

MINISTRY[®]

INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL FOR PASTORS
FEBRUARY 2008

THE MISSING MEN

The background of the cover is a watercolor-style illustration. On the left, a portion of a church steeple is visible. On the right, a dark silhouette of a man in a suit is walking towards the left. In the center background, a bright, glowing light source, possibly the sun or moon, creates a lens flare effect. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, purples, and greens, with a warm orange glow from the light source.

IN
EVERY
ISSUE

Letters
3

Editorial
4

Dateline
28

Resources
29

Pastor's Pastor
30

5 The missing men

In many of our churches the number of women in attendance far outpaces that of men. How can we increase the male attendance in our churches?

Minner Labrador Jr.

10 Being good stewards of the church's assets: Ministry editors dialogue with the directors of Adventist Risk Management

You might not think that an agency associated with insuring church properties is involved in sharing the gospel. But it is.

Nikolaus Satelmajer

Willie E. Hucks II

16 Jesus is my Savior, my Lord, and my God, and I want to talk to you about Him

How did a drive through the north Texas desert give a church leader a new perspective of the life and death of Christ?

Don C. Schneider

19 Hospitality and not patronage: Lessons in relationships from 3 John

A unique look at John's letter to Gaius that sheds light on creating a positive environment where believers can feel respected, needed, and loved.

Igor Lorencin

21 At Jesus' feet

Mary of Bethany's life reveals an experience that must take place before effective witnessing happens.

Warren Kay

23 Lessons I've learned from mistakes I've made

Learning the art of pastoral ministry becomes a matter of trial and error. Here are some suggestions from a pastor who has grown as a result of his experiences.

Barry Kimbrough

26 The joy of redeeming grace

Life without deliverance could be awful, meaningless, and directionless. But the beauty of the gospel is that we are not left in the wasteland of guilt; it bids us to enter the oasis of God's grace.

Thomas J. Zwemer

MINISTRY®

Ministry® is the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist® Ministerial Association and has been published since 1928.

Association Secretary James A. Cress

Editor Nikolaus Satelmajer

Associate Editor Willie E. Hucks II

Consultant to Editor Myrna Tetz

Editorial Assistant Sheryl Beck

Database Assistant John Feezer IV

Professional Growth Anthony Kent

Contributing Editors Jonas Arrais, Sharon Cress, John M. Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Anthony Kent, Peter Prime, Kit Watts

International Editors

Chinese Robert Wong

Indonesian Edwin T. Pandjaitan

Japanese Yukio Ebihara

Korean Sung Sun Hong

Portuguese Zinaldo Santos

Russian Ilie Leahu

Spanish Marcos Blanco (South America)

Spanish Fernando Zabala (Central America)

International Advisors Alejandro Bullón, Ron Clouzet, Daniel Duda, R. Danforth Francis, Passmore Hachalinga, John Kakembo, Ilie Leahu, Miguel Luna, Hector Sanchez, Houtman Sinaga, Bruno Vertallier, Gary Webster, Measapogu Wilson

Consulting Editors Leslie Baumgartner, S. Peter Campbell, Ben Clausen, John C. Cress, Raoul Dederen, Ron Flowers, Jeanne Hartwell, Michael Hasel, Roland Hegstad, Mitchell Henson, Gerry Karst, Kathleen Kuntaraj, Ekkehardt Mueller, Norma Osborn, Jan Paulsen, Robert Peach, Leslie Pollard, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, Fredrick Russell, Maylan Schurch, Loren Seibold, William Shea, Penny Shell, Dan Smith, Russell Staples, Richard Tibbits, Steve Willsey, Edward Zinke

Advertising Editorial Office

Subscriptions/renewals/address changes ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org (email); 301-680-6512 (phone); 301-680-6502 (fax)

Ministerial Resource Center Cathy Payne
888-771-0738, 301-680-6508

Cover Illustration 316 Creative

Layout 316 Creative

Subscriptions 12 issues: United States US\$32.50; Canada and overseas US\$45.50; single copy US\$3.00. To order: send name, address, and payment to Ministry® Subscriptions, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

Web site www.ministrymagazine.org

To Writers We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Before submitting, review the writers' guidelines at www.ministrymagazine.org. Please send manuscripts via email with your name, address, and telephone number. Send editorial correspondence to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.

Ministry® (ISSN 0026-5314) is a journal of the Ministerial Association, © 2008, published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists® and printed by Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193. Member Associated Church Press. Standard mail postage paid at Nampa, Idaho.

Adventist®, Seventh-day Adventist®, and Ministry® are the registered trademarks of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists®.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Vol. 80 Number 2

Bible credits Scripture quotation from *The Message*. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson, 1993, 1994, 1995. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group. Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved. Scriptures quoted from NKJV are from *The New King James Version*, copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers. Scriptures quoted from CEV are from the *Contemporary English Version*, Copyright © American Bible Society 1991, 1995. Used by permission. Scripture taken from *The New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

OUR READERS RESPOND...

African issue of *Ministry*

My feelings ran deeply when I read the October issue of *Ministry*—especially the article titled “Africa: A Land at the Crossroads.”

I am blessed to be a Seventh-day Adventist. I say this because God, through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), has reached people where they most need to be reached. A lot of catastrophes befall Africans: famine, wars, AIDS, and others. Through it all, ADRA is doing a wonderful work of saving people, both physically and spiritually.

I have worked with Kendu Adventist Hospital for 13 years as a social worker, directly ministering to people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. And I have discovered that what these people need most is the love Jesus showed the leper.

May God continue to enable you to reach many with such a wonderful magazine.

—Seth Otieno Osumba, Kendu Bay, Kenya

Where is the Lamb?

My heart burned as I was reading Dr. Warren’s article “‘But Where is the Lamb?’: An Ancient Question for Modern Pulpits” (December 2007). I believe this article has addressed the very crux of hermeneutic and homiletic principles. As a matter of fact, this is the one principle of biblical interpretation recorded by the Gospel of Luke as directly from the mouth of Jesus in Luke 24:27, 44 that all the Scriptures (the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms) are about Christ and His sacrifice; the summary of the gospel message is *the Lamb*.

Furthermore, Jesus Himself defined the *kerygma*, the core of the message to be preached by the early Christian church, in the same chapter after “He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (24:45, NKJV). The *kerygma* is all about the Lamb and what was achieved through His sacrifice: “‘Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations’” (24:47, NKJV). Indeed this is the *kerygma* that no sermon should ever miss: Jesus Christ and Him crucified. No wonder my heart was burning. I had the same response as the disciples on the way to Emmaus (24:32), and it is the same response that audiences throughout the world experience when the Scriptures are preached—God has provided the Lamb! And that is the good news of the gospel for which our modern pulpits hunger and thirst.

This is one of the best articles your magazine has published.

—Elizabeth Talbot, Azusa, California, United States

Sinners in God’s hands

Irecently read the article “Sinners in the Hands of God” (February 2007). Wouldn’t Abraham’s option of God apply to this subject when he said, “‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’” (Gen. 18:25, NKJV).

Isn’t one of the main reasons that the saints will judge the lost during the millennium, that they might understand how just and fair God has dealt with the unsaved? Will they not be able to proclaim to the universe “‘You are righteous, O Lord’”? (Rev. 16:5, NKJV).

—Peter Christakos, retired pastor, Blythewood, South Carolina, United States

The pastor’s gethsemane

Thanks to Willie Hucks in his editorial, “The Pastor’s Gethsemane” (August 2007) for reminding us that we don’t need to be (and shouldn’t be) solo fighters in ministry. Ironically, the disciples’ lack of watchful support in Gethsemane did aid Jesus by inadvertently demonstrating how utterly lost humanity really was—precisely the realization that jolted Jesus back to recognizing the world’s desperate predicament without a Savior.

In the end, however, Jesus made it through His Gethsemane experience without friends. It was by finding His Father that He could face His future and that quite resolutely (Matt. 26:46). As a pastor (who is human), I must not forget the Source for survival and realignment of purpose. When Gethsemane hits, I hope I remember to whom I should turn. Of course, it is all the better with supportive friends.

—Ingo Sorke, Keene, Texas, United States

Being the message

Icannot agree more with Cindy Lou Bailey’s article, “Being the Message” (February 2007). Her insight into the gospel is needed within our church.

She is right when she says, “Truth is more than a set of doctrines or a dogma. It is, first and foremost, a Divine Person, Jesus Christ. . . . Others can see ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory.’”

When our love for one another matches our theology, then we can truly say we are *being the message*.

—Manuel Fernández, pastor, Avon Park, Florida, United States

Calling all men!

When my mother was only nine years old, she and her mother were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. My grandmother, a lifelong Christian, decided that what the pastor of that church was teaching offered the best spiritual guidance for her young family. My grandfather, however, did not share the same view.

Many years later I would spend my childhood summers with my grandparents. My grandmother and I would spend time talking about the Bible and other religious themes. My grandfather and I spent time participating in various sports activities: fishing (his favorite pastime), watching baseball on TV, or sitting on the front porch watching people playing baseball on the sandlot field across the street from the house.

One other distinct memory that I have of those summers: every Sabbath morning my grandfather would take my grandmother and me to the Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Church in Augusta, Georgia, United States, drop us off, and drive away. We would not see him again until later that afternoon when he came to pick us up. I vividly remember seeing him waiting in the car for us or sitting on the church steps until we were ready to leave. But he would not come into the church.

He did eventually become a Seventh-day Adventist. In fact, he became a deacon and served his church faithfully until his death. But what took him so long to decide to come to church, much less become an Adventist?

His is not an isolated story, for in countless numbers of churches, wives attend without their husbands and children attend without their fathers. Such was common in every church that I pastored, and I still see the same from week to week, regardless of what church I am attending.

Robert M. Franklin Jr., Presidential Distinguished Professor of Social Ethics at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia,

WILLIE E. HUCKS II



United States, and former president of the Interdenominational Theological Seminary, also in Atlanta, Georgia, identified eight reasons why African-American men refuse to attend church services. Among the reasons:

- the teachings of Christianity are perceived to encourage meekness and passivity
- character traits that are often attributed to Jesus create an antimacho persona
- worship services are too long
- hypocrisy is tolerated, especially among those who have a higher standing within the congregation*

The men in my neighborhoods

While Franklin specifically addresses African-American congregations, it seems to me that the reasons I cited also apply to men of other ethnic backgrounds. Throughout my ministerial lifetime I have been blessed to live in several different neighborhoods, and all of them, with one exception, had a mix of individuals with various or no denominational affiliations. Furthermore, no two neighborhoods were alike in terms of their ethnic composition.

I have made it a practice to talk to the men in the neighborhoods in which I have lived about a variety of topics, and we have so much in common: a love of sports (be it participatory or spectator), other forms of recreation, our jobs, and many others. They have known what I do for a living, whether I pastored a church or my current assignment as an editor. Often without my bringing up

the subject, they volunteer their reasons why they don't attend church, and the reasons range from their desire to sleep late into the morning hours on their off days, wanting to work around the house, wanting to spend time with their wives and children at the park, or, in the case of more than a few, they just want to get up early and go to the golf course.

What can the church do about it?

The churches I pastored were intentional about ministering to the male population, but most of our efforts were directed at the men in our own church. The church that I currently attend, the Dupont Park Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, District of Columbia, United States, intentionally pursues ministry to men both within our church and within the larger community, focusing on mentoring our boys and teenagers, encouraging the men in our church and community to be proactive as it relates to health screenings concerning their cholesterol and glucose readings as well as their prostate health, and assisting them in developing interviewing skills and building a résumé.

In our lead article, Minner Labrador Jr. tackles the topic of intentionally ministering to men, and he does so from both sermonic and practical angles. He also addresses the criticality of ministering to the male population.

The editors of *Ministry* hope that a discussion will begin, or at least continue, that will lead to practical methods of reaching the males in our communities while attracting them to behold the dynamic nature of our Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

* Robert M. Franklin, *Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 90, 91.

Tell us what you think about this editorial. Email us at MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to us at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

The missing men

Minner Labrador Jr.



Minner Labrador Jr., MDiv, is pastor of the Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, United States. He also serves as the coordinator for men's ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

Missing in action." That simple phrase, common in war, has brought heartache and pain to an endless number of families who fear the worst for their loved ones. But, as terrible as physically missing in action (MIA) is, another battlefield exists where men are missing in action, and whose loved ones bemoan their fate. These are the men who are missing from our churches.

While the worst that can happen to an MIA in this world is physical death, the fate of the MIAs in the spiritual world means eternal death—and that should be a great concern for all pastors. As spiritual leaders, we should be just as concerned for the men who are *spiritual* MIAs as governments are for the men who are *physical* ones.

The numbers

The research clearly tells us that men are missing in record numbers from our churches. Take, for example, the research from the United States-based Barna Group. Every year, the Barna Group explores the state of Americans' religious practices, examining facets of people's spiritual activity, faith identity, commitment, and religious perspective (www.barna.org). Barna research points out that just 35 percent of men in the United States attend church weekly. In Europe it is five percent. According to Barna:

Women are more likely than men to be born again: 49 percent of women have

accepted Christ as their savior, compared to 41 percent of men. (2006)

Women are 55 percent of the adult born again population. (2006)

Women are more likely than are men to believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings (55 percent versus 41 percent). (2006)

Women are more likely than are men to believe that God is the All-powerful, All-knowing, perfect Creator who rules the world today (78 percent to 64 percent). (2006)

About 74 percent of women compared to 64 percent of men say that their faith is very important to them. (2006)

About 68 percent of women describe themselves as "deeply spiritual" compared to 55 percent of men who say that "deeply spiritual" describes them accurately.¹

Furthermore, all churches face the crisis of missing men in their congregations. The United Methodist Church Web site, for example, posted statistics on attendance for the year 1999. They noted that in 1999 there were about 875,000 women in attendance at church every weekend; this was compared to 248,000 men. They consider the lack of men enlisted in God's work a serious problem for the healthy existence of Methodist churches.

The absence of men from the churches of the United States, as well as other countries will have serious consequences. This absence:

- Eliminates male role models for youth
- Stifles the flow of tithes and offerings
- Creates a marked gender gap that results in an imbalance of spiritual leadership in the church

An enormous amount of research has been done about why men, in every denomination, in every age group, and in every country, do not equal the church attendance of women. Whatever the reasons for this absence, as pastors we need to find ways to minister to these spiritual MIAs.

Approaches

For starters, if we want to draw men into our congregations, we need to understand that men and women are socialized differently. This produces a difference in dynamics that results in the decision of whether or not a person attends and/or participates in church.

Women, in general, have been taught interdependence, obedience, and caring for others. They learn to be nurturers. Women, therefore, love relationships; this includes high-powered

businesswomen as well. For many women, relationships are more important than food, drink, housing, fame, or fortune. Many would “stand by their man” as the song, cowritten by Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette, says, regardless of deprivation, so long as they felt the relationship with

“their man” was warm and loving. So, when you and I stand at the pulpit and preach that “every person should have a personal relationship with Jesus,” women immediately identify with that concept and are first down the aisle to answer an altar call.

Men, on the other hand, generally have been taught independence and self-reliance.

When you and I preach to men about having a “personal relationship with Jesus,” most simply do not identify. To a man, having a “relationship” means action. This may explain why tough, earthy, working men rarely come to church, or why high-achieving alpha males who are risk takers, visionaries, and fun-loving adventurers rarely do either.

Thus, as we prepare our sermons each week, we need to consider exactly what message we send. Where, for example, did Jesus say to have a “relationship” with Him? No, Jesus said, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men!” In other words, He called people to action.

There’s nothing passive about Jesus’ instructions. And those big, burly fishermen on the Sea of Galilee jumped up and followed Jesus. No wonder men would rather hunt or fish or play sports. No wonder many countries broadcast races, wrestling, boxing, football, soccer, and other activities on their national television channels. Television producers around the world understand that men will be where the action is!

To miss the fact that men need action means missing what it means to be male. And to forget this when we’re preparing a sermon or conducting a church board

AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS,
WE SHOULD BE JUST AS
CONCERNED FOR THE MEN
WHO ARE *SPIRITUAL* MIA AS
GOVERNMENTS ARE FOR THE
MEN WHO ARE *PHYSICAL* ONES.

meeting suggests that we continue to promote the status quo gender gap with services that are 65 percent women and 35 percent men.

Changing the dynamics

Women and men who have been called to the ministry must understand the spiritual needs of men and should thus change how we minister and preach. The time has come to be bold and passionate in drawing men to the Lord. We need to preach sermons that will challenge men to action for the gospel; an impossibility unless we, ourselves, are burning with a desire to advance the cause of Jesus Christ throughout the world. And, whether we are male or female, we must set the example as ministers of action if we wish to change the dynamics of our congregations.

I’ve heard and preached many sermons admonishing my congregation to be more loving, dependent, supportive, kind, patient, and feelings-oriented. I no longer preach those types of sermons. Once I caught a glimpse of Jesus as a man of action, I began to intentionally represent Him—in the pulpit as well as in our church activities that involve men—in that manner. As a result, I have seen a rewarding increase in male attendance.

Here are some of the dynamics that have worked for me.

Sermons

I purposefully stress Jesus, the bronzed Man of Galilee, as a powerful leader of men. I stress Jesus’ care and love for women and children but challenge the men of my congregation like

this: “Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:62, NKJV). In other words, Do you have what it takes? Are you fit to follow Jesus?

Challenge the men to action. Jesus was not passive. He daily confronted the

religious order, the status quo, and the hypocrisy of the religious rulers. He walked on water, cast out demons, healed the sick, and raised the dead. Jesus was powerful, bold, courageous. In no way was Jesus a wimp. Help the men of your congregation to get to know Jesus as a role model for *real men*.

Whenever I preach the “Lamb,” I always preach the “Lion” from the tribe of Judah, who rides a white horse with a bow in His hand. Men want to follow a King, not a lamb. And following a lamb is no longer an understandable societal metaphor in many cultures as it was in biblical times.

I search for stories of honor, respect, and integrity to stir the male heart. Men are challenged by illustrations of sacrifice both in times of war and for the faith. I try to build a passion for action in the cause of God. Some books that have been helpful in the United States include Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, *Jesus Freaks*, and *Stories for a Man’s Heart*.

I use current local, national, or international sports events in my sermons that appeal to men, especially if it is a sport’s star or coach who has declared his love for God. Ministers who have no “worldly knowledge” of sports, who play no sport, who are isolated from the world of men, who have no knowledge of the names of local heroes, who have no idea how the local men entertain themselves, will have little connection with the men in their congregations. Here’s a word of advice to pastors: Take time to learn who won the local, regional, and national sports events of your country. Take time to learn about your current national “stars.” I make

THE PASSIONATE PREACHER

Broadcast Live from Walla Walla University,
College Place, Washington, U.S.A.
TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2008
1:00–4:30 P.M. U.S. Eastern Time
[Repeat Broadcast April 23, 2008]

Participating Organizations



MINISTRY



MINISTRY

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SEMINARS



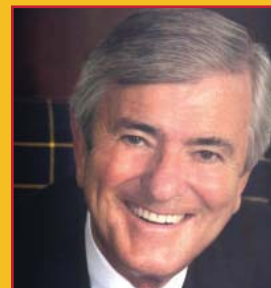
James Earl Massey is the son and grandson of ministers. For 22 years Dr. Massey was the senior and founding minister of the Metropolitan Church of God, a large multicultural, mission-oriented congregation in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. He was also elected for a five-year period to be the speaker on the "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 61st 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.

For broadcast information, please contact us or visit www.ministerialassociation.com

REGISTER IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS:



PHONE:

301.680.6515

FAX:

301.680.6502



E-MAIL:

MinSeminars@gc.adventist.org

WEB SITE:

www.ministerialassociation.com
[select PREACH from menu list]

LIVE BROADCAST

TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2008

1:00–4:30 P.M. U.S. EASTERN TIME

REPEAT BROADCAST

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008

AVAILABLE AT NO COST TO YOU!



Broadcast LIVE by satellite on Hope Channel and LIVE via webstreaming
www.ministerialassociation.com



INMINISTRY CENTER

FIELD-BASED
MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

**Ever wished you could
get more ministerial
education while
remaining InMinistry?**

NOW YOU CAN!

The InMinistry Center @ the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary provides field-based ministry enrichment for the North American Division. Classes are held at various NAD sites in two-week intensives or via the Internet.

Check out our three options:

- InMinistry Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry
- Continuing Education in Ministry

For more information:

Seventh-day Adventist
Theological Seminary

Website: www.InMinistry.info

Phone: 269.471.6321

Andrews  University

sure I know who won the national golf, tennis, and racing events. I use these events as sermon illustrations.

Male-directed words are intentionally used during sermons—competence, power, proving oneself, results, success, competition, and so forth.

I employ technology such as videos and on-screen graphics to illustrate sermons. Men and women learn best by the use of visual aids and by observation. Sitting idle and passive in a pew while a minister “lectures” can be terribly boring. To bring back our spiritual MIAs into our congregations, our sermons must be alive and dynamic.

Activities

When planning activities for men, never include exercises that make the male spirit uncomfortable. Don’t ask men to sit in a circle, hold hands, share their feelings, or read publicly. These activities embarrass most men.

Outdoor meetings are very effective. Weekend outings such as camping, white-water rafting, skiing, baseball and football games, tennis, and golf are how men bond. Never think you are wasting your ministerial time by spending it in one of these activities with the men of your congregation. It may be the best witnessing you ever do.

Play hard with the men—and pray even harder with them—in that order. Let the men of your congregation know that you are a *praying* as well as a *playing* pastor.

Take every opportunity to arrange excursions to soccer, baseball, football, hockey, and basketball games. Rodeos and bull-riding competitions, the races, and rock-climbing are just a few of the activities that the men of your congregation will enjoy. Then use these opportunities to praise God for health and fellowship and for each man present.

Men do better with projects that have an end date. Stay away from never-ending programs. Weekly meetings such as “prayer meeting” generally dwindle and die; they are never ending. Instead, run a series of programs that have a start and stop date. Allow men to challenge the purpose and efficiency of your projects and programs. Men like to tinker to make

things better and faster. Don’t be threatened by their questions or suggestions.

Always publicly recognize a man’s accomplishments and contributions. Brag on them.

Communicate your vision, purpose, and goals regularly as you fellowship with men. Men like to know where they are going and why.

Model what a godly man looks and acts like. Men and boys learn by observation and men follow a leader, not a program. Be the godly leader they can follow.

Live what you believe in front of the men, yet without ever being coarse or rough in word or deed.

Conclusion

An enthusiastic effort to reach the men in our congregations will facilitate congregational growth. In fact, research shows that men have a greater impact than children and women on a family’s church attendance. One study shows that when a child comes to church about 17 percent of the time the family will follow. When the mother comes to church about 30 percent of the time the family follows. But when the father comes to church about 93 percent of the time the family follows.²

It’s time that we pastors make an all-out effort to bring our spiritual MIAs back to church. Our challenge includes preaching and administering our churches so that men will understand that “real men” go to church. We want them to learn to know the only Real Man who ever lived. Then, as sons of the Most High God, men will find a brotherhood within the church from which they may draw their identity and where their church experience will have eternal significance. When that happens, we will fill our pews with both women and men, and the cause of God will be greatly strengthened. ■

1 The Barna Group Web site, www.barna.org [accessed June 7, 2007].

2 *Promise Keepers at Work* (Colorado Spring, CO: Focus on the Family, 1996), 111.

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

The North American Division with Mark Finley presents ...

Discoveries '08

Live via satellite on the Hope Channel from Greater Orlando in a series of all new Christ-centered biblical presentations exploring the past, present & future.

Join thousands of churches from
October 24 - November 29
for an incredible journey through the
great teachings of the Bible

Discoveries '08 will feature...

- Live Call-in Questions
- Interactive Chat Room
- Specially Designed Response Sheets
- The Best In Adventist Music
- Powerful Biblical Preaching With All New Graphics

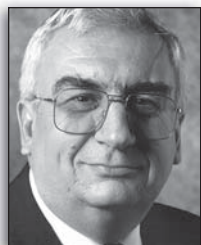
Register before June 1 and receive *Empowered by the Spirit* — a 2-DVD set of five sermons that will revive your church.

To register log on to www.acn.info or call 1-800-ACN (226) - 1119

Being good stewards of the church's assets:

Ministry editors dialogue with the directors of Adventist Risk Management

Nikolaus Satelmajer and Willie E. Hucks II



Nikolaus Satelmajer, DMin, is editor of Ministry.



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

Photos by David Fournier

The editors of Ministry recently sat down with the team of Adventist Risk Management (ARM) officers in an effort to learn more about their work—which is truly a ministry. The ARM administrators, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, consist of president Robert Sweezey, and vice presidents, Arthur Blinci, Karnik Doukmetzian, Michael Jamieson, and Byron Scheuneman.

Willie Hucks (WH): *The first time I heard the term risk management my reaction was, what's that? And I suspect a lot of our readers feel the same way. So let's begin with that. What do you actually do?*

Robert Sweezey (RS): That's real simple, we manage risk. Every major organization has a risk management department. What we do for the church is not unlike what corporate bodies do, with a few distinctions. Because of the nature of Adventism, our job really facilitates the church working together. All insurance, to some extent, is people working together. From the early days in the United States with Ben Franklin and his Fire Societies, people worked together to protect their assets, protect

their homes. For example, I buy insurance on my home; if it burns down, the insurance company sends me money, but where did that money come from? It came from other home owners who also bought insurance to protect their homes. That is how a group of people work together to protect the assets of their homes. Commercial insurance companies, of course, are into making money. As an Adventist organization we are not driven by making money. We are interested in spreading the gospel. So, how does Adventist Risk Management and our sister organization that we manage, Gencon Insurance Company of Vermont, help spread the gospel? We do that by working together. We take the risk of one small part of the mission and combine it with the risk from other parts of the mission, so that

Robert Sweezey



Karnik Doukmetzian



the risk of loss is shared between the entities, the administrators can balance their budgets, and the mission can be pursued at the least possible cost.

Nikolaus Satelmajer (NS): *Is there a difference between risk management and insurance?*

RS: Insurance is a sub-part of a risk manager's tool bag. Risk can be eliminated by means

other than insurance. For example, I do things to protect my home from burning down: clear the weeds around the house, keep my kids from playing with matches, etc. Instead of hiring an insurance company to work with competitors, organizations have discovered that they could retain within themselves a portion of managing risk. In lay terms, the simplest way to do this is to take a big deductible. There are other mechanisms as well that help to manage risk without simply giving the job to an insurance company. Now, because an insurance company is interested in making a profit, it is going to be careful in which risk they insure. For example, insurance companies may prefer to insure your home because you don't have little kids at home that could play with matches, but may not insure my home because I have kids. Well, that is also true when we look at the world church and the mission we want to pursue. Risk management and the insurance component of that is only one element of how the church works together financially. I'll illustrate this with the other components first. For example, you want to build a new school in a country in crisis—politically unstable and at war all the time. Who is going to loan you money to build a school in a country like that? Where do we get the money? Well, every quarter we as a church collect our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, we get a chunk of asset money and we invest it in that unstable country where no one else will go. Now that you have that building, who's going to insure it? Commercial markets won't because they think they won't make money, but Adventists can if we work together. I have used this mission example for years, but that example is coming closer to home, even in the United States, in view of what we saw recently by way of natural calamities in 2004 and 2005. Suddenly no one wants to insure churches in Florida or in New Orleans. But by working together we can protect the mission in those parts of the world and the gospel can go forward.

NS: *Do you insure even in these high-risk areas?*

RS: If it's part of the church, we can care for each other by the church working together.

NS: *Do you operate in all the world divisions of the church?*

Karnik Doukmetzian (KD): We operate in every division field of the world church. We maintain five offices. In the United States our main office is at the General Conference headquarters in Maryland; we have offices in California and Georgia, and outside of the U.S. we have offices in Brazil and England.

WH: *You're talking about insuring churches. Are you also responsible for insuring workers for the church?*

Arthur Blinci (AB): It depends on what you mean by "insuring." What church employees and church volunteers do when serving the church is insured by Adventist Risk Management and Gencon Insurance Company. So, if a lawsuit was brought against a pastor and they were charged with being negligent in supervising that church activity, they are covered under the liability insurance policy of the church.

KD: We don't insure individuals, but we do insure organizations and their employees and volunteers.

AB: The church sends thousands of volunteers for mission projects, such as construction. We provide accident insurance for those volunteers. If they are injured while building a chapel somewhere in the Caribbean, for instance, we care for their medical expenses.

RS: There are many other things we do, but every activity is designed to support the mission of the church so we have property and liability insurance, which protects the church, its agents, employees, and volunteers. We also support workers that are asked to go to parts of the world and put their personal safety and their assets at risk. In the United States and in some other divisions, we also play an active role in helping the church with its most valuable resource—its employees.

Byron Scheuneman (BS): The church is generous in its benefit program, especially in its relationship with its family of workers. The most significant part of that benefit program, after the retirement program, is health care. The church, in the United States, has asked Adventist Risk Management to administer its health-care program. Because of the willingness of the church to work together, ARM can negotiate with major companies the group purchase of health-care products, such as prescription drugs, at a much deeper discount, for both employees and retirees. In addition, relationships with nationwide entities such as the BlueCard PPO programs save the church over twenty million dollars annually in health-care costs. And this is only possible because the church is willing to work together so that a small academy in a remote part of the country can realize the benefits of a large group in these negotiations with a vendor. In addition, we have a group that works with life-insurance programs that can be secured at a much more favorable rate for the church. We also make sure that every worker has a basic coverage and a supplemental coverage with group rates versus individual rates. In addition to these programs and products, we have secured a variety of products that assist church workers as they travel and engage in activities on behalf of the church.

NS: *Imagine a church board meeting. The treasurer says that next month the church has to pay an increased premium to the conference. And a board member says, "I know where we can get good coverage for much less than that and so I think we ought to move." What advice do you have in such a case?*

KD: Don't do it! When you're looking at insurance you have to look at different aspects including what's covered by the policy. Is the property appropriately valued for insurance so that if it were to be damaged you would have enough insurance proceeds to rebuild it? Are you getting the coverage that you need? Is the conference, the owners of the property, able to determine that? The coverage we provide to the conferences and then to

the churches is broad enough to make sure the widest-ranging possible coverage is provided. You may find cheaper coverage elsewhere just as you find cheaper vehicles. But you may not get exactly what you're looking for or have the options you desire. The time when you find out about the value and benefit of your insurance policy is not when you buy it, but when you have a claim. And, when you have a claim, it's too late for you to say, "Oh, I wish I had the other coverage."

RS: Commercial insurance, more than homeowner's or consumer insurance, is really different from carrier to carrier, and needs to be carefully evaluated for property insurance. For liability insurance, it is good to remember how intertwined Adventism really is. In America, for example, we live in a very litigious society, and plaintiff lawyers, when they sue, typically sue everybody. Well, who is everybody? Think about a local church. The church has a Pathfinder club of about a dozen kids. Most of the exciting things that the little Pathfinder club does are conference- or union-wide activities. In one such activity, a child is injured. Is that a local church function, a conference function, a union function, a North American Division function or a worldwide function? Well, the plaintiff is going to find out by suing everybody. If everybody has a different insurer, everybody's insurer is going to come to the table and fight about whose fault it was and who should provide the indemnity to the injured person. What we need to do is protect the injured person; and if the church is wrongly accused, the church needs to stand together to defend. You have difficulty doing that when you have different financial parties and interests representing you. Not only is it nice when we're all working together but, in the long run, much cheaper for the church.

AB: There's another aspect that a church board needs to consider. When a conference office puts together an insurance package for its churches and schools,

there are certain costs that the conference may socialize with all its churches and schools. The local church may get an invoice that only says "church insurance" and they don't really understand how broad that is. For example, every one of the church board or school board members is covered with directors and officers liability insurance. Many of the other companies would say that you have to buy that kind of coverage separately. But with our policies, you don't. You already have that coverage because you're part of the sisterhood of churches. The church treasurer, the school treasurer, and any volunteer who helps the deacons to count the money all have crime insurance so that if funds are stolen from the church, the church is protected. And again, this is something that a conference

ABUSE HAPPENS. SOME DENOMINATIONS HAVE TAKEN THE POSITION TO DENY, DENY, DENY— UNTIL THE COURTS INTERVENE.

typically provides to all of its churches through its full conference program. For a church to get such coverage on its own, it has to go outside of the church family to buy insurance.

KD: We were talking earlier about working together. This also applies in the conference and church setting. Individual churches may be able to find cheaper insurance elsewhere, but working together reduces the overall cost of insurance for the whole group. One or two may be able to find cheaper insurance, but others may have to pay more if they were to go out on their own.

RS: Another point needs to be noted. There are places in the world where one can't get insurance. Being a Seventh-day Adventist means you're a part of a worldwide system, and you can get your church insured.

NS: *Are you saying that when you provide service for the church, conference, or*

local congregation, it is designed to work within the context of the local as well as worldwide mission?

RS: Absolutely.

NS: *Some providers may say, "Yes, we can insure your building," but in effect they may not fully meet our need.*

RS: Recently, one carrier who specializes in insuring houses of worship went to a local conference and offered to provide that conference a price lower than the ARM price for insuring their churches. Their offer covered all but six churches in the conference. Who's going to insure those remaining six churches? Gencon Insurance Company of Vermont? How could Gencon insure just the six poor-risk churches? You see, it takes the whole system working together.

WH: *Let's say I'm a pastor of a church. According to what you have said earlier, my church leaders—elders, deacons, youth leader, Pathfinder director, etc.—carry liability insurance. One day, a parent comes to me with a complaint that her daughter was abused by a local church leader. How do you respond to such cases?*

KD: Abuse happens. Some denominations have taken the position to deny, deny, deny—until the courts intervene. Many insurance companies take a similar position. We, over time, have developed a process that when such allegations arise, we immediately investigate, involve the conference officials, counselors, and our staff, to try to minimize the damage caused to individuals and to the church. The point is one of quick response. Other insurance companies won't even become involved at this early stage. They let the church handle the problem on their own and let them do what they want to do. In effect, they tell the churches, "When you have been served with a lawsuit, call us." Our position is different. We like to be involved at the early

stages so that we can work with the local church, conference, and church attorneys. The expertise that the whole group has developed together comes into action to try and minimize the pain and suffering caused by the abuse.

WH: *What should they do before something like this happens?*

KD: As a minimum, every individual involved with children should complete a volunteer application form and undergo appropriate background checks. We have some guidelines to help pastors on how to deal with staff and volunteers, how to train them for their work, how to do background checks, and how much involvement they should have with those with whom they work.

RS: Just like a financial audit of a treasurer is not an attack on the treasurer's character, training a volunteer working with children and youth is not an attack on that person's character. Our Web site www.adventistrisk.org lists resources and guidelines to help protect the reputation of those working with kids.

NS: *One of the accusations made in sexual abuse cases is that the church has ignored the victims. What do you do to take care of those who feel they have been wronged?*

KD: My first advice for pastors: get professionals to help you as soon as you hear of a sexual abuse case. Don't express disbelief. Don't make comments such as "this thing could never happen in our church." Inform the conference and ARM immediately. Let us know what happened so that we can work with you and with the victims, get them counseling or whatever is needed in order to assist them in their recovery.

NS: *So you're not treating them as adversaries.*

KD: Not at all. You can't afford to do that. The moment the complainants become angry, they turn against the church, they turn against the individuals who are trying to help them. And recovery for them becomes virtually impossible.

RS: The victims, especially in a minor's incident, want to be heard, want to be taken seriously. For example, the North American Division has set up a process through the sexual ethics panels to make sure everyone gets due process and is heard. We encourage every pastor to do that. Sometimes we are tempted to forget that our mission is always to help and protect the children. When an incident occurs and you're the pastor and now the local TV news person has a microphone in your face and the camera lights are on you, and you are being questioned, what do you say? The tendency is to say that you are not aware of all the facts, and that you have not had time to investigate the case fully. A better response would be, "We're here to protect our kids, we're worried about our kids' safety, and we're going to do what it takes to keep our kids safe. And we will cooperate with the authorities." As you work through the process, seek the help of professionals. The conference and Adventist Risk Management are here to help.

NS: *Michael, when you deal with premiums, resources, pulling things together that involves money, what do you as a CFO do on behalf of Adventist Risk Management to safeguard, to manage these significant assets?*

Michael Jamieson (MJ): My primary role is to care for financial operations, including budgeting and reporting. This allows management and the ARM Board to make good decisions, thus ensuring the best use of our resources for the protection of the Lord's assets. Our products are set up to care for the mission of the church. Everything that we are and own belongs to the church. When claims are low in a given year, the assets remain in the Lord's treasury. As a result, Gencon Insurance Company of Vermont, the risk-bearing arm of the church, has about twenty-six million dollars for managing future risks. As this value grows, we are able to assume more of our own risk, which reduces insurance cost, saving money for the church and its mission.

NS: *Because ARM is a church entity, all its assets are part of the church. Nothing*

Friedensau
Adventist University
is pleased to
announce two NEW
European,
English-language



Master of Theological Studies

with emphasis in the fields of

Adventist Studies or Mission Studies

starting in October 2008. Apply now!

12 reasons to study at Friedensau:

- Discover the historic heartland of Protestantism
- Get to know Germany – right in the center of Europe
- Make life-long friends with other international students
- Prepare for cross-cultural ministry to fulfil God's mission
- Delve into Adventist history and theology, beliefs and values
- Reflect on the relevance of Adventism for the present and future
- Live on a beautiful campus, just an hour from Berlin, the capital
- Study with an internationally trained, highly qualified faculty
- Use the brand new library and its superior research facilities
- Enjoy four special week-end excursions to historic sites
- Choose between full-time study and three-week intensives
- Benefit from the university's low-price policy



GET MORE INFORMATION AT
www.friedensau.eu
OR WRITE TO
info@friedensau.eu

goes to any stockholders outside of the church.

MJ: That's right. ARM and all of the ARM group of companies is owned and operated by the General Conference. We do not have any outside stockholders and none of our profits can be distributed to anyone other than the General Conference. We even pay rent to the General Conference, not to someone else. All of our assets are the Lord's.

NS: *So, when we collectively minimize our risk, we all save.*

KD: That's correct. One blessing I see in ARM is that it works only *with* the church. We sell insurance only to the church. We don't have one hundred thousand clients; we have only one—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We know the church, we know how the church operates, and our bottom-line desire is to protect the church in all aspects.

NS: *Occasionally, someone says, "Why do we need to insure anything? We should just trust the Lord." How would you answer that question?*

RS: God expects order in an organization. The Adventist Church has functioned in that fashion. Every aspect of its work requires order, which means orderly budgeting and orderly caring for risks that may occur. People sometimes quote Ellen White to say she was against insurance. Ellen White did make several interesting statements, but very few on property and liability insurance. What few statements she did make about property or fire insurance were private statements to her family to care for family business and make sure her house was insured when she was out of town. She did make a number of negative statements about life insurance. These statements were made at a time when life-insurance companies were not regulated and were unscrupulous. How much life insurance should an individual buy? The goal is not to leave your children or someone else a huge inheritance and make them lucky because you're dead. The goal is

to provide a financial tool to make sure that those who are dependent upon you financially have their needs cared for if you are unexpectedly taken from them. Both the Bible and Ellen White's writings uphold one's responsibility to make provisions for one's family so that loved ones are not left behind without any support and care.

NS: *So life insurance really is income replacement. Calling it life insurance is a misnomer.*

RS: Yes, it is income replacement, not a get-lucky-if-Grandpa-dies scheme. One of the changes in the regulations of life insurance since Ellen White's day is the concept of insurable risk. In property insurance, if you don't own it, you can't insure it. You can't insure my house for fire hazard. Only I can. In life insurance, there has to be a family or financial relationship between you and the person that you're buying the policy on.

WH: *So a sensible plan for a young family with children would be to have insurance sufficient to cover the house and the children's education.*

RS: That's reasonable. Now, the denomination in North America, and by and large around the world, provides a basic level of protection for its workers, and ARM facilitates that. Think of the risks that a young pastor faces, such as disability and injury that may prevent him from working. What then? Denominational employers provide assistance through ARM. Such assistance includes basic life insurance for the worker and dependent family members. Part of that is provided by the employers through mechanisms managed by Adventist Risk Management. Basic life insurance is provided to employees, but if you are a young person and have many children, you'll find the basic is not adequate, so you may have to purchase additional coverage. As you grow older and the children complete their education and embark on their own lives, you won't need as much life insurance. You can lower those expenses and then funnel those funds into mission.

WH: *What satisfaction do you personally receive from your work?*

KD: Using my expertise in law and insurance, I feel, helps save the church's assets for its mission, being able to help resolve problems, or clean up issues that had the potential of giving the church a bad name or negative press. Other things that give me satisfaction: writing a check for two and a half million dollars to a church that burned down last year. It would have taken many years for that church's one hundred and thirty members to recover from that disaster and raise the funds to rebuild, but having the backup of the church's insurance company allowed them to promptly rebuild their sanctuary and continue worshiping together. Two or three years ago we had the hurricane losses in Florida and the Caribbean. Over six hundred church properties were damaged or destroyed. Gencon Insurance Company of Vermont, and our reinsurance partners, paid over thirty-four million dollars to help these churches rebuild. This gives one a lot of satisfaction—being there to help in time of crisis or need.

RS: Risk management in the church is a staff function. If you ask, "What is a good day at work?" my answer would be, "A good day at work is when I helped a fellow church administrator solve a problem that was hindering their ability to carry out mission."

MJ: Another good day would be when someone has lost a loved one and you're able to call the administrators, and help them work closely with family, assuring them that they have insurance coverage to care for some of their immediate expenses—and their future.

BS: We administer thousands of health-care claims that come in from church workers and retirees across the United States. Nothing is probably more personal to an individual than their health care. When workers fall ill, they need to feel that they're going to be cared for. Our goal is to do just that and at the same time save a significant amount for the mission of the church through our concerted and cooperative efforts.

Byron Scheuneman



AB: One area of personal satisfaction for me is working with church administrators and lay people to better understand and appreciate the work of ARM. We have this educational and understanding partnership with various church entities such as the church ministries department, the youth department, and Adventist Community Services. It is

satisfying to see people understand for the first time that risk management is more than insurance, and that it is careful stewardship of assets the Lord has entrusted to the church.



Arthur Blinci

When people really see ARM's work in that light, they begin to understand that Adventist Risk Management is active stewardship.

Michael Jamieson



MJ: The greatest risk management story ever told is the story of redemption. The risk management plan was in place before man's fall into sin.

WH: Thank you so much for taking the time to share with us concerning your ministry. M

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

Adventist World Radio travels where missionaries cannot go.

An AWR listener in Mongolia writes: "While tuning my radio one night, I found your program, and it attracted me. Now I drop everything when it comes on. I have a dream that perhaps you can fulfill: a Bible of my own so I can learn God's message for me. Whatever the case, I don't know how to be a Christian. I hope you will instruct me."

AWR's broadcasts are making waves in the lives of listeners living in the hardest-to-reach places of the world:

- Programs are created in 70 languages by native speakers in each country.
- Several thousand hours of programs are broadcast each day, covering the majority of the world.
- Programs can be heard on AM, FM, and shortwave radio, as well as Internet podcasts and satellite transmissions.
- Broadcasts bypass political and geographic barriers, bringing the message of hope to millions.

With your help, many more eager listeners will be able to turn on their radios and hear of God's love for the first time.



12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904 USA
800.337.4297 • www.awr.org

AWR Annual Offering

MARCH 8, 2008



Jesus is my Savior, my Lord, and my God, and I want to talk to you about Him

Don C. Schneider

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from a morning worship thought that Don C. Schneider presented at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Don C. Schneider is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

My wife and I were driving west toward Amarillo, Texas. Not much to see in that part of the world; it's pretty flat and very dry. We were near the border between Oklahoma and Texas when I saw something unusual off to the left. I kept looking at it as we drove. We kept getting closer and closer but no signs explained it. I thought surely there would be a sign soon, saying something like, "Get off the freeway and come visit." But none appeared, so I took the next exit, turned around on the service road, and drove back.

I found the entrance. It was in a huge field; not much was around it. We drove into the parking lot; only a few cars were there. I looked up at the mammoth thing, 190 feet high and 110 feet wide. It was a cross. No explanation, no advertising, just this huge cross.

I walked closer and went around it. That which they call the Stations of the Cross were there. I went inside a small visitor center.

"Hey, what is this all about?" I asked.

A young girl asked me if I would want to find out more by listening to a tape and I said, "Yes, please."

She said, "I'll put it on for you."

So I sat down on the floor next to a small tape recorder and listened to the story of this cross, 19 stories high, 11 stories wide. A hole had been dug 20 feet deep and 65 truckloads of cement had been dumped into it to form the foundation. Sixty-inch tubing was on the inside of the cross, all covered with five-eighths-inch-thick sheet metal.

And I wondered *Why? Why is it here?* There was no advertising, no admission fee. *What is it all about?* I sat on the floor and listened to the explanation.

An engineer had been raised in an alcoholic family but in some way or another received an education. As he started working, he also got heavy into alcohol, but Jesus had given him the victory. So thankful, he wondered, *What can I do to say "Thank You" to Jesus?* For years he thought about what he could do when he finally said to himself, "I'm an engineer, I'll build the biggest cross allowable. It'll be built the biggest it can be."

So, there it was: 190 feet—a Thank You to Jesus.

I have thought about that a lot since. Even today, as I drove to work alone, I thought about it. I had dropped off my wife at the airport earlier, so now I could sing the way I wanted to sing (I don't need to worry about what key I'm in, or if I go flat). All I have to do is just belt it out, and so I belted out, "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross" and "Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It!" In short, I told Him, "Thank You" for what He has done for me.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from a Nazi prison cell, said that Christ and His cross are all that matter. I like to go to Germany. My favorite place in the world is Wittenberg. I go to the monastery where Luther lived. Out behind it, I smile as I think of a fire blazing and Luther throwing into it the papal bull which said, "Luther, you are excommunicated." I can almost hear him say, "Pope, I excommunicate you," as he threw the letter into the fire.

I can hear the hammer pounding as the 95 Theses are nailed to the door of the Castle Church. I walk down the street thinking about the debates between Luther and Rome. I laugh because he said that the cardinal debating him was no more able to debate theology than a donkey could play a harp. (He didn't use the word *donkey*, either)

When I'm in St. Mary's Church (a very plain church) where Luther preached those 2,000 sermons, and I read from one of his sermons, the God of heaven speaks to me.

I can see Luther there, describing the Cross. The poor people of that little town didn't know of any way to deal with their sins. Not far away, John Tetzel was selling indulgences, but the folk didn't have enough money to cover their own sins, much less the sins of their fathers and mothers.

But there, in that same church, Luther didn't talk about the money needed for an indulgence. He talked about a system where God would take your sins and give you a robe of righteousness in their place. Hear Luther's sermon where he said, speaking as if he were Jesus: "David, I know about you, you kill people. You're an adulterer. Bring all of that and put it right here on Me." And he describes

Jesus going to that cross. Then Jesus speaks to Peter: "Peter, I know you will betray Me. I know you can't really

I tell you what, you bring all of that here and put it on Me. I'll hang on the cross and you can stand in front of My flock wearing My clothes, and do what you do."

Sure, I'm not going to go build a cross 190 feet high, but I *am* going to praise His name. And so I came to work this morning singing that "Old Rugged Cross." I also sang "I've Been Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb."

SURE, I'M NOT GOING TO
GO BUILD A CROSS 190 FEET
HIGH, BUT I AM GOING TO
PRAISE HIS NAME.

be trusted, but put that right here on Me. I'll take that and I'll give you My coat and you can wear that in place of your sins."

And sitting in St. Mary's Church, it seems appropriate to go another step. I can hear him say, "Don Schneider, I know you too, and you're a mess, but

Just my small way of saying, "Thank You, Jesus, for what You have done for me." M

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

Hear the president preach!

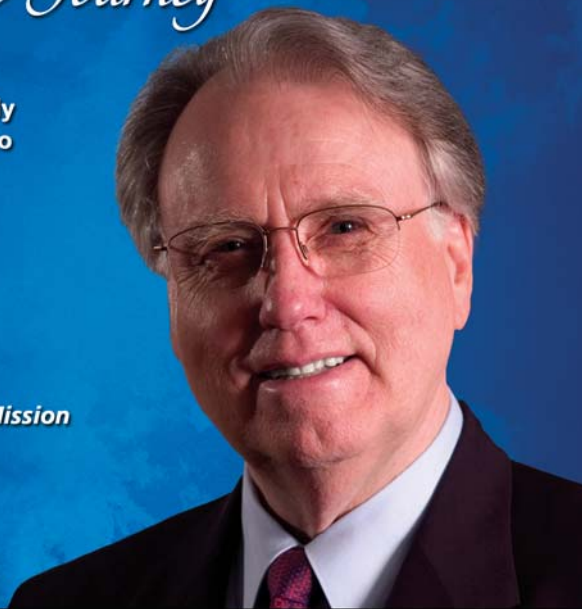
Almost Home: Completing the Journey

Jan Paulsen, President of The World Church of Seventh-day Adventists, addresses the church family to encourage and inspire members in mission and to uphold one another in faithful witness.

Series sermons *Service—An Attitude*
Being Useful to God
Keeping the Door Open
Living in Anticipation
Completing the Journey

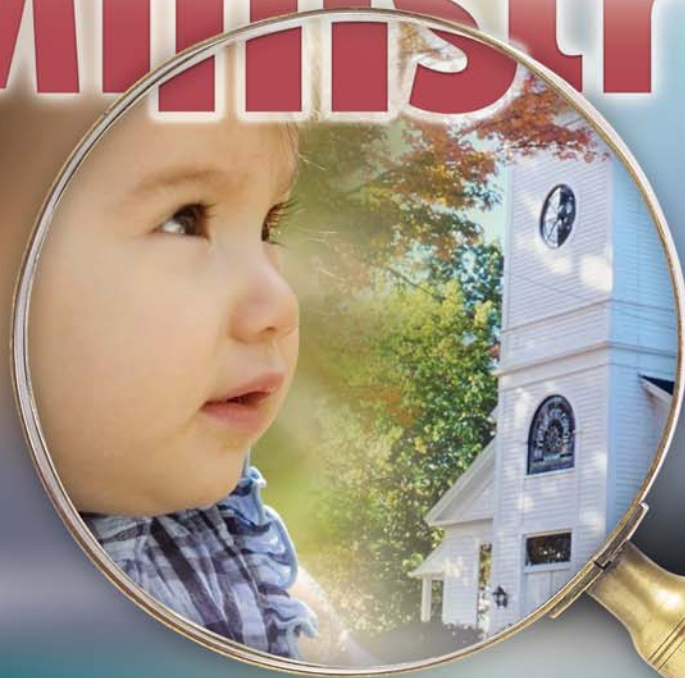
Bonus features *Jan Paulsen: The Man and His Mission*
2007 Year-End Greeting

Adventist Preaching



Two-DVD set, Vol 19 - \$24.95 + sh/h • For more info and to order:
www.acn.info or 800-ACN-1119 • www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525 • ABCs

Clear the fog to
Ministry



It makes a difference how you view the church.
Adjust your lens; you'll see us in a whole new light.



ADVENTIST RISK MANAGEMENT, INC.
www.adventistrisk.org

Serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church for more than 70 years...
providing global solutions to minimize risks!

Hospitality and not patronage: Lessons in relationships from 3 John

Igor Lorencin



Igor Lorencin, PhD, is senior pastor of the Zagreb First Seventh-day Adventist Church, Zagreb, Croatia.

John, in his third epistle, teaches an important lesson in interpersonal relations that, if implemented, could resolve many a conflict in our congregations and create a positive environment where believers can feel respected, needed, and loved.

The apostle John wrote the letter to a church member named Gaius. He praises him for his generous hospitality toward traveling missionaries (vv. 3–8). This conduct contrasts with that of another member, Diotrephes, who does not accept John's letters, gossips about the apostle, refuses to welcome traveling missionaries sent by the apostle, and even expels them and their guests from the church (vv. 9, 10).

Genuine hospitality versus patronage had become the major issue.

When a relationship of hospitality becomes imbalanced, it usually turns into a relationship of patronage. Diotrephes seems to have been of the latter kind. Christian church gatherings in the first couple of centuries were held in private homes. Since Diotrephes was able to prevent access to the church for certain individuals, that local church was probably meeting in his household. The epistle contrasts his tendency toward patronage with the genuine hospitality of Gaius.

John calls Diotrephes' works "evil" (v. 11) and warns Gaius not to follow them. He then commends another church member—Demetrius (v. 12). Demetrius seems to have been a member of the same church who practiced hospitality,

but he was expelled by Diotrephes. John recommends that Gaius join forces with the isolated Demetrius and continue his works of hospitality. In order to have a deeper understanding of why John recommends hospitality and condemns patronage, we need to understand the culture and customs of the time.

With hospitality as a host-guest relationship, where hosts and guests are equal, the hosts tend to even subordinate themselves to the wishes and needs of the guests. Expressed in verse 8 with the Greek word *hupolambanein*, the idea of subordination calls for support for visitors. The phrase demands deference toward the other party, suggesting a sense of reciprocity whereby host-guest roles may experience a reversal in future encounters, so that the guest becomes a host and the host a guest. Thus ancient hospitality is a relationship that promotes equality among all participants.

On the other hand, patronage becomes a relationship of inequality, with the patron always above the client. The relationship can be described as also reciprocal in the sense that the client needs to give something in return for the received benefits, but the patron remains always superior with no exchange of roles as in a hospitality relationship. Patrons regularly look for personal gain, instead of how to benefit their clients. Thus patronage develops into a condescending attitude motivated by selfishness and inequality.

Why does John recommend hospitality instead of patronage in a church setting? Hospitality is a relationship of equals and brings a positive spirit into a Christian community. Deference of both parties to each other also contributes to a positive rapport between them. The element of subordination to the needs of the other, present in hospitality, brings a spirit of service. The reciprocity that exists in hospitality leads members to serve the needs of each other in a church community. If all church members—rich and poor, young and old, influential and noninfluential—were to practice such hospitality, what a revival would take place in the faith community!

On the other hand, patronage leads to relationships of inequality in church communities. Where patronage rules, there is always someone who believes themselves to be superior and deserving of a better position (see v. 9). Where patronage rules, a serving attitude does not exist and willing subordination becomes nonexistent (v. 10). In patronage relationships, the patron subordinates others. Instead of deference,

domination surfaces. As a relationship of unequals, patronage has a tendency to destroy a church.

In summary, John presents hospitality as a positive model

for structuring relationships in a local church, and rejects patronizing relationships as negative and damaging. We find John's central thought in verse 8: "We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth" (NIV). How do you work together for the truth? By showing hospitality and living in a spirit of hospitality. How do you work against the truth? By exhibiting a condescending attitude, imposing your will over others, and ruling instead of serving.

Serving in the Gospels

In the Gospels we observe that serving was a constant problem among the disciples. Repeatedly Jesus catches them in discussions about which of them is greater (Mark 9:33–37). Some of them even dare to ask for top positions in His future kingdom (Mark 10:35). Sinful human nature desires to rule, and serving does not come natural to us. So Jesus told His disciples, "'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'" (Mark 10:42–45, NIV).

The upper room experience presents most dramatically the need to cultivate a serving attitude among believers (John 13:1–17). In New Testament times, when guests entered a house, a host would, first of all, wash the guests' feet and thus show a required attitude of subordination. A host shows honor and respect to the guests by bowing down to serve. But in the upper room there was no one to serve. A servant was needed. One would think that the disciples would have learned something about

HOSPITALITY IS A RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS AND BRINGS A POSITIVE SPIRIT INTO A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

the needed attitude after living with Jesus for three and a half years. But no one thought about equality, deference, and hospitality, but rather about ruling others, domination, and patronage.

In that situation Jesus stepped in. He became a host and served everyone, leaving us an example to follow. Christianity cannot be described as ruling as patrons do in a patron-client relationship but about serving as hosts do in a hospitality encounter. Jesus showed us the perfect servanthood. He served not only in the upper room, but went all the way to the Cross. Even today He continues to serve us with His whole life and attitude centering around service. In His hospitality He invites us to Him; He wants to serve us. But at the same time He wants us to have the same attitude of hospitality and to serve others.

Today, patronage in churches can often be found in the form of members eager to impose their will over the rest of the church community. Often such patrons are materially rich and believe that because of their financial contributions to the church they have a right to unduly influence and decide on issues pertaining to the church—at times with no consideration of the opinion of others. Such patrons may not have been successful in other areas of life and want to show their influence within the faith community by imposing their will over others. Whenever a person, either alone or in league with other like-minded people, tries to impose their will over the rest of the church community, it reveals a patronizing attitude. By nature, patronage does not have an interest in equality among church members, but in rulership, power, and domination.

On the other hand, an attitude of hospitality promotes among members a spirit of service and equality. Among Christians who believe in the priesthood of all believers, church offices should not

be used for the purpose of ruling over others. Members with higher offices are required to serve more and not less. If higher offices tend to lord over others, then the spirit of

patronage and dominance determine church life and conflicts are unavoidable. Hospitality calls for service of everyone to everyone and such an attitude produces equality for all participants. In such an environment people will feel needed, respected, and loved.

Becoming more hospitable

Third John's burden includes the following two questions: How can I become a more hospitable person interested in a relationship of equals? How can I serve others and spread that serving attitude in my surroundings? The disciples had a hard time with such questions. If it were not for the shocking experience of the Cross, they probably never would have learned how to serve others. But the Cross defined them. The Cross forced them to become people of hospitality—people who do not care about ruling, but focus on serving.

What impact does the Cross have on our lives? How deeply does the gospel impact us? Does it make us into people who are ready to give up self-interest in order to benefit others? The third epistle of John teaches us that patronage, domination, and ruling have no place in a Christian community. Churches need hospitality, a relationship of equality, where everyone willingly takes on the role of a host and of a guest, everyone serving and being served at the same time. When a church becomes moved and motivated by a spirit of genuine hospitality and service, there is no limit to the power and usefulness of such a church. It will become a magnet for people in need who will, in turn, serve others and thus multiply the number of those being saved. We need Gaius, not Diotrephes. ■

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

At Jesus' feet

Warren Kay

For years I have pondered why many pastors and parishioners have such an apathetic witness for Jesus. Then it hit me: we experience a progressive journey prior to witnessing. Mary of Bethany's life reveals this kind of progressive experience that must take place before effective witnessing can happen.

Waiting at Jesus' feet

Jesus and His disciples have come to Mary's home in Bethany. Although Martha opens her home to them, she becomes distracted with the necessary preparations. Time flies by. As she works hard in the kitchen (kneading the bread, for instance), sweat drips from her brow in anxiety about all that needs to be done as she prepares the meal. She usually enjoys being in the kitchen, but today something robs her of this satisfaction. Suddenly she bursts into the living room and confronts Jesus, "'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?'" (Luke 10:40, NIV).

Where has Mary gone? Martha finds her right there, in front of Jesus, sitting at His feet. His words have become more important than food. To her they mean life.

Mary's battles are different than Martha's. She senses deep within that only with the help of this Guest will she ever be victorious over herself and the weaknesses she struggles with. Now, to Mary's embarrassment, her sister exposes her before Jesus and His disciples with words

suggesting that, as usual, she persists in being lazy and thoughtless.

"'Martha, Martha, . . . you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her'" (Luke 10:41, 42, NIV).

Jesus vindicates her choice. Finally, someone acknowledges her right-doing, and this affirmation touches her heart and washes away her embarrassment. "'One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her'" (Luke 10:41, *The Message*).

Ellen White wrote that the "one thing" Martha needed was "a calm, devotional spirit, a deeper anxiety for knowledge concerning the future, immortal life, and the graces necessary for spiritual advancement." But, she also acknowledges that the world needs Marthas and her careful and energetic devotion as they work for Him. "But," White adds, "let them first sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus. Let diligence, promptness, and energy be sanctified by the grace of Christ; then the life will be an unconquerable power for good."¹

Jesus gave us the commission, "'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations . . .'" (Matt. 28:19, NIV). But we must remember that He had earlier invited them to Him by saying, "'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'" (Matt. 11:28–30, NIV).

We may think of *going* as such a burden because we have not yet really come. We have not yet learned to sit at Jesus' feet, to hang on every word, and to find rest for our souls and help for our battles. Before we can go we must first come! Ellen White confirms the scripture by reiterating what Scripture says, "Come, learn of Me, and in this coming we begin the life eternal." Then she explains, "The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. As we walk with Jesus in this life, we may be filled with His love, satisfied with His presence."²

Jesus tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the gift from the Father. "'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses . . .'" (Acts 1:8, NIV). Like Mary, we must learn to wait at Jesus' feet, while our seeking heart hangs on every word until we receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.



Warren Kay, MDiv,
pastors the Sylvan
Lake and Rocky
Mountain House
Seventh-day
Adventist Churches in
Alberta, Canada.

Weeping at Jesus' feet

Earlier Jesus, the invited Guest at Simon's home, healed Simon the Pharisee from leprosy, and, on this occasion, Simon says *Thank You* in his own way. Martha stays in the kitchen, serving, perhaps, with more compassion and composure. Mary again kneels at Jesus' feet but this time, instead of waiting, she weeps. She has experienced Jesus' forgiveness for a sinful life, with her broken heart touched by His accepting love. Her heart also overflows with gratitude, remembering that her brother was raised from the tomb. (See Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8.)

Being prompted to do something impulsive, as only a heart in love will do, she purchases an alabaster jar of perfume that cost her a full year's income. She believes Jesus will be crucified, and, in her deep love and sorrow, she desires to honor Him. Then her intense grief turns to joy as she hears many say that soon He will be crowned King.

With a stir in the room as the fragrance captures everyone's attention, Mary kneels at Jesus' feet once again. While she washes His feet with her tears, she kisses them and pours her expensive perfume on them as well. She honors her Lord first before anyone else.

When that which we know in our heads makes the journey to our hearts, then we too will be prompted to do something extravagant for Him.

I remember being at a youth leaders' conference and watching a first-person dramatization of Abraham climbing the mountain to sacrifice Isaac. My heart was touched and tears streamed down my face. Immediately after that presentation, I was driven from within to buy some resources that would be of help in my spiritual walk. I was amazed at what happened when my heart was touched by His Spirit's power.

And someone told me the following story:

Last week I was going for a walk and praying. I was very upset and literally hyperventilating. I'm thinking about what a bad spouse I am. I should be doing this and that and the other thing. What a fool I am. What a hypocrite!

But then I heard a very quiet whisper. I almost missed it. I said, "What?" Then I heard it again. "You belong to Me first. I'll take care of you. I won't let anything hurt you. Anything that comes against you has to come through Me first."

I just started crying I was so relieved.

recognize the One standing behind her as she turns and says, "'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.'" She knows of an empty tomb that could be used for His body.

Then Jesus says to her, "'Mary.'" Instantly, she recognizes Him and falls to His feet in adoration.

"Teacher," she exclaims in joy and adoration, her heart overcome with exuberance as she worships at the feet of the One whom she so absolutely adores. Jesus insists that she stop clinging to Him so He can return to His Father. "'Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.''" (See John 20:10-17.)

The power

And now Mary goes to the disciples with the news: "'I have seen the Lord!'" (John 20:18, NIV). Mary doesn't need a course on how to be a witness. She

doesn't need to be trained in the most effective evangelistic techniques. She doesn't need to learn how to do DVD evangelism or how to give Bible studies. She doesn't need any of that because *she has seen the Lord*.

Mary's seeking heart has waited at Jesus' feet. Mary's broken heart has wept at Jesus' feet. Mary's new heart has worshiped at Jesus' feet. And now, experiencing Jesus' amazing love she becomes a powerful witness for Him.

In the same way, we will become powerful witnesses but only when we wait at His feet, seek Him with our whole heart, weep at His feet with a breaking heart, and worship Him with a new heart. ■

WE HAVE NOT YET LEARNED TO
SIT AT JESUS' FEET, TO HANG
ON EVERY WORD, AND TO FIND
REST FOR OUR SOULS AND HELP
FOR OUR BATTLES.

That's the picture of Mary weeping at Jesus feet, her breaking heart full and overflowing with His love.

But this consciousness of His presence comes only after waiting at His feet.

Worshipping at Jesus' feet

The next portrait of Mary occurs early Sunday morning. She goes to the tomb, but the stone has been rolled away. Excited and out of breath, she exclaims to Peter and John, "'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'" (John 20:2, NIV).

Mary lingers at the tomb after Peter and John leave. Weeping, she looks into the tomb and sees two angels sitting where she had helped place His broken and bruised body on Friday evening.

"'Woman, why are you crying?'" they ask.

"'They have taken my Lord away,'" she replies, "'and I don't know where they have put him.'" She doesn't

1 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publ. Assoc., 1940), 525.

2 Ibid., 331.

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

Lessons I've learned from mistakes I've made

Barry Kimbrough



Barry Kimbrough, MDiv, is pastor of the Taunton and Foxborough Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Massachusetts, United States.

During my 12 years of pastoring, I've made my share of mistakes. But unless I am willing to learn from my errors, I'll never become skillful. Pastoring more than one church has never been easy, especially for those not gifted in multitasking; but as Robert Schuler says, "I'd rather attempt something great for God and fail than attempt to do nothing and succeed."¹ Errors may dampen our spirits, but listen to what Ellen White says: "Do you make mistakes? Do not let this discourage you. The Lord may permit you to make small mistakes in order to save you from making larger mistakes."²

Hopefully, the following suggestions can help save a new (or experienced) pastor from repeating a few of my lapses.

Gear sermons to local needs

I've learned that a good sermon for one congregation can totally miss the mark in another—on the very same Sabbath. I have memories of launching into a well-prepared message only to suddenly realize, by the blank stares before me, that the sermon had little bearing on the particular needs of my immediate listeners. The sermonic need of one congregation may not be the same as another's. Churches cannot be called clones. A message on the historicist principle of prophetic interpretation may be helpful in a church facing the inroads of futurism, but it won't touch the hearts of a group of worshipers who are grieving the death of a teen in a tragic accident. That

illustration may be an extreme example, but it demonstrates that on a given Sabbath different flocks will often have different requirements.

While some sermons can be successfully preached to multiple churches, others based on the same text may need to be customized to emphasize the truths relevant to the church at hand. There will always be Sabbaths when entirely differing messages may be called for by individual churches. Hence, many pastors must prepare several sermons per week *for just one of their congregations*. This includes messages for midweek prayer meetings.

Preparing two or more quality sermons in a week takes advance planning. Some pastors annually take a full week or more to plan their preaching year. Others plan quarterly or monthly. But even an hour of planning at the beginning of the week can help make the Sabbath messages more fitting. The sooner pastors develop plans as to text and topic, the more time remains for efficient sermon building.

Choosing appropriate weekly scripture passages on which to base sermons often turns out to be the biggest task, but here a thorough acquaintance with the contents of Scripture becomes extremely helpful. The Bible has more than enough varieties of messages on which to base timely discourses that speak to local circumstances. Jesus showed His command of Scripture when He spoke from well-chosen verses, and He quoted quickly and easily, fitting scriptures in answer to His questioners.³

For those weeks when no special congregational needs seem to be present, I have found it helpful to simply choose a psalm, a parable, a gospel passage, or a section of Paul, and preach exegetically. This method has its blessing: the communication of new truths or emphases from previously overlooked scriptures.

My mistakes in preaching have taught me that a polished sermon is good but a relevant one is better. "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Prov. 15:23).⁴

Be sensitive to the mood of your congregation

In one district I had a congregation that enjoyed a great year of growth, while, unfortunately, the other church struggled to grow. I was so excited about what God was doing in the growing parish that I enthusiastically reported the successes when I stood before the struggling church. Soon I learned that what was great news to me was actually frustrating to some present. They were discouraged. Talking about others' triumphs only made them feel worse, and I would have been wise

to say less about the “good” church and more about what God could do with the present flock. Napoleon recognized this leadership principle when he remarked that “a leader is a dealer in hope.”⁵

The good news is that every church—no matter how heavily burdened with problems—can be blessed in unique ways. The struggling church in the above experience required a lot of my attention, including seemingly endless meetings to put out fires, and I often felt that I was failing in my efforts to help them. But a unique thing happened. The extra time and effort spent with the people created a loving bond with the pastor. All the dilemmas were not solved, but on my final Sabbath I was surprised at the outpouring of heartfelt thanks and appreciation that I received. Churches are people too; they need affirmation and optimism. Focus on the positive. Watch for God’s blessings. Soon even your slowest church may “see the salvation of the LORD” (Exod. 14:13).

Trust God to solve district problems

In one region, the smaller of my two


churches had worship service at 9:30 A.M. and Sabbath School at 11:00 A.M., with the larger church having the traditional schedule so that both churches could share the pastor for worship services. At one point the smaller church wanted to change its divine service from 9:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M., hoping the later worship time would make it easier for people to attend and thus facilitate growth. The challenge was how to fit this new plan with the larger church since it would require them to adjust their worship time by 30 minutes.

A representative from the smaller church visited a board meeting of the bigger church to request the modification. Predictably, some on the board resisted the idea of adjusting the time of *their* service. To me, the little church’s request seemed reasonable enough, and as I listened to the reactions my frustration mounted. I considered their reluctance as stubbornness, and I blurted out a threat to alter my own preaching schedule to meet the needs of the smaller church. This stirred up a sharp counterthreat from one upset board member. Tension filled the air. Fortunately, the heat died down,

and we were able to go on with the meeting, but the request was rejected.

As it turned out, the smaller church decided to go ahead with a three-month experiment of the time change, even though it would decrease my pulpit time with them. But after just a few weeks of trying it, they discovered it was not the solution they hoped for, as a number of problems were created that they did not foresee. As soon as the allotted time for the trial ended, they went back to the 9:30 A.M. worship service, breathing a united sigh of relief. The district scheduling conflict solved itself.

I learned from the ordeal that sometimes churches don’t get along; and more importantly, that I should not get emotionally involved in their quarrels. The problems can’t be ignored, but they must be addressed prayerfully with a pastoral attitude toward all. In this particular case, God had the problem solved from the beginning. But even when the argument persists, we should follow the advice of the wise man: “The fear of man [or a congregation] brings a snare, / But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe” (Prov. 29:25).



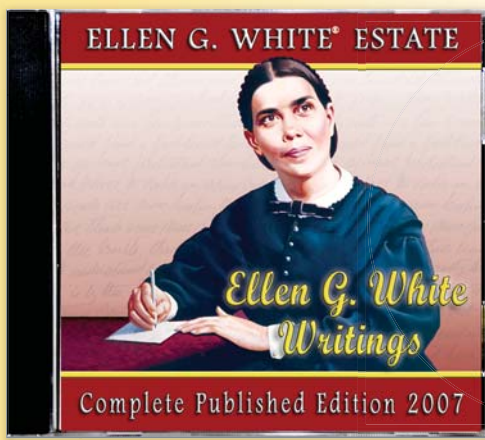
Ellen G. White Writings


Complete Published Edition 2007

See www.WhiteEstate.org for details,
or visit your local Adventist Book Center.

Only \$50.00*

Regular Price \$99.99





Includes:
The complete published writings of Ellen G. White, available on one CD-ROM: Books, Periodicals, Pamphlets, Manuscript Releases, and more...

- * 385 titles and 75,000+ pages of text
- * 6-volume Ellen G. White Biography
- * 4-volume Comprehensive EGW Index
- * 8 children’s books on Ellen G. White
- * 16 Ellen G. White reference books
- * 110 White Estate topical papers
- * 1828 Webster’s American Dictionary
- * KJV Bible

*This special discounted price is only available to credentialed ministers and teachers—Call 1.800.WHT.DISC

Be balanced in your church workload

One year a successful evangelistic series caused me to forget that I was only one person and that a church can become overworked. When the next satellite series was promoted, I urged both churches to host it, thinking I could multiply the success already achieved. What I didn't think about was that the evangelistic church was tired from a series of outreach efforts that year. Wanting to be cooperative, they agreed to another one; but when the satellite series started, attendance was small. I then found myself spending half of my time trying to implement a program that was not taking root in one church, while the same program was inspiring new life in the other church and attracting a number of new seekers. But because of unwise planning, I didn't have adequate time to give to the mission that was going well. By trying to do too much I ended up burdening myself with extra work that wasn't needed, not to mention money spent that could have been better used in a different way.

In their book, *Simple Church*, Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger narrate a story of the First Church and the Cross Church. First Church was well-known and abounded with ten programs per week, including two worship services, Wednesday night discipleship classes, home groups, Tuesday morning men's and women's meetings, Thursday night visitation, youth choir, and children's choir. Yet despite the intense round of activity, the church was at a standstill of nongrowth for five years because the congregation was actually weighed down by all the activities.

Cross Church, however, was not as well-known and hosted only three programs per week: the weekend worship service, small groups, and ministry teams. They have found that faithfully working a simple plan has enabled them to grow much over the past twenty years.⁶ The lesson is obvious—more does not necessarily mean successful.

God once put limits on Paul and Timothy when they "tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them" (Acts 16:7). Instead, He sent them to Philippi, narrowing their activity to the area where it would succeed.

I have learned from my mistakes to be more sensitive to my own limits and those of the parishioners and to focus energies in the direction of God's leading. In district churches this could mean hosting major programs biannually instead of yearly and otherwise mapping out a sensibly doable plan for all parishes involved. Also essential, there must be prayer for the Spirit's guidance, and a willingness to make adjustments when necessary.

Provide printed schedules

I have endured a few embarrassing moments as a result of trying to conduct church business solely based on my memory. Forgetting a board meeting is humiliating, troubling to discover that I have scheduled two overlapping appointments, and unsettling to find that a misunderstanding has led to a last-minute vacancy in the pulpit schedule. All of these mishaps could have been avoided if I had printed out calendars for myself and given them out to the proper leaders ahead of time. If small families need date books, how much more do multichurch districts. The extra time spent in typing them and making copies or emailing attachments to the elders, results in a reward of smooth functioning programs. Once God wrote His message on a wall so that no one would miss it (Dan. 5:5), and He inspired 66 books of written messages for the world. This ought to say something about the importance of printed communication.

Concerning the efforts of pastors, Ellen White wrote, "For want of experience, mistakes will be made; but if the workers connect with God, He will give them an increase of wisdom."⁷ ■

1 Quoted in Mark Finley, *Padded Pews or Open Doors* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publ. Assoc., 1988), 52.

2 Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publ. Assoc., 1967), 124.

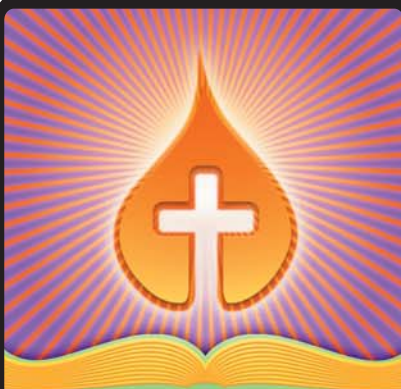
3 See Matt. 5:17-48, noting especially verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 4:16-30; 24:27, 44-48. For examples of immediate scriptural answers, note Matt. 12:1-8; 19:3-9; 22:23-33; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 4:4, 12.

4 Scripture references are from the New King James Version.

5 Quoted in Robert D. Dale, *Pastoral Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986), 14.

6 Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 41-44.

7 Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publ. Assoc., 1943), 246.



ACTS 100
acknowledgment • communion • training • service

Dos and Don'ts of Giving Bible Studies

Select a topic you personally understand. Students will lose confidence in what you say if you are confused about the lesson.

Pray, pray, and then pray! Pray before you arrive, before you open the Bible, while you are studying, and when you end. Bathe your study in prayer, and the Holy Spirit will guide you.

Don't argue. You will likely win a debate, but lose a friend.

Make Jesus and salvation the center. Don't just share information; share Jesus Christ, His great love, and what He has done to save us.

Don't be mechanical. Use the opportunity to win a heart and gain a friend.

Be kind and patient. Never make someone feel uncomfortable if they do not immediately understand what you are saying.

Don't constantly correct erroneous misconceptions. Allow your student to come to a clearer understanding of truth as the Spirit enlightens their mind.

Make an appeal following each lesson. The student's response reveals where they are spiritually as well as their understanding or struggle with the scriptural message.

Don't overstay your welcome. Do not overwhelm your listeners with lengthy discourse. Keep the lesson simple and be considerate of their time and busy schedule.

Remember: It is the power of God's Word that converts hearts and transforms lives—not your human effort. Your success in presenting Bible studies depends upon your willingness to be an instrument in God's hands, filled with His Spirit, and revealing His great love.

—Lillian Torres, Bible instructor

Fresh ideas for developing your church's spiritual life
www.ministerialassociation.com

The joy of redeeming grace

Thomas J. Zwemer



Thomas J. Zwemer, DDS, is vice president emeritus, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, Georgia, United States.

Praying at my mother's knee, saying grace at meals, sandbox sanctuaries, and memory verses were a large part of my childhood years. Now in my 80s, my twilight years are full of Bible study classes and church services. While time dims some things, others become brighter and more focused. With me, assurance is the engine that keeps me going. It carries me through my lessening physical stamina and the loss of personal friends and family members. It enables me to contemplate on the great themes of Scripture and empowers me to reaffirm my spiritual perspective every time I hear the Word spoken as an essential evangel to a hungry, distressed, and dying world.

In his biography of Jonathan Edwards, I recall George Marsden telling the story of Edwards's famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." In an attempt to magnify the love of Jesus, Edwards painted a picture of an angry God holding each sinner like a spider over the open flames of hell. He drew such a vivid picture that he brought the congregation to hysterics. By the time he got to the loving Jesus standing at the open door welcoming sinners into His bosom, no one was rational enough to hear—let alone understand.

How often preachers make that mistake, for they do not say enough about God's wonderful grace. Of course, a need exists to speak about sin, about guilt, about judgment, but above and beyond all about God's infinite love and grace.

There is a need for sermons to periodically move from guilt to grace to gratitude to generosity.

Guilt

We are all sinners. "All have sinned," says Paul, "and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23, KJV). We carry this burden of sin, this guilt of breaking not only God's law but His heart as well. We live in a spiritual prison house, imprisoned by our sin, facing the penalty of death from which we will find no escape outside of God's provision. The awareness of this moral debt and spiritual bankruptcy becomes part of the burden of guilt that we carry. Paul cries out the inexpressible burden involved in this guilt. "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24, KJV).

Life without deliverance could be awful, meaningless, and directionless. But the beauty of the gospel is that we are not left in the wasteland of guilt; it bids us to enter the oasis of God's grace. Following Romans 7:24, Paul does precisely that: "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 7:25; 8:1, NIV).

God designed guilt to drive us to the foot of the Cross. Satan uses it to drive us to insanity, sometimes to self-destruction, to a path away from God. Kelly is a case in point. During World War II, I was assigned to Kelly, a medic in the 40th Infantry Division. Kelly was a hard-driving, 24-hour-a-day dynamo. Within two weeks I was working solo but next to Kelly. We worked our way through three assault landings in the Philippines and were regrouping to invade Japan when the war in Europe was over. One day, we were assigned to pick up cigarette butts and trash. I was walking next to Kelly and suddenly found him crying. "What's the matter?" I asked. He just shook his head and waved me off.

The next day the company commander asked me what the matter was with Kelly. I said, "I don't know, sir. I asked him, and he refused to talk."

The major told me to try again. "I am very worried. Find out. You are the closest one to him."

Later in the afternoon, I found Kelly sitting on the side of his cot crying. I sat down beside him and said, "Kelly, whatever it is, you can tell me. The major is very worried and so are all the guys."

Then he told his story. Kelly was raised a devout Christian. He lived a Christian life in all the months I had worked with him. When the 40th Division was deployed to Oahu, the camp was

surrounded with taverns and bordellos. One night the guys got Kelly drunk and got him into a bordello.

Kelly fought the rest of the war so full of guilt he constantly worked trying to live it down. Now he was just wasting time with no work to do. He was just waiting for orders to go home as a “high point” man. The guilt of that one night overwhelmed him.

I got out my Bible and read to him passages about the woman caught in adultery. I read the passage in Matthew: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (11:28, KJV). I read the great invitation, “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’” (Isa. 1:18, NIV). I recounted the story of David and Bathsheba, I knelt at his side and prayed for him and invited him to pray with me. He declined.

I reported back to the major. “I am afraid Kelly needs long-term care, he is carrying a guilt he cannot shed.” Two days later Kelly shipped out still crying. A life of guilt, without opening up to the possibility of grace, can be dreadful.

Grace

But there is good news. God has intervened with everything having to do with sin “While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6, NASB). We are the beneficiaries of Christ’s atonement. Jesus Christ died for all humankind without distinction or qualification. This gracious act is the next step of the Christian gospel—free grace—free to us but costly to God.

Uncle Roy was a banker, a merchant, and a gentleman farmer. He just about owned all of the little town of Pound, Wisconsin. He drove a Cord convertible. His cousin owned a private phone company that covered three counties.

Uncle Roy knew every single telephone operator in all three counties. He found the “good life” very pleasant indeed, but as he entered his 60s, it didn’t seem to agree with him. He was hospitalized for tests, and he was in a critical condition. I was in California and called his room, and he responded in a very weak voice. We talked for a few minutes. I asked if I could read a scripture and pray with him.

He said, “Oh yes, Tom.”

So I read, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden . . .” As I read I could hear him say over and over again, “Oh yes, oh yes.” Then I prayed. After prayer, we said Goodbye. Hours

Creator God and the love, mercy, and compassion of a redeeming God. “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1, KJV). “O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Ps. 136:1, KJV).

When we are saved by God’s grace, we are not only free from the guilt of sin but we are full of joy and happiness. Our life becomes a continuous expression of gratitude and thanksgiving, with our worship as simply the celebration of the living, dying, resurrection, and reigning of Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and Master. As Christians we can say more, but we cannot say less than that Jesus

Christ is Lord! “Thanks be to God” becomes not merely a benediction but an enlistment to be His witnesses!

Generosity

Generosity is the final step of Christian proclamation. “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8, KJV). The natural impulse of the one freed from sin is to rejoice and be thankful for the new life and then to share that newfound status.

With evangelism as a call to witness the grace of God and celebrate Christ’s life and redeeming love, such a witness does not become a grudging testimony, but an outpouring of generosity. The truly redeemed individual responds with “My cup runneth over.”

Such a spirit of generosity knows no frontier, picks no favorites. Everyone in need of God’s grace or goodness becomes the object of Christian generosity. We are called to serve all, serve well, and serve to the measure with which God has blessed us.

Christian life thus turns into a movement away from guilt and into the joy of redeeming grace—a celebration of a life of gratitude and generosity. ■

OF COURSE, A NEED EXISTS TO SPEAK ABOUT SIN, ABOUT GUILT, ABOUT JUDGMENT, BUT ABOVE AND BEYOND ALL ABOUT GOD’S INFINITE LOVE AND GRACE.

later Uncle Roy passed away. But those quiet words, “Oh yes,” assured me that he found peace in God’s grace. I know I will see him again in the morning.

Gratitude

The next step in the Christian proclamation can be described as gratitude for the bounties of God’s salvation. Being debt-free does not mean no more credit card living, but rather a living witness to the grace of God in Jesus Christ and the celebration of His victory over sin and death.

King David was exuberant in his gratitude for the forgiveness and acceptance of God. His response provides a model of public and private worship as acts of celebration for the creative power and redemptive love of God.

The praise psalms of David carry two themes: the glory and power of a

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

Ministry presentation to African division presidents

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—On October 16, 2007, during the Annual Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Ministry* editors **Nikolaus Satelmajer** and **Willie E. Hucks II** presented framed copies of the October 2007 issue of *Ministry* magazine to **Jan Paulsen** and the five presidents of the various regions of the Adventist Church on the African continent. Receiving the copies were **Luka Daniel, Ulrich Frikart, Geoffrey Mbwana, Paul Ratsara, and Bertil Wiklander.**

Paul Ratsara (left) and Geoffrey Mbwana, presidents of the Adventist Church in southern and western Africa, respectively. Photo by Tor Tjeransen



The Adventist Church touches every geographic region of the world, and *Ministry* plans to highlight each region of the world over the next several years. The African continent was the first to be spotlighted. Each such issue will feature writers from that particular region, and the strengths and challenges of each region will be addressed with the hope of helping *Ministry's* readers to see not only how all parts of the world church are interconnected, but how all regions have similar issues and how each region addresses its issues—and other regions can learn lessons that help them in addressing their own issues.

Congress in France: Muslim patients under Christian care

Tours, France—Eight hundred French-speaking Seventh-day Adventists in the medical profession in France, Belgium, and Switzerland feel they need an understanding of Islam and special preparation in order to meet the new challenge arising from the ever increasing number of Muslim patients seeking their help.

These health-care workers are working in Seventh-day Adventist institutions, government health agencies, and private clinics and practices in the three countries. They have formed the Association Medicale Adventiste de Language Francaise (AMALF) with **Kohlia Stéveny, MD**, from Belgium as president. They are an active branch of the Adventist International Medical Society (AIMS).

Muslim patients seeking help from nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, dentists, dieticians, and physicians often react—due to Islamic beliefs and lifestyles—negatively to some aspects of Western medical treatments and methods. These conflicts cause some anxiety on the part of the medical practitioners.

The AMALF conference held at the French government sports facilities in Tours, France, in the beginning of November 2007 had this issue as the main point on the agenda. The theme for the meeting attended by 55 medical practitioners was “Health Professionals Facing Multicultural Patients.”

Christian witnessing was an important subject at the congress. The dialogues at the convocation revealed that with the extreme difficulties Christians face in witnessing to Muslims, health-care workers could prove to be important and accepted spokespersons. [Patrick Guenin, MD]

Young adult summit: Ignition to foster discipleship

Dallas, Texas, United States—Young Adult Summit: IGNITION, February 14–17, 2008, will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel, 400 North Olive Street, Dallas, TX 75201. Young adults and those invested in ministering to them are invited to the summit featuring **George Barna, Matthew Gamble, Eddie Hipolite, Elia King, Ann Roda, and True!mprov.**

For the first time, the biannual North American Division Youth/Young Adult Ministries Leadership Summit will include a comprehensive young adult ministry concentration offering the best practices, dynamic worship, and experiential

learning experiences for those who are passionate about discipling young adults. IGNITION will give intentional focus to significant young adult issues, feature innovations, as well as exhibit effective young adult ministries for the local church and campus. Important issues, such as sexuality, postmodernism, social justice, spiritual formation, and campus ministry will not only be addressed, but practical solutions, relevant models, and successful initiatives will be exhibited, experienced, and exchanged.

“It is our hope that every church across our division will send their young adults and leaders to IGNITION,” said **James Black**, director of youth/young adults ministries for the Adventist Church in North America.

Early registration and group discounts are available. Go to www.ypac.adventistmeetings.com or call AdventSource, 800-732-7587 for more information. [A. Allan Martin]

Paradise Hospital CHIP a big success

National City, California, United States—Paradise Valley Hospital, located in National City, California, United States, completed its sixth successful **Coronary Health Improvement Project (CHIP)** program, resulting not only in big improvements in the health of the participants but adding a baptism, a wedding, and subsequently a new staff member to the already well-qualified staff. The average cholesterol readings for the 47 participants decreased more than 20 percent. Participants in the program also experienced significant weight loss and reduction in glucose and triglyceride levels.

The most significant outcome was the experience of **Shirley Stewart**, who has been suffering from multiple diseases for a number of years. Treatment by doctors has had only limited success, but as she has followed the CHIP nutrition schedule and guidelines faithfully, she has almost completely eliminated most of her symptoms. She was in an electric wheelchair and unable to walk when she entered the program, but she was able to walk across

the platform to receive her diploma. She now walks two to five miles a day as part of her regular exercise regimen. She began Bible studies several months ago and was baptized, while participating in CHIP. In addition, she will be getting married to **Glen McFarland**, the audio/visual leader for the Paradise CHIP program.

Feather River Hospital, located in Paradise, California, United States, has now formed a Lifestyle Medicine

Department, as a result of its partnership with the Paradise hospital CHIP. **Rick Mautz**, assistant CHIP director, is the new department director and is working to establish across-the-board preventive health programs in support of the other hospital departments. Courses offered include CHIP programs, stop smoking classes, wellness maintenance programs, weekly exercise classes, diabetes education programs, depression recovery

programs, a yearly physicians' seminar with continuing medical education credit, and other support programs to provide preventive health education for the community.

For more information about courses that address the health concerns of the community using twenty-first century concepts, go to www.nadhealthsummit.org. [Fred Spruell] ■



RESOURCES



Ellen G. White Writings, Complete Published Edition 2007

Every pastor should own this important study tool that brings all of Ellen G. White's published writings within instant reach. It is essential for serious research in her writings, and it provides easy access to statements for sermons, church bulletins, and other uses. The latest release is fully MS Vista compatible. It also will work flawlessly on an Intel Macintosh running Windows via Apple's Bootcamp, or Parallels Desktop for Mac, or VMware's Fusion.

The EGW Complete 2007 CD uses an improved interface with new menus and enhanced search functionality. The program brings 385 Ellen G. White titles (75,000+ pages of text) into one complete searchable database, including over 5,000 EGW periodical articles and 21 volumes of Manuscript Releases. It also holds the 6-volume Ellen G. White biography by Arthur White, the 4-volume Ellen G. White Comprehensive Index and Scripture Index with more than 400,000 links to referenced entries, and the King James Version Bible with full text search capabilities. Extras include 8 Ellen White children's story books, 16 Ellen White reference works, 110 White Estate research documents on issues related to Ellen White and her ministry, and Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary. The program allows you to export any material into

Microsoft Word and many other popular word processors for inclusion in sermons, articles, and other documents.

To order or for additional information, please visit: www.WhiteEstate.org, or see our ad on page 24 in this issue.



Review of *A Long Shadowed Grief*, by Harold Ivan Smith, Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2006.

Friends, friends of my family, church members and their friends, taking their lives—or "suiciding" as Harold Ivan Smith calls it.

The characteristics of the reaction to suicide for those who loved the person who died: shock, shame, ceaseless wonderings as to why; and the twin nagging questions as to whether or not I could have done something before and what can I do now?—these all swarm around in my head and cannot be driven away. Smith's book represents the best permission I have been given to both ask and explore these questions.

I have in my possession several books on suicide. They explain the statistics, decry the causes and offer weak solutions to stemming the tragic deaths. These books all sit on a shelf, relegated to textbooks and manuals occasionally referred to when the need arises.

A Long Shadowed Grief is not that kind

of book. It starts with a candid and revealing look into his family's story and journey into and beyond the tragedy of suicide. Smith pulls back the layers of camouflage used to hide the shame of his cousin Wilma's death—the weapon of choice was a handgun. He's sensitive by being real, real by being candid. He reveals his own experiences with suicide and the hidden sinkholes in his family that swallowed up the life of a relative who took her own life, or as Smith suggests, "life took her."

He gets at the root of what caused it, an even deeper shame and disgrace in his family. Every step he takes back into the past gives him a new foothold into the future, a chance to avoid disappearing into that massive black hole that suicide so often creates.

He skirts around the edges of the turbulence without being destroyed, indeed he survives with an eye toward thriving. He does all this with grace, confidence, and an honesty that is at once frighteningly revealing yet hopeful and disarming.

As he reveals his story, he empowers others to admit that the time has come for them to tell their stories, to face the truth, even if they do it alone. He balances compassion and care with candid and piercing observation.

This excellent guide to living beyond the trauma that suicide causes for its survivors should be a comfort and inspiration to all who read it and who are working through such trauma.

—Reviewed by Marty Thurber, pastor of the Fargo and Valley City Seventh-day Adventist churches in North Dakota, United States. ■

Instruction that prepares and preserves

JAMES A. CRESS



If the instruction of new believers produces isolationism or feelings of superiority, it has failed in its objective. Although knowing the truth will set you free, none can ever be saved only by the information they possess.

Nevertheless, instruction is necessary. In fact, it is vital and foundational. Jesus' commission commands His followers to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach all things that He has commanded (Matt. 28:19, 20). The obvious question is when and where that teaching occurs.

Ellen White stated, "After the first efforts have been made in a place by giving a course of lectures, there is really greater necessity for a second course than for the first. The truth is new and startling, and the people need to have the same presented the second time, to get the points distinct and the ideas fixed in the mind."¹

Michael Green's research points out that in the early days of Christianity, baptism was administered straight away on profession of faith and repentance and that this practice continued at least throughout the first century. "However, the *Didache* suggests that very soon a period of instruction in the Christian faith, particularly its ethical side, preceded baptism." "It would not be surprising if the early missionaries did soon evolve a stylized form of Christian instruction just as they seem to have done, at least to some extent, with their gospel preaching."²

Green's additional comment on this indoctrination process of the early church comes directly to the crux of the issue for Adventists. He says, "Whether it [this indoctrination instruction] preceded baptism or followed it is more problematical."³

Adventist evangelism has followed a similar process of providing baptismal preparation instruction simultaneously with gospel proclamation. For example, a new member in my congregation once observed, "Your evangelistic series is, in reality, an inquirer's class."

In fact, the very issue of how much of that instruction should precede baptism

and how much should be provided as the newly baptized believer grows has been a vigorously debated topic among Adventists for more than a generation. Sometimes we have invested more energy in the debate than we have in the actual process of grounding new believers.

Long-term church members essentially want all instruction to precede baptism. But this has brought problems to the process of assimilating new members. The greatest of these problems may be the inability of the new believer to grasp everything in a relatively short period of indoctrination. Consider the necessity of repetition as a learning process for infants.

However, the most dangerous of these problems may well be the erroneous conclusion that since converts are so thoroughly indoctrinated prior to baptism, they need no additional or further postbaptismal instruction or that we might consider it safe to leave new believers on their own. Of course, the more we shorten the prebaptism proclamation phase, the more essential becomes the postbaptism indoctrination and assimilation phase.

Our responsibility is dual: we must proclaim the truth, and we must assimilate the new believers into the culture—the culture of the church versus the world, the culture of discipleship versus nominalism, the culture of the experience and expression of faith within the fellowship of the local congregation as well as within the wider body of all Christians.

The essential and the additional

The content of instruction is important as well. It should be geared both to the level of comprehension and to the level of commitment of the new believer.

Further, there should be a core understanding and consensus by the body as to what is essential and what is additional. Herb Miller says, "Trying to get people to 'have the mind of Christ' on moral matters is admirable. But we must always be wary that we are not really trying to get them to 'have our mind' on the matter instead of His. Many who think they are witnessing to God's word are really trying to speak God's word for Him. That subtle form of idol worship tries to take over God's job of being God. 'Accept among you the man who is weak in the faith, but do not argue with him about his personal opinions' (Rom. 14:1) is still excellent advice. Pride in our own righteousness has no place in word communication."⁴

However, Jesus' own words (Matt. 28:19, 20) anticipate an instruction that comes after baptism as well as that necessary to baptize the convert. The words "teaching them to observe all things" (KJV) do not precede the experience of baptism in the gospel commission and, for all practical purposes, cannot precede new birth in the actual life of the believer.

To me, this becomes theologically persuasive with a definite practical application. If baptism brings a spiritual rebirth (John 3), and if spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14), then some portion of the "all things" that Jesus has commanded cannot be discerned until the individual experiences that *spiritual rebirth*.

To attempt to do otherwise ignores the process envisioned by the gospel commission. ■

1 Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publ. Assoc., 1970), 334.

2 Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 154.

3 Ibid.

4 Herb Miller, *Evangelism's Open Secrets* (St. Louis, MO: CBP Press, 1977), 40. Bible text from CEV.

Tell us what you think about this editorial. Email us at MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to us at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Love

*Walking with Jesus
from Eden to Eternity*

Makes a Way

Herbert Edgar Douglass

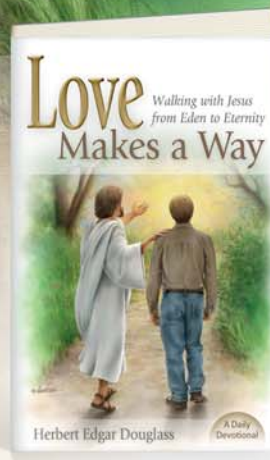
Enjoy a guided tour through the history of the universe. This daily reading program will take you through eight of Ellen White's most significant books in just one chapter a day:

the Conflict of the Ages set, *Steps to Christ*, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*. Dr. Douglass draws out special insights into the plan of salvation.

ADULT DEVOTIONAL
US\$13.99 • Hardcover, 384 pages
20 or more, US\$9.99 each
ISBN 13: 978-0-8163-2231-2
ISBN 10: 0-8163-2231-7

Three ways to order:

1 Local	Adventist Book Center®
2 Call	1-800-765-6955
3 Shop	AdventistBookCenter.com

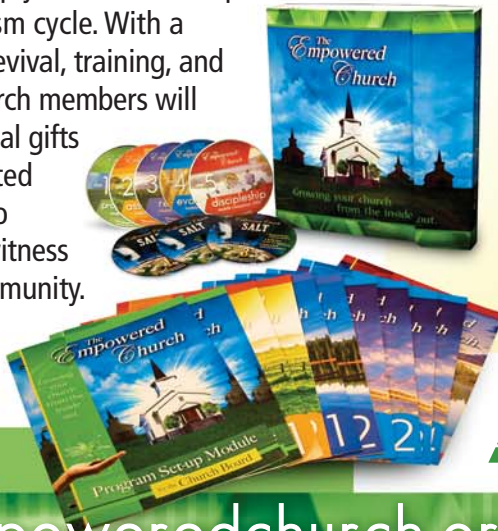


© 2008 • PACIFIC PRESS® PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION • 75590/501

The Empowered Church

Growing your church
from the inside out.

The Empowered Church is an exciting new program that will propel your church's outreach efforts to the next level! Our Empowered Church Kit has all the tools your church needs to become an evangelism powerhouse, with training manuals, instructional DVDs, outreach tools, and much more — all designed to help your church set up an ongoing evangelism cycle. With a strong emphasis on revival, training, and discipleship, your church members will maximize their spiritual gifts in a united, coordinated soul-winning effort to become a powerful witness for Christ in your community.



In addition to the Empowered Church Kit, Amazing Facts also offers additional Empowered Church services.

LEVEL 1 churches receive an Empowered Church training intensive weekend, which will jump-start your church's implementation of the Empowered Church program.

LEVEL 2 churches receive the training intensive weekend AND one year of coaching from an Empowered Church coach, helping your church create an ongoing evangelism cycle.

LEVEL 3 churches receive the training intensive weekend, one year of coaching, AND an Empowered Church Bible worker for six months.

AMAZING FACTS For more information,
call us **TODAY!**

www.empoweredchurch.org

916-434-3880

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS®

MINISTRY®

1350 N. KINGS ROAD • NAMPA, ID 83687-3193

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nampa, ID
Permit No. 147