, I'm somebody. Somebody recognized me.* Train them and put your trust in them. Even if they don't offer a public prayer as well as the pastor might, give them assignments so that they develop in the church.

**WH:** What are the strengths that young people bring to the church and to the society as a whole? And what can we learn from young people and their strengths?

**HM:** Young people are energetic. Old people easily get tired, but young people, you give them programs to do the whole day and at night they are still wide awake. Not like us, we need time for a nap; but not for young people. So, we can involve them and it is easy. Young people will win young people. Pastors don't always win young people; but if young people make friends with the community, they will bring souls to the church.

**BM:** I watch news every day and I watch the soldiers dying in Iraq. And maybe the older you become you are more interested in reading the obituaries, seeing who died and why they died and at what age. I see all these soldiers dying in Iraq, at ages 18, 19, 20,

21, 22. And the leader of the group may be 43. That should say to us as church leaders that young people are not afraid to give their lives for God if they are used and given opportunities. So I think that's the strength this church has. You know, we have over 10,000,000 Seventh-day Adventist young people below 30 years of age—baptized young people.

**WH:** Below 30? That's your definition of young people?

**BM:** Yes, but some people want to pull it up to 35, and we say, "OK, do it," but in general our cap is 30. But this church has strength. Involve them in the mission of the church. That's the strength.

**JT:** Young people have passion. And it depends on if they will do good things or

**WH:** I'm wondering, how does this ministry contribute to your own spiritual growth?

**JT:** I think youth ministries challenges me. Young people always tell you the truth. You finish your message and the older people say, "Oh pastor, it was wonderful, amen." But if you preach to young people and they don't like your sermon, they will come to you and say, "Pastor, I don't agree with you." Working with young people challenges me to grow in my spiritual life.

**BM:** I've also found out, as a youth pastor, you have to read your Bible. When I leave this place and go on a trip, I may preach ten to twenty sermons, and you can't do it without the power, your connection with God. And preaching

**HM:** In working with our young people, you will become a better preacher, a more vibrant Christian, because you can fool yourself, but you cannot fool our young people. They know. So, that is why we have to pray always. We have to read our Bible. We should know our Bible better than our young people so that they will say, "Oh yeah, that is a person of prayer."

**JT:** You learn how to ask forgiveness. If you're wrong and they come to tell you that you're wrong and you recognize that you were wrong, and you say, "I'm sorry," I promise you, the people who heard you apologize will follow you.

**HM:** You should be a person of prayer. I received so many emails saying,

I ALWAYS TELL THEM, THERE'S NO DEVIL FOR AFRICA, NO DEVIL FOR EUROPE, NO DEVIL FOR SOUTH AMERICA. THEY ALL HAVE THE SAME PROBLEMS, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THE ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE THE WORLD TODAY HAS BECOME A SMALL GLOBAL VILLAGE.


bad things. What we have to do as leaders is to motivate them and get from them that passion for Jesus Christ. Teenagers have passion for everything. If you can use this passion they can work in the church.

**HM:** In 1907, when this youth department was born, there were 461 youth societies with 8,933 youth. In 2006, we had 171,850 youth societies with 4,494,846 young people. So imagine, about 5,000,000 young people all over the world. If we can mobilize them for Jesus Christ, we can turn the world upside down!

**BM:** That's why we are told, "Train our young." I think Ellen White knew what she was talking about.

to young people is so tough because you have to preach sermons that excite them. Young people are struggling with issues. As Jonatan says, they challenge you. Imagine you finish preaching and instead of shaking your hand, they say, "Pastor, I don't agree with what you're saying." When you go to your room, you're messed up, lunch is messed up, and you go to God. And you say, "God, I have another sermon at five o'clock." But some young person says, "Pastor, you're just wasting our time, there's nothing I like from your sermon." That keeps me closer to the Word, to God, in prayer, because young people are struggling with problems. They come to me and so I have to take them together to the Cross in prayer, reading the Bible.

"Pastor, thank you. Do you remember when you prayed for me?" So wherever you go, people will come and say, "Pastor, pray for me." Don't say, "OK, when I go home I will pray for you." No, right there, pray with them. They will really appreciate that, and they will be strengthened.

**WH:** Pastors, thank you so much for your inspiring testimonies and for affirming the beauty that our young people possess. 

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# Reaching the postmodern mind

Aleksandar S. Santrac



Aleksandar S. Santrac, DPhil, pastors the Ivry sur Seine church in Paris, France, and is also visiting professor of philosophy, Belgrade Theological Seminary, Belgrade, Serbia.

When students at the University of Paris, in the protests of May 1968, wrote the graffiti, “*Il est interdit d’interdire*,”<sup>1</sup> they were not aware that they unlocked Pandora’s box of a new sentiment. Postmodernism had already been present in academic circles, but in liberation movements that wanted to do away with obsolete worldviews and their *authority*, postmodernism took on the dimensions of a cultural phenomenon.

In a philosophical sense, postmodernism could be briefly described as “a denial of the reality of a unified world as the object of our perception. . . . Postmoderns reject the possibility of constructing a single correct worldview and are content simply to speak of many views, and, by extension, many worlds.”<sup>2</sup> It is a palette of varying philosophic, sociological, hermeneutic, historical, anthropological, ethical ideas. One of the fundamental postulates of postmodernism is that it seeks answers from many sources.<sup>3</sup> Due to its various forms, many view postmodernism as a threat; others see it as the final solution to all problems.<sup>4</sup> Still unaware of the fact that a new historical era has begun, we frantically resist the *dislocation* of the human condition—a contemporary postmodernist *rejection of the modernistic worldviews* of Western civilization. We are still resisting the *decentralization of self*,<sup>5</sup> and therefore do not wish to admit that we entered the postmodernist era long ago.

## The Postmodern mind

The ambivalence of the *arrival* of postmodernism is also the ambivalence of its content. One never knows, finally, what *is* postmodernism. Is it an open critique of modernism, or extension of maturity of modern project, or development of the “new worldview” all together, or everything mentioned above?

Quite certainly, postmodernism rejects the premises of *modernism*. Historically viewed, it is obvious that one philosophical trend is replaced by another. Michael Epstein accurately noticed: “The postmodern is the state of culture that replaces the new age and throws into the past the ‘modern’ project, the foundations of which were the value of realistic knowledge, of individual self-awareness and rational action, and counting on the individual’s strength in the conscious self-organization of mankind.”<sup>6</sup>

The characteristics of the modern project that Epstein describes belong to the so-called Age of Enlightenment (“*Aufklärung*”), in which reason prevailed through the active prosperity of science and technology. One of the essential intellectual and practical reactions to this form of modernism is the romanticism of the nineteenth century. The twentieth century is characterized by “isms” from the assortment of more recent views on the world (Marxism, fascism, positivism, existentialism, nihilism, etc.). Historically viewed, postmodernism followed in the wake of all these trends, “maturing” in the 1970s, when the French school of postmodernism actually created the space of general suspicion of reason or rationality, progress, and objective truth. The modern project of rational “isms,” general belief in progress of human race and, what is most important for us Christians, belief in objective truth per se, are all *passé* to the postmodernist.

Most Christians perhaps have not comprehended the essence of postmodernism in a philosophical sense. Many have not even heard of Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, or Baudrillard. However, the church lives in a new cultural setting formed and framed by postmodern philosophy—a setting that here is termed as postmodernity<sup>7</sup>—a broad cultural matrix of thinking and behavior, not just a set of beliefs. Some of the contemporary realities of postmodernity that shaped our way of knowing and acting are television, the Internet, and globalism.

## Virtual realities

Neil Postman affirmed that “television has achieved the status of meta-medium—an institution that directs not only our knowledge

of the world, but our knowledge of the *ways of knowing* as well.”<sup>8</sup> Not being aware of these philosophical presuppositions, millions have gone through a transformation in their way of perceiving and evaluating information. As Jacques Ellul says: “visionary reality of connected images cannot tolerate critical discourse, explanation, duplication, or reflection...” Cognitive pursuits “presuppose a certain distance and withdrawal from the action, whereas images require that I continually be involved in the action.”<sup>9</sup> *Image*, instead of words, has become the actualization of postmodern ways of knowing. *Reflective* thinking exists no more. *Appearance and surface reign over essence and depth of meaning*. The world has become *virtual*.

The Internet has changed life in the Western world; the modernistic construction of highways has been replaced with the postmodernist construction of “highways” of information and communication. On the “mental screen” of the computer monitor, the “death of the metaphor” is happening. What was once projected as a mental conception has now, through the Internet, become the anti-metaphorical space of absolute simulation. The Internet is becoming an absolute world in and of itself. What should have been a “map of reality” has become reality. On the global network, ordinary reality is annulled and the hyper real space of absolute simulation is created: Thereby, we lose ourselves and become machines.

Postmodernity unambiguously has the precise goal of devaluing and lessening the importance of objective truth as such. Meaning and reflection are replaced by artificial surface of reality, symbolized by image. Undoubtedly, the preaching of the gospel in the new contextualization needs to reconsider television, Internet, and global perspective as means for reaching the world for Jesus. On the other hand, we have to confront the question: Have these cultural changes actually created a new

## LACKING THE RATIONAL CERTAINTY OF BELIEVING, POSTMODERNS HAVE A MAXIM: “WE ARE ON THE MOVE FROM FALSE CERTAINTY TO TRUE UNCERTAINTY.”

contra-culture incompatible with the Christian faith?

### Community and mystery

Postmodernism denies the existence of God in a biblical sense. Objective reality and objective criteria of truth and morals are rejected. Therefore, one can never assume that there is any theoretical compatibility between postmodern and Christian views of reality. If postmodern philosophers speak about God, they tell us that God is, resembling this world, *virtual*. He has no right (says Baudrillard) to be objective criteria for our thought and lives because He is in the realm of *simulation*. Consequently, God in the postmodern world is completely beyond ethics and our moral obligations.

There are, however, similar (not compatible) concepts, but they are used in *completely* different contexts. Take for example the ideas of *community* and *mystery* so often pointed out as compatible with Christianity. When postmodern philosophers and theologians speak about communal assent to the truth, they emphasize cultural influence in our knowledge of truth. Truth is known exclusively within someone’s community; the community’s perspective is the only known truth.<sup>10</sup> Because our personality is always communal, every truth one accepts is always subjective or cultural. Truth is never objective.

In contrast, when Christians speak about community, we speak about communal understanding and appropriation of objective truth of God in the Scriptures. As a community, we do not accept pluralism of subjective or cultural (communal) faiths, as the postmoderns do; rather,

we accept a one and only objective truth, that which is revealed in the Christ of the Scriptures. Philosophically speaking, the concept of community in Christianity is not metaphysical, it is epistemological.

Speaking about *mystery*, postmoderns view it as completely *nonrational* or even *antirational*. Ways of knowing become the ways of mysterious and intuitional

quests for the truth. Christians, on the other hand, do believe in the powers of reason and rationality in knowing<sup>11</sup> the truth as it is in Christ. Christ is a profound mystery indeed, but not a mystery that cannot be accepted by reason.

This is seen, for example, in Colossians 2:2, 3, where the apostle Paul calls for “*complete understanding*, in order that they may *know* the mystery of God, namely, Christ” (NIV). Obviously, unlike postmoderns, the apostle does not dissociate knowledge and mystery, because Christ as mystery is a revealed mystery, one that is known and experienced.

Of course, the mystery of God and His Spirit is *suprarational*, never completely comprehended by humans. However, the idea of mystery in the Bible is never emptied of human knowledge and rationality.

### Love as tolerance

Lacking the rational certainty of believing, postmoderns have a maxim: “We are on the move from false certainty to true uncertainty.” A knowing of the Scriptures, with inspired texts for developing the doctrines of the church (on which we stand or fall as community and as disciples of Jesus), is not passé. It means that image and symbol are not all that we should offer to postmoderns. Yes, the apostle Paul says that Christ is the image of the invisible God,<sup>12</sup> but this is an image of the revelation of truth. Thus, it is not image as understood by postmoderns—the surface of reality without permanent meaning.

Even “love” is understood differently. In postmodern culture, love is always tolerance. However, this tolerance is

a theory that basically says that no one has a right to maintain belief in objective truth. If one wants to be accepted in love, they need to accept the idea of subjective truth since objective truth threatens, judges, excludes, and even persecutes. As Foucault would pronounce, “the act of knowing (the truth) is always an act of violence.”<sup>13</sup>

In the Bible, however, when Christ speaks about tolerance, He never denies the existence of objective truth—namely Himself and all His teachings. If we accept the idea of one *objective* truth that we do know by the true Spirit (subjectively accepted), and still want to be tolerant and humble toward all human beings, including postmoderns, we walk in the path of Christ and of His cross.

### Careful not to compromise

Thus, it is crucially important not to repeat the mistake of the early church. The church fathers did not recognize that evangelism to the pagans is not evangelism to a partially compatible culture. It was, instead, evangelism in the contra-culture of Greek philosophy and mythology, which were radically different from biblical truth. A superb mind like Augustine made this kind of mistake and created a “philosophical theology” that was not based on the Bible. This could be a form of the “careless liberalism”<sup>14</sup> that Ellen White warns against.

Relationships, friendship love, and caring for others are crucially important for every disciple of Christ, but they are not what Christianity is *all* about. It is true that postmoderns want to belong and have deep relationships, but it is not true that their sense of a belief system necessarily must occur after their sense of belonging. Belief and belonging go in concert. In our evangelistic efforts we have to reach people where they are and not assume that they belong to the defined categories of people whom we want to evangelize. That is why it is sometimes tricky when we speak about evangelism in a strategic sense, because every strategy is partially human and thus not faultless. A strategy of evangelism should point out similarities and compatibilities with popular culture;

however, if the content of Christian faith is reduced to the expectations of postmoderns (or moderns, or any other faith or belief system), we jeopardize the message of Christ and the power of “present truth.” If we use postmodern language or nonthreatening vocabulary, we should not do it at the expense of the truth as revealed in the Word of God.

Sometimes it is heard that creating intimate relationships (friendship evangelism) has “greater value” than public evangelism. Yet the fact is, Christ *did both*. In our human strategies we should never diminish Christ’s strategies and His definitions of values in mission. Postmoderns do need public evangelism. Without public evangelism, there is a danger of folks thinking that community, love, and relationships are what Christianity is *all* about, because Christianity is portrayed exactly that way. The church becomes a “humanitarian” safe haven with a psychological comfort that other humanitarian agencies can offer as well. Paul did not “make a fool of himself,”<sup>15</sup> voyaging throughout the Roman Empire, primarily to “make friends.” He did so in order to preach truth.

In public evangelism, in frontal war between truth and error, light and darkness, Christ and Satan, we are actually involved in gaining “territories” for Christ. In a contra-culture, we must utilize the contra-weapon, and that is the power of Christ’s truth with the love and friendship that His Word fashions. That is possible only through deep conversion and revival of the community of faith by the Spirit, not by strategic wisdom. If Christ’s mission was focused on the strategy “nonthreatening vocabulary,” why did He so often use the scandalous expression of “hell” as a final destiny for the unrepentant? Of course, the truth has to be proclaimed in a humble and loving way, but also with power and conviction. Frequently, we try to minimize the requirements of the faith in order to create a “safe” environment, without *skandalon*, for postmoderns. That was not Christ’s strategy.

To sum up, living in a contra-culture of postmodernity,<sup>16</sup> we as Christ’s disciples should first uphold and defend the

Christian ideals of believing, revival, and discipleship, while at the same time we should create an environment for those interested in belonging and friendship. We can do both, based on Christ’s *Word* and the power of His Spirit. ■

- 1 “It is forbidden to forbid.”
- 2 Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1996), 40.
- 3 Within postmodern philosophy, we can find the *deconstructive* (philosophical and linguistic), *liberational* (social and political), *constructive* (with emphasis on a new worldview), *restorational* or *conservative* (with emphasis on the *good sides* of premodernism and modernism) postmodernism, etc.
- 4 Compare: David S. Dockery, “The Challenge of Postmodernism” in *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, ed. David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 13.
- 5 Or the *decentralization of the ego* (a favorite term of Foucault and other postmodernists).
- 6 Michael Epstein, *The Origins and Meaning of Russian Postmodernism* (National Council for Soviet and East European Research, 1993), 91 (Serbian edition). On the historic relation postmodern/modern, and postmodernism/modernism, see *ibid.*, 147.
- 7 Of course, there is a wide circulating distinction between postmodernism (as contemporary thought transformed into cultural phenomenon) and postmodernity (as a historical and cultural period after modernity, characterized by rejection of authoritative role of reason and science). Nevertheless, for the sake of this article’s purpose I *redefine* postmodernism and postmodernity, though not completely, since my definition of postmodernity assumes an historical era as well. The distinction is useful in this article’s exploration of relationship between *believing* and *belonging*.
- 8 Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 78, 79, cited in Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 282.
- 9 Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 142.
- 10 See Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For Rorty, meaning and belief are contingent phenomena of a particular culture in space and time.
- 11 Rom. 1:21, 22. Pagans *knew* who God was. God wants us to *know* Him. Revelation assumes cognition.
- 12 See Col. 1:15.
- 13 Grenz, 133.
- 14 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 129.
- 15 See 2 Cor. 12:11.
- 16 Or whatever *contra-culture* means today. After postmodernism comes “deep void” of thought filled with contemporary spiritualism, interest for the supernatural, and religious fiction.

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# Cycle of Life

## “Be prepared. Have your house in order.”

*Pastor Jimmy and Shereen Ferguson / Baltimore, Maryland*



**W**e learn by example. Shereen's two elderly aunts lived together and shared everything. Worried about what might happen if one or the other of them died, the aunts prepaid their funerals; wrote out all their wishes for their belongings; and had an attorney prepare their wills. When they died, there were no unanswered questions. Their testimony, in death as in life, was: "Be prepared. Have your house in order." Ellen White wrote, "Death will not come

one day sooner...because you have made your will." By welcoming Trust Services into our life and into our church, we can truly live Ellen White's teaching. Making wills is part of ordering your life – like doing a family budget or planning for education and careers. We're preparing wills and guardianship documents for our children – so that our family can lead our church by example.

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# Therapeutic preaching

Larry Yeagley



*Larry Yeagley, now retired, has served as a pastor and chaplain. He lives in Gentry, Arkansas, United States.*

Who are you angry at?" questioned a visitor as he shook my hand after the worship service. He left before I had a chance to reply. I mulled over his question for weeks. I pulled previous sermons from my file (not many in my early ministry) and scrutinized them. I tried to recall my tone of voice, facial expressions, and emotions during each sermon. Painfully I concluded that my questioner had reason for his question.

I concluded my voice was unnatural, authoritarian, not conversational, too loud at times, and angry-sounding. Shortly thereafter I read about a Scottish preacher who recommended that preachers speak as dying to the dying. I also attended classes taught by a hospital chaplain on therapeutic preaching. I soaked up every word because my sermons had been anything but therapeutic. I wanted to change.

## How to start

Listen to your sermons on tape or CD, or view your sermon on video, if your sermons are videotaped. As you listen, put yourself in the place of a church member who is experiencing difficult times. Imagine that you have just lost a child to accidental death. Try to picture yourself recently divorced or rejected by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Ask yourself tough questions. Did this sermon give hope? Was my tone of voice pleasing? Why did I get so loud? Why did I use such a coarse tone of voice at times? Was I

scolding? How practical was this sermon? Would this sermon prompt a troubled member to seek my counsel? Did I use harsh words? Was I critical? I knew I had to ask questions like these if I were to preach therapeutically.

## Know your congregation

Pastoral visitation is still important. Your sermons can't be therapeutic if you don't know church members and they haven't developed a trust relationship with you. You wouldn't continue seeing a physician if that physician never examined you and evaluated your symptoms. A treatment modality is useless without diagnosis. Neither can you preach therapeutic sermons if you don't know the struggles of your members.

My friend went to church the week of her mother's funeral. She longed to find comfort in her grief. The pastor sermonized about modesty in dress. He had no idea that she was in mourning even though she was a member of his church. Her pastor would have encouraged her if he had spoken as dying to the dying. A woman in grief isn't focused on the style of her dress.

## No recitation of world evils

I listened to a sermon a week after the massacre at Virginia Tech University (in Blacksburg, Virginia, United States). Most of the sermon was a rehearsal of the injustices of the past decade. He reminded us that vengeance belongs to God, but he missed the mark. He gave no concrete thoughts about adjusting to tragedy. If a relative of a victim had been in his congregation, they might have left the church empty.

Church members are bombarded every day of the work week by demanding supervisors or customers. Cars break down, water heaters leak, children get into trouble, jobs are lost, tax bills go up, and marriages can be in turmoil. Sabbath is an oasis. Worship should be a source of solace, strength, and encouragement.

A rehearsal of world disasters does little to uplift people who experienced their own disasters during the week.

## They need hope

Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, / But desire fulfilled is a tree of life" (NASB). Dr. Jerome Groopman wrote, "For all my patients, hope, true hope, has proved as important as any medication I might prescribe or any procedure I might perform."<sup>1</sup> He continues, "Hope, I have come to believe, is as vital to our lives as the very oxygen that we breathe."<sup>2</sup>

# Ministerial Student Writing Contest

**Ministry, International Journal for Pastors, announces its first Ministerial Student Writing Contest. All students enrolled in a full-time ministerial preparation program on the undergraduate or graduate level may participate.**

## Submission requirements

1. Writers must choose a category from the list below for their submission and state this information on the first page.
  - a. Biblical studies
  - b. Historical studies
  - c. Theological studies (including ethics)
  - d. Ministry (preaching, leadership, counseling, etc.)
  - e. Mission studies
2. All submissions must follow the Writer's Guidelines as to length, endnotes, style, and other features of the manuscript. Please carefully read the guidelines found at [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org).
3. Submit your manuscript in Microsoft Word to [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org). Please include the following information at the top of the manuscript: your name, address, email address, telephone number, category for which you are submitting (see above), religious affiliation, name of college/university/seminary you are attending, and title of your manuscript.

*Pastors, encourage college students in your congregations to write.*

## Prizes

<b>GRAND PRIZE:</b> <b>\$750</b>	<b>FIRST PRIZE:</b> <b>\$500</b>	<b>SECOND PRIZE</b> (five possible): <b>\$400</b>	<b>THIRD PRIZE</b> (five possible): <b>\$300</b>
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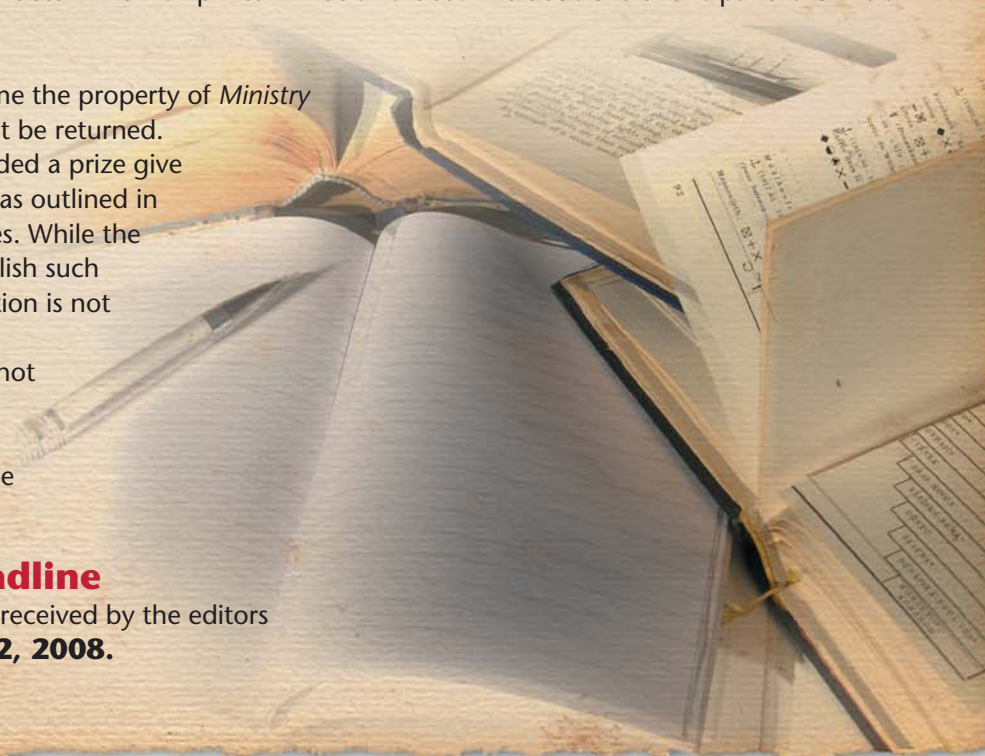
The evaluation panel will determine if all prizes will be awarded. The decisions of this panel are final.

## Publication

1. All submissions become the property of *Ministry* magazine and will not be returned.
2. Writers who are awarded a prize give the rights to *Ministry* as outlined in the Writer's Guidelines. While the editors intend to publish such manuscripts, publication is not guaranteed.
3. Manuscripts that are not awarded a prize may be purchased by the editors at a price to be negotiated.

## Submission deadline

All submissions must be received by the editors no later than **January 2, 2008**.





Hope has been called emotional nutrition. I call it spiritual nutrition. Preachers should specialize in dispensing it from the pulpit, not as a pseudo psychiatrist, but as a pastor who is familiar with God's Word.

The growing practice of having memorial services long after a death troubles me. I hear preachers call them celebrations of life, not funerals. They do not acknowledge the need to grieve, yet hope germinates in the soil of sorrow and lamentation.

A single mother lost her little girl after her baby spent three years in the neonatal intensive care unit where I served as chaplain. During those three years she came to the unit every day. She pushed her arms into sleeves of the special oxygenated isolette, always dreaming of taking her baby home. That dream never came true.

She drove to the funeral, alone. The pastor began the service by saying, "Friends, this is not a time for crying. This is a time to celebrate!"

The mother was bent over on the front row. She steeled herself against crying. After the interment she drove home, alone. But the nurses from our neonatal intensive care unit followed her home. They said, "Martha, be ready at ten in the morning. We are going to the hospital to have a real funeral."

One by one the nurses carried a white rose to the altar. Some read a poem they wrote about the baby. Others sang a song or told of an interesting encounter with the infant. Martha was given the permission to cry and express her lament. At the close of the service the roses were gathered and tied with a pretty ribbon. The nurses took the mother to the cemetery and placed the roses on the fresh grave. From the depths of sorrow arose hope of a better tomorrow.

## Preventive counseling

The Bible is a rich resource for addressing matters like loneliness, grief, anger, worry, stress, finance, illness, self-worth, and values. It contains stories and principles with preventive and therapeutic potential. It addresses questions that people are asking. Preaching from the

Scriptures about real-life problems can be like personal counseling on a group scale. This should never be a substitute for personal visitation when a person is facing a crisis.

If you are fortunate enough to have a psychiatrist or psychologist in your congregation, you can ask them to read your sermons in advance. Ask them to tell you of statements that could be hurtful to a person facing trouble of any kind. Ephesians 4:15 says we should speak the truth in love.

Preachers have the responsibility to read widely about life situations like grief, loneliness, and anger. They should never say, "We didn't learn that in seminary." The life of the pastor is an ongoing learning experience. Continuing education is vital to good therapeutic preaching.

## The rewards are many

During a sermon I once delivered, I chose to speak about comfort. I used 2 Corinthians 1:1-10. I spoke about what grief is like and how the comfort from God is a gradual process that is sure to come to those who wait on the Lord. Years later I met a woman who was a visitor in that church on the day I preached. She told me, "I don't know why I decided to attend that particular church that Sabbath, but when I saw your topic in the bulletin I knew why. I had just had a major loss and despaired of ever adjusting. I left the church that day confident that life would once again be worthwhile."

I was so glad that my questioner prompted me to scrutinize my sermons. I was so grateful that God gave me the grace to preach therapeutically. The rewards are many when you ask God to help you to comfort His people. ■

- 1 Jerome Groopman, *The Anatomy of Hope* (NY: Random House, 2004), p. xiv.
- 2 Ibid., p. 208.

*Tell us what you think about this article. Email us at [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or write to us at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.*

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# Dateline

## Festival of the Laity

**Orlando, Florida, United States—**The Festival of the Laity, sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, will be held at the Florida Hotel and Conference Center in Orlando, Florida, United States, September 26–29, 2007.

The event features eight general sessions and forty-five seminars—designed to further equip and motivate its participants in working in Sabbath School, personal ministries, and prison ministries.



J. Alfred Johnson II

According to **J. Alfred Johnson II**, director of Adult Ministries for the North American Division, the theme for the week is “Anointed, disciplined disciples: telling our world” about God’s love and His soon return.

For registration and other information, go to [www.FestivaloftheLaity.com](http://www.FestivaloftheLaity.com), or call 1-800-732-7587.

## Lithuania Adventism celebrates 80 years

**Kaunas, Lithuania—**Eighty years ago, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lithuania gained government recognition as a church, and to mark that event, 400 members and friends gathered in a special day of celebration. Among the guests were the Lithuanian Bible Society Director, a Pentecostal church bishop, and the chair of the Baptist Society; **Pastor Paul Clee**, of the Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists, **Valdis Zilgalvis**, president of the Baltic Union, and two conference presidents.

Former president of the Adventist Church in Lithuania, **Danielius Ozelis**, presented a history of the Lithuanian church which began in 1900, and was recognized 27 years later. Some of the highlights he presented in the fascinating history included the World War II years, when there were 500 members and 17 pastors, and the atheistic Communist regime, when outreach work was forced underground.

Current president **Bertold-Vinston Hibner** commented, “Today the church stands on the foundation that was laid by our pioneers. After Lithuania regained its independence, the church experienced a rapid growth from 45 members in 1992 to 892 members today. The Adventist church in Lithuania is seeking to get [further] parliamentary recognition and is developing its relationships with other Protestant denominations. Our church is becoming better known in Lithuania—due to the work that all our members and ministers are doing.

“We have a nice group of pastors who are doing an excellent job. I feel that our ministers and our members went home with a stronger

commitment to serve God,” Hibner concluded.

—[M. Kucinskas/G. Bukalders/TED News]

## Editor Recognized

**We** are pleased to announce that **Willie E. Hucks II**, assistant editor of *Ministry*, was recently appointed associate editor. The new designation does not significantly change his role, but it does recognize more appropriately the work he is doing.

“Willie Hucks is a valuable member of the editorial team. His extensive pastoral and teaching experience is a great asset in this role,” stated Nikolaus Satelmajer, editor. James A. Cress, publisher, points out that in addition to his editorial role, Dr. Hucks will continue to lecture to various pastoral groups.

Prior to joining *Ministry*, Hucks was associate professor of religion at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, United States.



Willie E. Hucks II



## BOOK REVIEW



**The Leader's Legacy** by David L. McKenna. Barclay Press, Newberg, OR, 2006.

Most books on leadership discuss the characteristics of an effective leader or leadership strategies. Such books are designed to help leaders successfully occupy their positions. However, these books rarely discuss how to effectively leave a leadership position when the leader's assignment is complete. In *The Leader's Legacy*, David L. McKenna offers a unique angle on leadership by showing leaders how to make a graceful exit.

It is rare that organizations consider succession until it is too late. McKenna argues that in order to effectively build an organization, Christian leaders should think not only about how to leave their position, but how to develop leaders to succeed them once their work is complete.

His "succession principle" asserts that "a leader builds upon the past, gives momentum to the present, and leaves the promise of greater things to come." Using the ministry of John the Baptist, McKenna demonstrates the idea that true leadership is marked by a commitment to the grand scope of the organization and an understanding of the leader's role in it.

At 167 pages, *The Leader's Legacy* is easy to read. McKenna weaves his study of the ministry of John the Baptist with stories of his own 50 years of leadership experience as a pastor, educator, and

higher education executive. His 12 Rules of Succession help Christian leaders understand their own role in the grand scheme of the organization, read the life cycle of the organization, effectively time their own exit, and manage their leaving in a way that leaves a legacy that will ultimately further the moral and spiritual transformation of an organization.

McKenna reminds his readers that Christian leadership is measured by the leader's contribution to the mission both now and in the future. Ultimately, a leader's ministry is marked by not just how the leader enters and leads, but how he or she ultimately leaves and prepares the way for those who come after. That is the leader's legacy.

—Reviewed by Robyn Jackson, PhD, president of Core Educational Consulting, Washington, D.C., United States.

Letters continued from page 3

religiously inspired texts. The theory of evolution has been the subject of thousands of books by recognized scholars who support the validity of the ideas. While there is occasional disagreement as to various minor details, the growth of information and discovery of the facts of life continue to build on the foundation given by Darwin (and many others both before and after him) and to support the vast number of the scientific elite who do not question the value of the methods and conclusions of the academic community.

Hasel's belief in the inerrancy of Scripture denies every principle of the origin of language. Words are the tools of communication, but they are imperfect tools. To demand perfection

(inerrancy) from imperfect words solves the difficulty for some, but has not resulted in any form of cohesive interpretation for the Christian world.

—Hal H. Eaton, Mouth of Wilson, Virginia, United States.

### Counting the members

One of the many books of Dr. Seuss is *On Beyond Zebra!*. In reading the Pastor's Pastor column titled "The Numbers Game" (July 2007), I came away with a similar conclusion. Yes, we should count members. However, beyond numbers are relationships.

Discipleship means more than "bringing in the sheaves." It means establishing nurturing relationships with those whom we baptize.

Nevertheless, I had difficulty with the logical progression to arrive at that central truth. The Laodicean church in Revelation is a prime example. Their counting resulted in self-satisfaction; as was also the case with the rich man in the parable of Jesus—who built bigger and bigger barns.

Too often we count at the wrong end. We count them coming in the front door and ignore those leaving out the back door. The parable of the lost sheep has it the other way around. The church has a twofold mission: Keep the sheepfold safe and seek and save those who are lost. Evangelistic head counting is an egocentric endeavor.

—Tom Zwemer, Augusta, Georgia, United States.



# Belonging

JAMES A. CRESS



Psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs demonstrates that once a person moves beyond assuring the essentials to sustain life and safety, the next priority is to "belong." Further, the more change or trauma individuals have experienced, the greater their likely need for a new "reference group identification." For new church members the need to belong is essential.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, congregations should intentionally establish new fellowship groups as membership expands. This will enable people to continue to feel a part of the fellowship family even as the church grows, allow the church to grow without major resistance, provide the setting in which people are tied into the Word of God, and help with the assimilation of new members.<sup>2</sup>

The probability of new members becoming actively involved is directly tied to the number of friends that they develop soon after joining the church. Flavil Yeakley interviewed 50 new members who had become actively incorporated into the life of the church as well as 50 recent converts who had dropped out. The more quickly new members formed personal relationships within the congregation, the more likely they were to become active and involved. The converts who stayed had developed an average of more than seven new friends in the church. Those who dropped out could identify an average of fewer than two.<sup>3</sup>

Another study asked two questions of those who had recently departed: (1) Why did they drop out? The answer regularly given was, "Did not feel part of the group." (2) What would most influence their choice of a new church home? Nearly 75 percent responded with "friendliness of the people."<sup>4</sup>

Members in the churches from which these new members dropped out most likely did not consider themselves unfriendly. New members are not necessarily overtly rejected. Quite often there is a superficial level of friendliness. In fact,

most congregations would be shocked if they were described as unfriendly.

Friendliness is different, however, from being friend-seeking. Common courtesy and genteel manners will lead a group of people to act in a friendly manner. On the other hand, the real message that may be conveyed is "Please don't bother me with depth beyond superficial greeting." One new member in my former congregation stated, "I get the real impression that when someone asks how I'm doing they really don't want to know and would be shocked if I even attempted to tell them. They are expressing a friendly greeting, but they don't want to be my friend."

We should not be surprised if new members reject superficial courtesy offered in lieu of genuine friendship. As Ken Abraham observed: "The opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference."<sup>5</sup>

With regard to nurturing people into the life of the body, too many of our churches are better in form than in reality. We say the right things, but we don't provide loving, supportive relationships to back up our words. We may think we are friendly while, in fact, guests or new members do not sense a loving atmosphere at all.

Nelson Annan suggests a six-step approach toward nurturing friendship-building, inclusive relationships:

1. *Communicate love.* Some leaders may be strong in organizing, teaching, and leading committee meetings, but weak when it comes to relating to people. Leaders must not only love the flock, but effectively communicate that love.

2. *Preach and teach love.* Challenging the church to grow in love for God, for one another, and for the world around them is the pastor's privilege and responsibility.

3. *Emphasize friendliness and warmth.* People-oriented members who smile, love to talk, and remember names should be trained to greet visitors and intentionally nurture new believers.

4. *Follow up first-time visitors.* Cultivate friendships with guests; extend lunch invitations; telephone to express pleasure for their visit; mail a warm note to encourage return attendance; make a personal visit to build the bridge of friendship and, possibly, to share the gospel.

5. *Broaden internal groups to make new people feel like they belong.* Newcomers should be surrounded with warmth and made to feel welcome. Additionally, this atmosphere must be genuine or it quickly will be detected as artificial.

6. *Strengthen and increase social events.* In loving churches people spend time together outside of the church building. In order to build relationships, more time is needed than ten minutes before or after meetings. Create unique ways to bring dozens of people together to play and laugh, to work and serve, and to learn and pray together.<sup>6</sup>

Your objective is for people to say of your congregation, "This is where I belong!" ■

1 Flavil Yeakley, "A Profile of the New Convert: Change in Life Situation," published in *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook*, Vol. 2, Win Arn and Charles Arn, editors (Pasadena, CA: Institute of American Church Growth, 1979), 31.

2 Kent R. Hunter, *Foundations for Church Growth* (New Haven, MO: Leader Publishing Co., 1973), 155.

3 *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook*, Vol. 2, 179.

4 Ibid.

5 Ken Abraham, *The Disillusioned Christian* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1991), 127.

6 Nelson Annan, *More People: Is Church Growth Worth It?* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1987), 37-40.

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September 28	The Big Question
September 29	The Hidden History of the Human Race
September 30	Secrets in Stone
October 1	Out of Thin Air

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