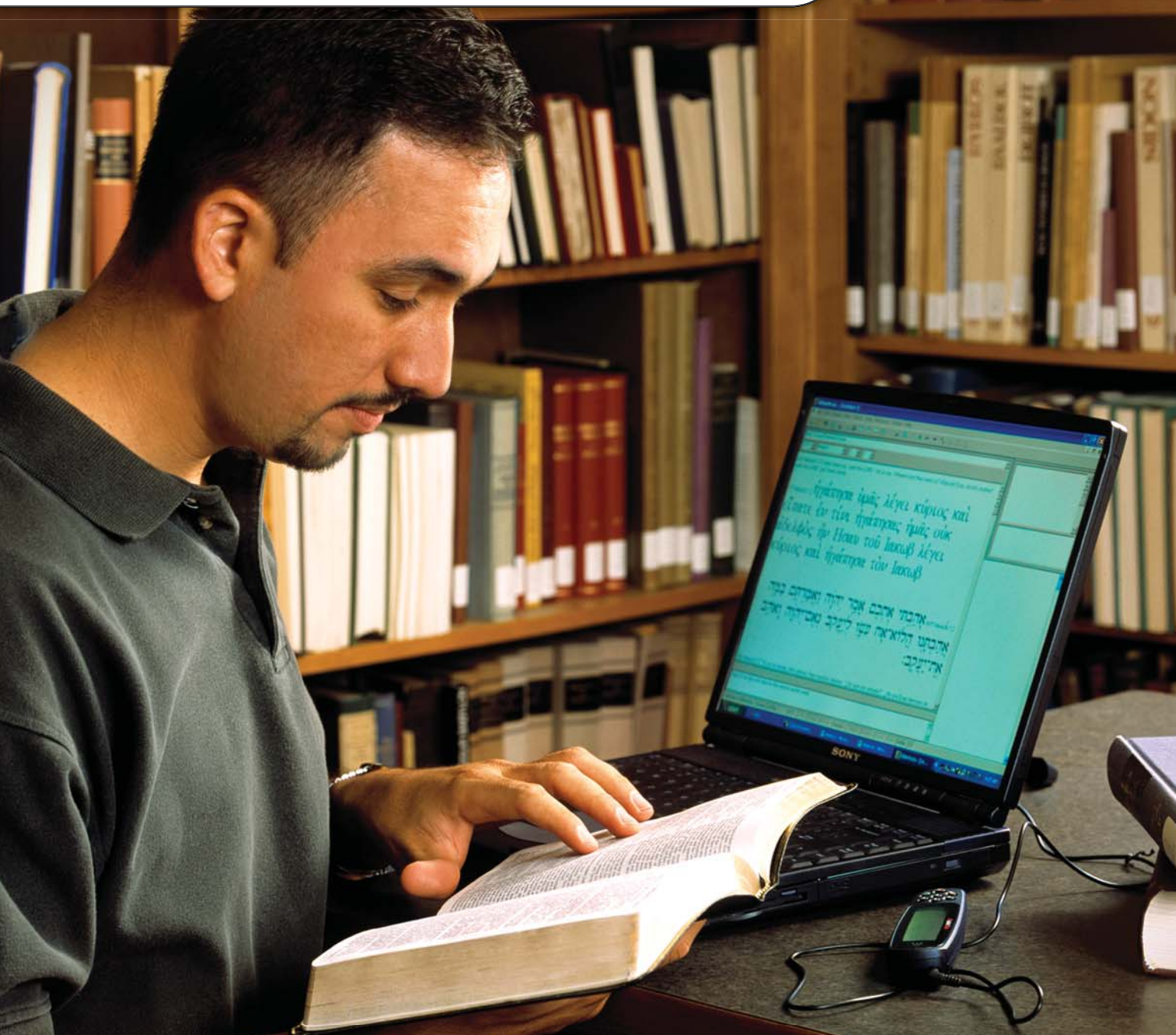


# MINISTRY®

INTERNATIONAL

JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

SEPTEMBER 2008



“HANDLING ACCURATELY THE  
WORD OF TRUTH”

(2 TIM. 2:15): *Featuring ministerial student articles*

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# OUR READERS RESPOND...

## Making a difference with young adults

**A.** Allan Martin's article, "Reaching Out: Making a Difference With Young Adults," (July 2008) was a great article. It is a call to arms! The cover art for the article speaks volumes in and of itself—one lone arm among the throngs of people reaching out.

As a pastor—a pastor who is a young adult—I am saddened by what we call *young adult ministry*. It [is] all too true that we [the church] have stood around as "bystanders," but the time is now to join collectively and, as Allan Martin exhorts, deepen the devotion of young adults to Christ!

After reading Robert Wuthnow's work, which A. Allan Martin referenced, there is a question that remains concerning reaching out to young adults: Will we, as a church, as leaders, face the realities that are before us and adapt and effectively minister to young adults, or will religion cease to be an "important resource for networking, for maintaining intergenerational ties, and for transmitting values to adults as well as to children"? (Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007], 232). The outcome is in our hands.

—Manuel Vela, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States

**A.** Allan Martin's call to be a "bystander no longer" must not go by unanswered. Not only is the future

viability of our movement threatened, but the very salvation of that generation is at risk as well. I know that in most churches the situation isn't hopeless, but lack of taking action now can only have dire consequences.

Fixing the problem can be complex. Yet with hard work and openness to learning what the problems [actually] are, the local church can move to correct the attrition. But most churches really don't know why young adults are not connecting and therefore try to interest them with programs that are designed for those born before 1946.

We need to be proactive and urgently address this problem. We cannot delay any longer. There are those who are ministering in an effective way and have made the necessary changes to make church a place for young adults again. Let's all learn what to do and turn this around now!

—Bill Bossert, pastor, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, United States

**D**r. Martin's article hits the center of a critical point of need in our church. We have a tendency to be consumed with doing things right, and we fail in the process to do the right things. Martin makes a point that "leaders" tend to discourage young adults by criticizing those things they would wish to do as a part of church. This is a symptom of our dysfunctional relationship with truth. Our passion for being right and doing right leads leaders to assume the prerogative of enforcing right without dialogue and understanding. I wish that Dr. Martin had defined who or

what he meant by "leaders" and "leadership." Is he speaking of professional leaders, clergy, denominational leaders, or lay leaders when these words are applied? Who is criticizing is a critical element of understanding if we are to make changes to correct the issue. This is my only concern in an otherwise excellent article, but I feel it is an important one. We are sometimes tempted to see staid and traditional professionals as the primary resistance. My experience is that the culture of Adventism, as perceived and practiced by the rank and file of the church, is the greatest challenge. Local leaders are shackled by a culture that is tempted to resist any change that is not clearly and specifically sanctioned in traditional literature.

We must open the door to that which makes us uncomfortable. Let the young ones in!

—Stanley Patterson, email

**T**o bridge the generational differences and differing mind-sets and communication styles, we need to decide that ministering to young adults is going to be different than "business as usual"—run and decided by gray-haired males. We need to allocate resources to this effort.

I pray for solutions and guidance.

—Dan Chaij, Chattanooga, Tennessee, United States

**I** truly appreciate A. Allan Martin's article. He touches on the young people that led out in the Advent movement. I suppose he could have pointed to the

*Continued on page 21*

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If you're receiving Ministry bimonthly and haven't paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 Ministry has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. We believe, however, that the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share our aspirations and faith in a way that will provide inspiration and help to you as clergy. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulder, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you can't use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all clergy of other denominations. To receive your complimentary subscription, please write to us at our Editorial Office, visit us at [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org), or email us at [ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org).

# The realization of a dream

Several years ago, the editors of *Ministry* entered upon the task of building upon the foundation laid over the years by everyone who preceded us as editors and associate editors. Our main goal, like theirs, is to provide a quality journal that meets the spiritual and professional needs of ministers around the world. We entered into this responsibility with ideas of what we wanted to accomplish. Indeed, we have achieved some of them; yet there are others that remain to be fulfilled.

One of our hopes that we wanted to see fulfilled was conducting a contest for student writers—men and women who attend colleges, seminaries, and universities, who are studying for the ministry or in some other area of religious studies.

## A dream born

We first introduced this concept to our *Ministry* Publishing Advisory Committee in April 2006 during a meeting in Loma Linda, California; but that's all it was: a concept. In February 2007, we formally unveiled the details of our first Ministerial Student Writing Contest during a Seminary assembly at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

We widely advertised the contest through mailings and regularly in *Ministry*, inviting writers to submit manuscripts in any of five categories: biblical studies, theological studies, missions, ministry (practices), and historical studies. One of our goals was to increase and broaden the pool of writers. And to that end we succeeded, receiving more than 100 submissions.

The writers covered the gamut of all possibilities. Many denominations were represented; there were both female and male writers; and there were plenty of submissions from all five of the categories.

A task as monumental as evaluating the submissions could not have been handled by our editorial staff alone. When it came to assessing the quality of the manuscripts, we assembled some of the top experts in the various categories,

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER  
AND WILLIE E. HUCKS II



and they graciously consented (without remuneration) to evaluate the manuscripts we sent to them.

Our editorial assistant, Sheryl Beck, took great pains to guarantee the anonymity of each writer, so much so, that not even we, the editors, knew who the writer of any given manuscript was. Obviously, this was done to protect the integrity of the process and to ensure that each submission was evaluated on its own merits, without prejudice.

The manuscripts were judged based on criteria such as effective research, coherently expressed content, original contributions to the subject, professional writing, and viable integration into practical ministry. After thoroughly examining the results of the criteria, we were pleased to discover several things: (1) our top prizes went to a good mix of male and female writers, (2) there was a great representation of winners from various parts of the world, and (3) a good cross section of the five categories was represented among the top prize winners.

And now we are pleased to announce the winners of our first Ministerial Student Writer Contest:

- **Grand prize:** Daniel Bediako
- **First place:** Daniel Harrison
- **Second place:** Amy Drennan and Jermaine Ma
- **Third place:** David Wolter
- **Third place:** Denise Josephs
- **Third place:** Abner Dizon
- **Third place:** Donna Olivia Powell
- **Third place:** Tim Perenich
- **Third place:** Jon Coutts
- **Third place:** John C. Johnson

There were many other fine papers submitted, and over the upcoming months we will publish several of them—even though they did not win a prize. However, in this month's edition, we are publishing some of our top submissions, with the other winning entries to be published in future issues of *Ministry*. As with all authors, you will see biographical information about each one at the start of their articles.

## A dream continued

In our travels to seminaries, colleges, and universities worldwide, we are constantly asked if we are going to conduct another student writing contest. We would find it difficult to start something like this and not continue it. These young writers are excited at the possibility of sharing their insights with others.

We, however, see this contest as even more than just a contest. These bright young talents are the theologians, scholars, professors, and yes, pastors of today and tomorrow. They see the Bible and life with young eyes, and their wisdom enlightens us all. We thank God for calling such talented individuals to be ministers of the Word.

We are now accepting manuscripts for our next student writing contest. So start thinking about themes you wish to address.

We thank everyone who took the time to research, write, and share their papers with us. It was a time-consuming process to read and evaluate them all; but it was well worth the time spent doing so. We learned so much as we read and that pleases us because we, too, are students, desiring to grow and improve in our own ministries.

And remember that while sermons have a significant impact upon those who hear them, the impact of the written word is often far more enduring.

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

# The implications of 1 Corinthians 5:5 for church discipline

Daniel Bediako

*"Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5, KJV).*

**F**irst Corinthians 5:5 is fraught with both exegetical and theological difficulties.<sup>1</sup> How is the church to "deliver" the incestuous man to Satan? What does "destruction of the flesh" mean? What about the salvation of the "spirit" in the day of the Lord? What implications does this text have regarding church discipline? Our discussion will focus on three areas. The first briefly surveys various scholarly views on the passage; the second establishes its historical and literary contexts; and the third will provide a lexical analysis of the relevant phrases of the text, indicating how they fit into the context of 1 Corinthians 5 and the Pauline writings in general. The conclusion will briefly note the implications of this text to church discipline.

## Views on 1 Corinthians 5:5

Much of the debate on the passage centers on the meaning of *flesh* and *spirit*.<sup>2</sup> The discussion also deals with the nature of Paul's verdict. Does it point merely to temporary discipline<sup>3</sup> or to something more (that is, permanent expulsion and subsequent death)?<sup>4</sup> Some scholars understand "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh" in a physical sense: the expelled, incestuous man will suffer physical illness,<sup>5</sup> or even physical suffering leading to

death at the hands of Satan.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, some scholars have posited a "curse/death" interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:5 based on analogies from Greek "magical" papyri and/or Jewish writings.<sup>7</sup> Several variations of these views are promulgated: Paul may have meant a delivery of the man to Roman magistrates,<sup>8</sup> a secret execution,<sup>9</sup> a self-atoning physical death,<sup>10</sup> or a delivery to purgatory.<sup>11</sup> In any case, these interpretations take *flesh* in a physical sense, namely, the body. However, some understand *flesh* and *spirit* metaphorically, each denoting the whole person rather than a dichotomy of the person.<sup>12</sup> Some scholars believe that Paul refers to the expulsion of the incestuous man, and that this would lead to the "destruction" of his sinful nature,<sup>13</sup> not his physical body. Some seek to identify the incestuous man in 1 Corinthians 5:5 with the offender in 2 Corinthians 2:6–11 whom Paul says the church should accept back.<sup>14</sup> Others see in this expulsion both the mortification of the flesh (fleshly lust) and physical suffering (destruction of the flesh or body).<sup>15</sup> While there is no consensus regarding the details of the text, many scholars agree that the purpose of Paul's verdict is the salvation of the man's "spirit."

Nonetheless, some scholars have questioned whether in 1 Corinthians 5:5 "flesh" and "spirit" could not refer to some other person(s) rather than the incestuous man.<sup>16</sup> Tertullian<sup>17</sup> and H. von Campenhausen<sup>18</sup> agree that here *flesh* refers to the incestuous man; yet, while the former understands *spirit* as the spirit of the church, the latter links it with the Spirit of God. K. P. Donfried connects *flesh* with the church and *spirit* with God.<sup>19</sup> Barth Campbell follows Tertullian, Donfried, and Campenhausen, but he argues that both *flesh* and *spirit* refer to the church.<sup>20</sup> According to these views, Paul's focus is on the spiritual life of the church,<sup>21</sup> not the incestuous man. Finally, V. G. Shillington understands 1 Corinthians 5:5 in the context of the atonement in Leviticus 16.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the incestuous man, like the scapegoat, bears the sins of the community in his flesh so that the "spirit-in-community" will be preserved on the day of the Lord.<sup>23</sup> Such diverse interpretations of 1 Corinthians 5:5 necessitate a full-fledged analysis of the text.

## Understanding the context

Historically, Corinth is known, among other things, for its sexual corruption.<sup>24</sup> Thus sexual immorality was part of the Corinthians' pre-Christian lifestyle (1 Cor. 6:9, 10), and this lifestyle seems to have found its way into the church (5:9; 6:12–20; 7:2; 10:8; cf. 2 Cor. 12:21). The



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problem with which Paul deals in chapter 5 is not just sexual immorality, but an extraordinary case of immorality,<sup>25</sup> one not common even among the Gentiles.<sup>26</sup> Paul is straight to the point: “a man has his father’s wife” (v. 1, NKJV).

In 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, Paul says that the church at Corinth is the temple of God and that those who destroy it will be destroyed by God. This serves as a basis for understanding 5:1–13.<sup>27</sup> Having been informed of the incestuous relationship (v. 1), Paul directs the church to put the man out of their fellowship (v. 2). This directive is repeated several other times in the passage (vv. 4, 5, 7, 13), indicating the gravity of the matter. Verses 3–5 state how and why the church should carry out the judgment, and verses 6–8 give the theological basis for the intended action. In verses 9–13, Paul excoriates the church’s relaxed attitude and seems to suggest that the church should have taken the appropriate action based on his former letter.<sup>28</sup> This context provides the parameters for understanding the verdict in verse 5. By keeping close to this context, most of the scholarly opinions given previously will be discarded.

### Analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:5

This section offers lexical-semantic analysis of the following words and/or phrases within the general context of the Pauline corpus: *paradounai*, “to hand over” or deliver; *eis olethron tēs sarkos*, “destruction of the flesh”; and *hina to pneuma sōthē*, “that the spirit may be saved.”

**Hand over.** The apostle says that when the church assembles in the name of the Lord, they should *paradounai* (aorist infinitive of *paradidōmi*), “hand over” the incestuous man to Satan. In the Septuagint (LXX), the root *paradidōmi* (translating the Hebrew *beyādekā* “in your hand”) is used to refer to God handing over Job to Satan (Job 2:6; cf. 1:12) for physical affliction. The word is also used in the sense of God’s rejection or abandonment of His people as a form of judgment (Jer. 33:24, 25). In the Gospels, *paradidōmi* is used in reference to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas (Mark 14:10) and the handing over of Jesus to

Pilate (Mark 15:1), who in turn hands Jesus back over to the people (Luke 23:18–25; cf. Rom. 4:25). The word also denotes God’s judgment on sinners (Acts 7:42; Rom. 1:24–28). It is clear from this that *paradidōmi* may either be literal, physically handing someone over for punishment, or figurative, judgmentally rejecting or abandoning someone.

In the context of 1 Corinthians 5:5, a figurative understanding of *paradidōmi* seems to be a better option. Paul uses several metaphors in this chapter. Examples include the references to the “old yeast,” “Christ, our Passover lamb,” and “the feast” (vv. 7, 8, NIV, KJV). Verse 5 may thus be understood.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, in several contexts *paradidōmi* simply implies rejection and abandonment (Rom. 1:24; Eph. 4:19) or surrender (John 19:30; 1 Cor. 13:3; 2 Cor. 4:11; Eph. 5:25). In 1 Timothy 1:20, the word implies abandonment.<sup>30</sup> Here, Paul says that some believers, Hymenaeus and Alexander, have shipwrecked their faith and that he has handed them over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

Thus understood, *paradounai* in 1 Corinthians 5:5 does not refer to a magical spell or curse, nor does it refer to a court summons, a secret execution, or a self-atoning death. We may take verse 2 as the basic verdict of Paul, and that the rest of the chapter (including the figurative sayings in v. 5 and v. 7) serves to reinforce this verdict. Note also that verse 13 forms an inclusio with verse 2. This is to say, that what verses 2 and 13 state literally, verses 5 and 7 state figuratively.<sup>31</sup> In any case, the incestuous man must be expelled from fellowship. Christ rules within the church, and Satan rules outside the church. If the sinner is expelled from church fellowship, he automatically finds himself in the sphere of Satan’s operation.<sup>32</sup>

**Destruction of the flesh.** The phrase *eis olethron tēs sarkos* literally means “destruction of the flesh.” The word *olethros* (*olethron* is masculine singular accusative of *olethros*) generally denotes physical destruction. The noun *olethros* or the verb *olethreuō* in the LXX may denote destruction (Exod. 12:23) or judgment (Jer. 5:6; 48:3; Ezek. 6:14). In the New Testament (NT), *olethros* has

the more general sense of eschatological or spiritual destruction (1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:9). While *olethros* may have physical meaning,<sup>33</sup> the figurative tenor of 1 Corinthians 5:5, 7 (cf. vv. 2, 13) seems to suggest that, like *paradounai*, *olethron* should be taken figuratively. This should also advise against interpreting the text in a strict, literal sense. A careful look at the Greek sentence in verse 5b seems to indicate that *eis olethron tēs sarkos* stands in apposition to *paradounai tō satana*. Both *paradounai tō satana* and *eis olethron tēs sarkos* have judgmental connotations and their juxtaposition here suggests that both phrases have the same reference. If so, this means that “deliver such an one unto Satan” equates or, at least, is explained by “for the destruction of the flesh.” Since the *hina* clause (“that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”) has the incestuous man in view and syntactically relates to the main clause (“deliver such an one unto Satan”), *hina* expresses the intended result of the action in the main clause. In other words, the intended result of *paradounai* here is the salvation of the incestuous man’s spirit.<sup>34</sup>

Having taken *olethros* in a metaphorical sense, the meaning of *sarx* (*sarkos* is the genitive of *sarx*) needs to be determined. In the first place, it should be noted that Paul, as well as the NT, has no dichotomous or dualistic view of the human being.<sup>35</sup> This means that we should not divide the human being into “flesh” and “spirit.” Rather, either of these elements refers to the person as a whole.<sup>36</sup> Thus, when in 1 Corinthians 5:3, 4 Paul says that his own spirit will be present when the congregation meets to execute the verdict, he merely means that he fully undersigns the action.

According to A. Sand, *sarx* is used in three ways: (1) the bodily substance (1 Cor. 6:16; 15:39); (2) earthly and natural, merely worldly, existence (1 Cor. 1:26; 9:11; 2 Cor. 1:17); and (3) human beings subject to the power of sin (Rom. 7:5–8:10; Gal. 5:13–6:8).<sup>37</sup> The context of 1 Corinthians 5 seems to suggest that *sarx* be understood to mean sinful human nature.<sup>38</sup> *Sarx* refers to the incestuous man, not the worldly

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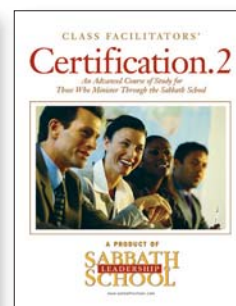
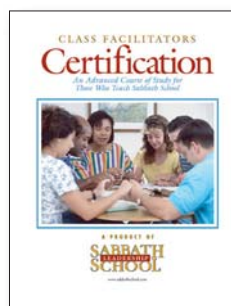
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inclination of the church. That this is what Paul means becomes clear even from a cursory reading of verses 3–5: “Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord” (NIV).

This understanding of *sarx* complies with the figurative sense of *olethros*. The incestuous man must be expelled from the church (1 Cor. 5:2, 7, 13), an action which may possibly lead to the destruction of his sinful nature. Accordingly, rather than physical destruction or death,<sup>39</sup> *olethros* implies the renouncement of the incestuous man’s sinful nature, namely, turning away from his present fleshly way of life marked by this gross immorality. While *olethros* is, admittedly, a strong word

for destruction, Pauline references to the subjugation of the flesh elsewhere indicate that its use with reference to flesh in 1 Corinthians 5:5 should not be a surprise or demand literal interpretation. For example, Paul says that those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh (Gal. 5:24). He also says that believers must put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature (Col. 3:5). If in such instances Paul does not mean literal crucifixion or death of the flesh, we should not understand *olethron sarkos* in 1 Corinthians 5:5 otherwise. The same is true of 1 Timothy 1:19, 20, the only NT parallel to 1 Corinthians 5:5. Paul does not consider death as a means of church discipline, since discipline is clearly redemptive (cf. 2 Cor. 2:5–11).

*Salvation of the spirit.* Finally, how are we to understand Paul’s phrase, *hina to pneuma sōthē*, “that the spirit may be saved.” As argued above, *sarx* refers to the whole person, namely, the sinful nature or present way of life of the incestuous man. Since in the context of 1 Corinthians 5 *pneuma* (“spirit”) is the antonym of *sarx*, it follows that

*pneuma* should be understood as the man’s new nature in Christ, resulting from the destruction of his *sarx*. Both terms are figurative, each referring to the whole, undivided being. They also correspond to Paul’s old nature/new nature antithesis (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Eph. 4:22). Note Rosner’s statement: “When Paul contrasts flesh and spirit, as here in verse 5, flesh refers almost without exception to the contrast of evil and good tendencies, as in Romans 8:5–17 and Galatians 5:16–24.” “Flesh” refers to the person oriented away from God and “spirit” to the person oriented towards God.<sup>40</sup>

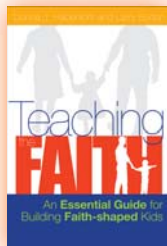
In Pauline writings, salvation may be present (Rom. 11:14; 1 Cor. 9:22) or eschatological (1 Cor. 1:18, 21; 3:15; 2 Cor. 2:15). The significance of *sōthē*, “may be saved” (aorist subjunctive passive of *sōzō*), in 1 Corinthians 5:5 is seldom debated. Nonetheless, the reference to the salvation of the spirit “in the day of the Lord Jesus” presents some difficulty. Do we have to construe

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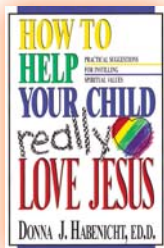
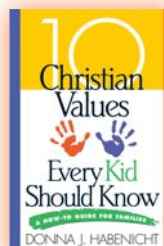
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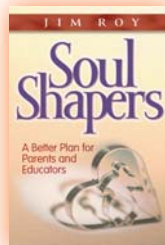
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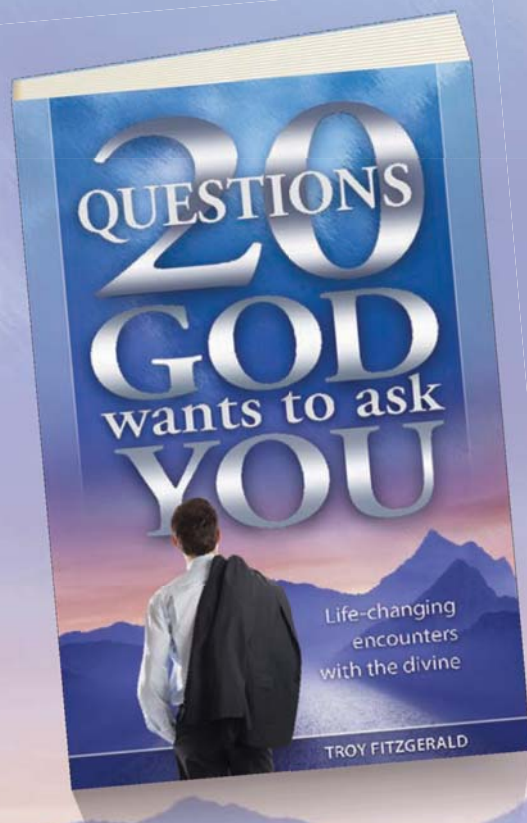
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salvation here in an eschatological sense because *sōthē* is qualified by “the day of the Lord Jesus”? On the other hand, if Paul envisioned the return of the incestuous man after the destruction of the “flesh,” would he situate the salvation of the man’s “spirit” only at the eschaton? Gordon Fee makes the point that “the day of the Lord Jesus” is one of Paul’s “ordinary ways of expressing salvation” (cf. 1 Cor. 3:15; 4:5).<sup>41</sup> Thus understood, Paul may not necessarily have attached temporal significance to the phrase. Paul elsewhere envisions the day of the Lord with considerable immediacy (1 Cor. 1:7, 8; 7:26, 27; 15:51, 52; Phil. 1:6, 10; 1 Thess. 4:17; 5:4). However, nothing in the context of 1 Corinthians 5 argues against understanding the day of the Lord in an eschatological sense. In the parallel text of 1 Timothy 1:19, 20, Paul seems to expect the repentance of Hymenaeus and Alexander when he says that he has given them over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 5:5 Paul seems to assume the repentance of the man. On this basis, he proleptically—bypassing the intermediate—announces the eschatological salvation of the incestuous man once he repents. In any case, Paul’s verdict seems redemptive.

While the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:5 presented here is not entirely new, it has given a solid basis for the “expulsion view.” Some scholars advocate this interpretation, yet, based on analogy with Job’s suffering (Job 1:12; 2:6) and Paul’s thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7),<sup>42</sup> they seem to (or at least doubt whether such interpretation does not) envision the physical involvement of Satan in destroying the “flesh” of the incestuous man.<sup>43</sup> This brief study has argued a figurative understanding of Paul’s injunction in 1 Corinthians 5:5. Accordingly, Satan plays no role in this nonliteral destruction of the flesh. If, as stated above, “for the destruction of the flesh” stands in apposition to “deliver such an one unto Satan,” then the difficulty disappears. By figuratively handing over the incestuous man to Satan, i.e., expelling him from the church, it is hoped, in view of the accompanying disgrace and grief, that the man would

come back to his senses, repent of his sin, turn away from it, and be accepted back into fellowship.

## Implications for church discipline

First Corinthians 5 has enormous implications for church discipline. Among other things, the text teaches the following about discipline:

1. Among other sins, the sexual immorality of a believer contaminates not only the person, but also the church, the temple of God (vv. 6–8). Therefore, the church must not entertain such people (vv. 9–11).

2. When such a grave sin comes to the notice of the church, the appropriate action must be taken immediately. This may include expulsion from fellowship (vv. 2, 5, 13).

3. Church discipline is primarily remedial. The idea is not to send away an erring believer from the church. Rather, by expelling such a person from fellowship, the person may realize the gravity of sin and repent from it.

4. Church discipline also purifies the church as the temple of God and protects it against contamination (vv. 6–8).

5. The church must responsibly discipline an erring believer (vv. 2–5, 13).

6. Church discipline is to be carried out by the whole congregation under the leading of the Holy Spirit (vv. 4, 5). In this way, personal sentiments are guarded.

The above points suggest that church discipline was not meant just for first century Christians, but for Christians of all times. Today, it appears that some congregations have forgotten that church discipline exists. On the other extreme, some are so obsessed with church discipline that the discipline loses its significance. Whatever the reasons for such a bifurcation of attitude towards church discipline, Paul’s message in 1 Corinthians 5 and elsewhere must be heeded. ■

1 See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 209.

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- 4 Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 13 (Ante-Nicene Fathers 4.87, 88). See also R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner’s, 1951–1955), 1:233; W. F. Orr and J. A. Walther, *1 Corinthians*, Anchor Bible Series (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 188, 189; S. M. Gilmour, “Pastoral Care in the New Testament Church,” *New Testament Studies* 10 (1964): 395; J. C. Hurd Jr., *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (New York: Seabury, 1965), 137, 286; E. Schweizer, “*Sarx, Sarkikos, Sarkinos*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:98–151; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to Corinthians*, Hermeneia, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 97.
- 5 See for example, H. Olshausen, *A Commentary on Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock, 1984), 90; H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 471; Margaret E. Thrall, *The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 40; Morris, *First Epistle*, 88, 89; Thomas Charles Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock, 1979), 126, 127; W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 10:217; G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology*, ed. L. D. Hurst (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 109; Paul W. Marsh, *1 Corinthians*, A New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), 384.
- 6 Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:233; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary*, 97; Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 188, 189; Gilmour, “Pastoral Care,” 395; Hurd, *Origin*, 137, 286; Schweizer, “*Sarx, Sarkikos, Sarkinos*,” 98–151; Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 2d. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock, 1981), 84, 85; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1968), 126, 127.
- 7 A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York: Hodder

- & Stoughton, 1911), 302, 303; J. Schneider, "Olethros," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 5:168; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980): 254-263; Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 186; Barrett, *A Commentary*, 126; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary*, 97 n. 37; Clarence T. Craig and John Short, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1953), 10:62; Gerald Harris, "The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Corinthians 5," *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 1-21.
- 8 Olshausen, *First and Second Epistles*, 90, mentions Gräfe as a proponent of this view. For modifications of this view, see Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 186; A. C. Thiselton, "The Meaning of SARX in 1 Corinthians 5:5: A Fresh Approach in the Light of Logical and Semantic Factors," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973): 218.
- 9 J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul*, trans. W. F. Stinespring (London: Allen and Unwin, 1946), 553; J. D. M. Derrett, " 'Handing Over to Satan': An Explanation of 1 Cor. 5:1-7," *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité* 26 (1979): 21.
- 10 See Campbell, "Flesh and Spirit," 332; cf. *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 6:2.
- 11 E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 212, 312, 313; S. D. MacArthur, " 'Spirit' in Pauline Usage: 1 Corinthians 5:5," *Studia Biblica* (1978): 249-256.
- 12 For example, W. Larry Richards, *1 Corinthians: The Essentials and Nonessentials of Christian Living*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier, ed. George R. Knight (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1997), 98; Craig L. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 105; Thiselton, "The Meaning of SARX," 204; Ruef, *Paul's First Letter*, 40; Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 256; Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter," 42; South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 552.
- 13 F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 123; Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Paul's*, 217; Bloomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 105; Nigel Watson, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1992), 49; Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 255, 256; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 207; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 209.
- 14 Colin G. Kruse, "The Offender and the Offence in 2 Corinthians 2:5 and 7:12," *Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1988): 129-139; see also Bloomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 106; Olshausen, *First and Second Epistles*, 90, 91; John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 127; cf. Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 259.
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- 16 See Campbell, "Flesh and Spirit," 333.
- 17 Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 13 (Ante-Nicene Fathers 4:87, 88).
- 18 H. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 134, 135.
- 19 K. P. Donfried, "Justification and Last Judgment in Paul," *Interpretation* 30 (1976): 150, 151.
- 20 Campbell, "Flesh and Spirit," 333-342.
- 21 See also Schneider, 62; Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication,'" 259, says that 1 Corinthians 5:5 is better interpreted "communally and eschatologically." For her, *flesh* refers to the elements and aspects of creation that are hostile to God and due for destruction during the eschatological crisis, while *spirit* refers to the Holy Spirit that dwells in the community.
- 22 V. George Shillington, "Atonement Texture in 1 Corinthians 5:5," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 71 (1998): 29-50.
- 23 While Shillington, "Atonement Texture," 29-50, takes *spirit* to refer to the church's orientation to God, he understands *flesh* in a physical sense, namely, the flesh of the offender, which is to be destroyed in what Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary*, 97, terms as a "dynamistic ceremony."
- 24 In view of its notoriety for sexual immorality, Aristophanes coined the term *korinthiazō* to designate fornication, and Plato used the term "Corinthian girl" as a euphemism for a prostitute. See Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter," 56; Mare, *1 Corinthians*, 180, 216; and Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 24.
- 25 Perhaps this incestuous man was a libertine, engaging in an extraordinarily hedonistic relationship as a manifestation of his freedom in Christ. Similarly, Manfred T. Brauch, *Hard Sayings of Paul* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 99, comments on the conceit of the church about the incest (1 Cor. 5:1) as follows: "Indeed, their arrogant pride regarding sexual immorality in their midst indicates that they may have seen this matter as the very proof of their spiritual perfection."
- 26 Incest was banned in the Old Testament (Lev. 18:8; 20:11), Jewish writings (*Mishnah Sanhedrin* 7:4), and Greek writings (Caius, *Inst.* 1.63).
- 27 Brian S. Rosner, "Temple and Holiness in 1 Cor 5," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 (1991): 137-145, argues that 1 Corinthians 5 is the application of the metaphor of the temple in 3:16, 17; see also Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication,'" 259, 260.
- 28 Bloomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 104, divides the chapter into three parts: (1) a judgment pronounced (vv. 1-5); (2) a rationale explained (vv. 6-8); and (3) a misunderstanding corrected (vv. 9-13).
- 29 South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 553, correctly observes that vv. 2, 7, and 9-13 explain the intention of *paradounai*. Further, "we should understand v. 5 as simply an additional figure of speech to describe what is clearly stated in v. 2, i.e., that the man must be removed from their midst." See also Brauch, *Hard Sayings of Paul*, 99.
- 30 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 208, says that the use of *paredōka tō satana* in "1 Tim 1:20 suggests that for Paul this was a quasitechnical language for some kind of expulsion from the Christian community." Fee, 208, and South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 550, suggest that in 1 Corinthians 5:5 Paul has Job 1:12 and 2:6 in mind.
- 31 See also Rosner, " 'Drive Out the Wicked Person,'" 32.
- 32 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 209. See also Rosner, " 'Drive Out the Wicked Person,'" 32, 33; South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 552.
- 33 Some think that in 1 Corinthians 5:5 physical suffering from the hands of Satan, analogous to Job 2:4-10; Acts 5:1-10; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32; and 2 Corinthians 12:7; is in view. However, a scrutiny of these passages suggests that they do not provide genuine parallels to 1 Corinthians 5:5. See also South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 548.
- 34 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 210, says that since the emphasis is on salvation, "destruction of the flesh" "must be seen as part of the remedial process." The phrase "destruction of the flesh" in Paul nowhere refers to death.
- 35 Sand, 231.
- 36 Ibid.; Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 172, 207.
- 37 Sand, 231.
- 38 Thus, *sarx* is used in an ethical sense. See Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle*, 127; Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Paul's*, 217, 18; Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 172, 207.
- 39 South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 554, notes that in verses 9-13 Paul says that *pornoi* (the same word used of the incestuous man, v. 5) should be avoided, not killed.
- 40 Rosner, " 'Drive Out the Wicked Person,'" 32, 33. See also Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter," 42; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 209; South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 552.
- 41 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 213.
- 42 Morris, *First Epistle*, 88. South even says that "it is not at all problematic for the expulsion view for Satan to be the unwitting agent, indirectly, of the incestuous man's salvation" "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 560. See also Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 212, who sees the possibility of "remedial suffering."
- 43 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 213; Morris, *First Epistle*, 88; South, "Critique of the 'Curse/Death,'" 560. The texts used to support the possibility of physical suffering in Satan's hands (Job 1:12; 2:6; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 2 Corinthians 12:7) do not provide a genuine parallel to 1 Corinthians 5:5.

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# The healing power of empathy

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**A**s a pastor, have you ever wondered how to deal with factions within your congregation and promote the unity of the body of Christ?

Divisions within the church manifest themselves in a plethora of ways: liberal versus conservative, rich versus poor, tribe against tribe, caste against caste, to name a few. All too often, dialogue does not exist, and a misinformed leering of other groups lurks.

The problem is indeed a complicated one, and solutions are not easy. While we cannot address all the issues or find a simplistic cure-all for what ails our churches, we must look at one characteristic that, if practiced, can have a monumental impact on the unity of believers worldwide: empathy.

## Empathy defined

According to Carl Rogers, empathy is “to perceive the internal frame of reference of another person with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings that pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without losing the as-if condition.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, to show empathy toward another individual or group means to imagine what it would be like to be that person or group. One should do so in moderation, without losing the sense of one’s own self in another.

Empathy should not be confused with *sympathy*, for some may have sympathy for another, without truly understanding another’s situation.<sup>2</sup> Sympathy is triggered by an awareness of others

based on our own feelings and experiences. Empathy, on the other hand, takes an extra step by striving to understand the feelings and experiences of that person.<sup>3</sup> When someone feels mere sympathy toward another, the sympathetic person might be more likely to feel sad themselves, which may actually have consequences on that person’s emotional state. By contrast, one who shows empathy will likely be motivated to assist the victim in the resolution of whatever situation they are experiencing.<sup>4</sup> Empathy, then, has a practical component, serving as a catalyst to positive change.

One might be inclined to argue that some are not naturally empathetic, that they do not have the emotional capability to empathize with others. While this may be true in some cases, research indicates humans are capable of learning how to empathize.<sup>5</sup> Research also shows that when a person exhibits genuine empathy, it is more the result of a choice than nature.<sup>6</sup> Those who seem naturally empathic are able to do so as a result of a lifetime of choices.

Empathy, then, is a deliberate attempt to understand the inner world of another, and a skill that can be learned and practiced. It can have a tremendous impact on one’s willingness to reach out to another in building bridges across a separating gulf.

## Natural barriers to empathy

Perhaps one of the most common reasons for divisive issues is human egocentricity. As human beings, we naturally see other people and events through our distinct personal or cultural biases.<sup>7</sup> We subconsciously and mistakenly assume that everyone shares our own values, norms, and ethics, and we are taken aback when someone around us violates these principles. We assume that others are more like us than they actually are.<sup>8</sup> We expect them to reach the same conclusions on outside events that we do, and we anticipate that they will make the same decisions we would in a given scenario. Hence we are prevented from understanding their point of view, relegating them to a certain category.

We fail to understand others because we do not take time to understand them. Sometimes we generalize their character based on a single interaction with them, choosing to apply a label based on that interaction.<sup>9</sup> Other times, we stereotype them based on faulty information gained about the group to which they belong.<sup>10</sup> For one reason or another, from faulty or incomplete information about someone, we pass our judgment on that person.

But for empathy to flow from one to another, we must be willing to recognize these human tendencies and limitations within ourselves. We must recognize that others operate from a frame of reference completely different than ours, and strive to understand that frame of reference. We must recognize within ourselves the prejudices we carry about another person or group, and choose to deal with these prejudices that prevent us from understanding the other's behavior. In doing so, we overcome the roadblocks that hinder empathy.

### Implications of empathy

Empathy is crucial to maintain social harmony.<sup>11</sup> When people are willing to lay aside their personal feelings and take the effort to get inside the mind of someone else, they have the possibility to maintain peace amongst themselves. Such a situation lends incredible aid in repairing a divided church.

Empathy enables dialogue among people who have significant differences.<sup>12</sup> Humans naturally seek the status quo; as a result, not many choose to associate with people different from themselves. They remain wrapped up in their own cultures and subcultures, furthering the rift between themselves and the other. With empathy, such people can take the risks involved in breaking out of their own comfort zone, and, by taking time to understand someone different, they can discover a piece of shared humanity and even learn something from the other.

Thus, empathy not only helps people with great differences to *understand* each other but also allows them to *love* one another.<sup>13</sup> This type of love Jesus commands His followers to possess (John 15:12–14, 17)—the type of love that, once it understands what another person is going through, actively seeks that person's well-being.

Imagine if believers worldwide would practice this behavior. Imagine the conflicts that could be solved once the realization occurred that the differences lie in some type of misunderstanding. Imagine the pain that can be healed when people, instead of reverting to defense coping mechanisms, take the

risk involved in understanding another person. Imagine the unity and love shared when people choose to go out of their way to show love in practical terms to someone whom they initially may not understand.

The implications for the body of Christ cannot be underestimated. We would fulfill Jesus' prayer that we would all be one (John 17:20, 21). By doing this, the world would be given a true example of the peace it craves, and would know that we belong to Him, just as He prayed.

The repercussions would be felt in individual congregations. Instead of bickering and quarreling, there would be a more focused, sharpened dedication toward real mission. People would be willing to take time to understand what is important to others and discover together a shared priority that can supersede individual agendas.

### Conclusion

Yes, empathy has the power to unite people, even those whose differences seem irreconcilable, opening the door to genuine dialogue. It is a crucial element for peaceful interactions to exist between two parties. At a time when believers seem to be separated by various issues, empathy can pave the way for the type of unity crucial to our existence and mission.

As with anything of value, what is necessary seldom comes easily. To truly understand the mind-set of another who is different from us requires a great deal of effort. Even in situations in which we may be convinced we are right, we must take the time and energy to learn how another reached a conclusion opposite to our own. Such work, if executed, will pay tremendous dividends toward our common mission.

Pastors are key in promoting empathy. Perhaps as much as any other role or occupation, the pastor's position presents constant opportunities for empathy. Through the seemingly unending conflicts, challenges, and resistances facing pastors, they must strive to realize empathy in each interaction, in such a way that it becomes a habit for them. Their congregation needs to learn empathy

from the pastor, not only in word but also, and especially, in example.

Once people experience the power of empathy, they will spread it amongst themselves, showing an example of functional interaction. People will be drawn to Christ as they see how those who take His message seriously live out His love.

Finally, if empathy can become a habit in our churches, the differences once deemed insurmountable will fall. Not that conquering such differences will come without great toil, but those who have seen its healing power will be willing to endure the necessary strain and potential for hurt. Eventually, our churches can unite, and we may see God's kingdom work powerfully in the world. ■

- 1 Cited in Jean Decety, "Perspective Taking as the Royal Avenue to Empathy," in *Other Minds: How Humans Bridge the Divide Between Self and Others*, eds. Bertram F. Malle and Sara D. Hodges (New York: Guilford, 2005), 145.
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- 3 Decety, "Perspective Taking," 146.
- 4 Wallace J. Kahn and Catherine V. Lawhorne, *Empathy: The Critical Factor in Conflict-Resolution and a Culture of Civility* (West Chester, PA: West Chester University, 2003), 5A.
- 5 Ibid., 5.
- 6 Decety, "Perspective Taking," 154.
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# Mentoring and attachment:

## Insights for ministry to emerging adults

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After graduating from college and leaving a close community in which I (Amy) was deeply invested, and then transitioning into my new church's postcollege group, graduates and professionals (GAP), I faced a sense of loss. Although initiated with the hopes of facilitating connections between each young adult in the church, the group proved to be just what the name, GAP, implied—a void. I could no longer walk across the hall for a profound conversation with my college friends and mentors, all who knew me well. My relationships in college provided fertile soil that enabled me to discern God's voice and allow my gifts in leadership, ministry, and communication to grow, something which I now didn't have. Consequently, participating in weekly GAP meetings was an affirmation of my deep-seated postgraduation fear of being unknown, lost, and without guidance.

As I searched my church's mission statement, I was astounded to find the conviction to serve college students, families, and to facilitate a deeper connection between the two included in the statement. But there was nothing for my group. How could my church overlook my peers and me? Are we not an integral part of the congregation too?

Becoming a thriving adult doesn't happen overnight, nor does it develop in a vacuum apart from the influences of community, especially mentors. In our experience, there is a notable disconnect between the challenges of emerging

adults—typically those between the ages of 18 to 25—and the ability of the church to effectively disciple them.

Thus we contend that mentoring should be an integral solution to this problem—an effective way to fill “the GAP.” Effective mentoring can create a positive attachment relationship between two people that allows space for emerging adults to explore their identity and commitments in a safe environment and ultimately help them hear the voice of God. As emerging adults are given the space to discover who they are and develop themselves and their gifts through discipleship, they will have a greater desire to integrate into the church as a whole.

### Emerging adults

Teri, a talented and fun third-year college student, was entering a key decision-making period. She had unlimited opportunities to explore her career options, yet she felt a desire to marry and start a family. Her decision to go to medical school came during the critical juncture of discovering who she was and how her vocation could contribute to the world.

Herein lies the tension of emerging adults: they have the unprecedented freedom to choose their life path, yet they are still in the midst of discovering their identities and learning to discern God's voice. This challenge can often be debilitating and paralyzing.

In the industrialized West, society generally defines adulthood as being married (often with children), holding down a stable, full-time job, and operating out of a coherent worldview. However, in the last half century, the typical age of marriage and parenthood has steeply risen, causing a seeming delay of adulthood. Due to this dramatic shift, emerging adults such as Teri, when asked if they consider themselves adults, will respond in “some respects yes, in some respects no.”<sup>1</sup>

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett describes the emerging adulthood life stage as “not simply an ‘extended adolescence’ ” nor a “ ‘young adulthood’ ” but rather a stage that is a “distinct period of life in its own right.”<sup>2</sup> Arnett describes the emerging adult step as the (1) “age of *identity explorations* . . . especially in [the areas of] love and work;” (2) the “age of *instability*”; (3) the “*self-focused age*”; (4) the age of “*transition*”; and (5) the “age of *possibilities*, when hopes flourish, when people have an unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives.”<sup>3</sup> What value it would be for Teri to have a mentor who could come alongside her and recognize and identify the spiritual,

vocational, and developmental factors involved in making these decisions, while also providing wise counsel to help move her towards well-informed commitments.

### What are the spiritual needs of emerging adults?

James W. Fowler, in his important work on the human development of faith, identifies a six-stage framework that highlights an emerging adult's faith transition from an adolescent to an adult. Adolescents have a prequestioning faith where their basic beliefs and core values are informed by others.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, young adults in the subsequent stage generally experience a critical distancing from their faith community in order to reform their belief system.<sup>5</sup> Fowler categorizes young adults as "tak[ing] seriously the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes."<sup>6</sup> Thus, emerging adults are in the middle of this faith transition: leaving the stated beliefs of their parents, pastors, and youth group

leaders in order to arrive at a faith that is their own.

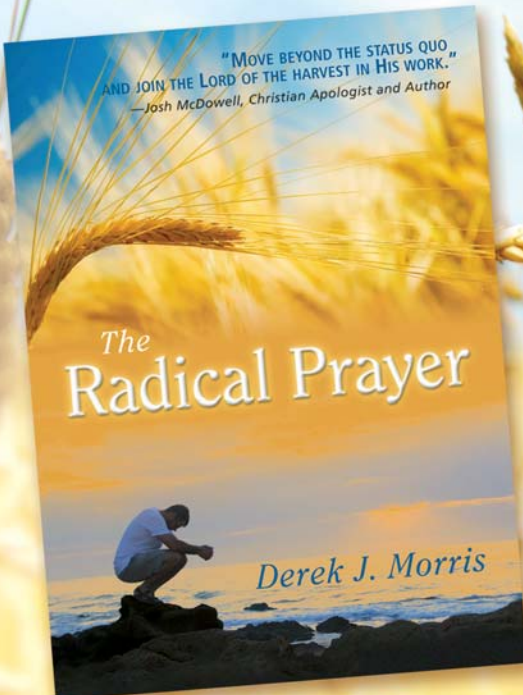
Campus ministers of emerging adults<sup>7</sup> have worked with a number of students like Teri, who struggle with their newfound freedom, shifts in their faith, and access to seemingly unlimited amounts of information and opportunities. We believe mentors can help create a sacred, safe space where emerging adults are encouraged to commit their life to God and are empowered to explore new opportunities without the fear of judgment.

### Mentoring: A vehicle for secure attachment

*Eli and Samuel: A biblical mentoring-attachment relationship.* Mentoring should be an integral way for the church to lessen the gap between emerging adults and their communities. Similar to a caretaker watching an infant, so is a mentor empathetically aware of the emerging adult in a way that allows the emerging adult to "feel felt," to use their God-given gifts creatively, and also to help develop a greater sensitivity to God's voice.

The story of Eli and Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1–17) is one example of the key role that mentors play. Eli, a priest of Israel, mentored Samuel at a critical juncture in his life because "Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him" (1 Sam. 3:7).<sup>8</sup> As God beckoned Samuel numerous times, his mentor, Eli, had the wisdom to recognize both the boy's eager learning posture and the voice of the Lord. The experiential lessons that Samuel learned through Eli (listening and responding to God) continued to be hallmarks in Samuel's future ministry (1 Sam. 3:19, 20), especially as he mentored the future kings of Israel (1 Sam. 8–10; 12; 13; 15; 16).

Mentoring in many ways is an art: a melding of thoughts and mediums that come together synergistically and create a picture of great potential. Emerging adults long for mentors who will help them process who they are and how they are uniquely gifted. This time of their lives compares well to an unfinished canvas. A desire to create something unique and beautiful



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existed; the challenge was how to do it. Eli saw Samuel's potential and helped create an awareness of his underdeveloped patterns of relating to God. Eli utilized their mutual deep devotion to one another—their secure attachment relationship<sup>9</sup>—as a vehicle through which he attuned to Samuel and helped him

encounter the Lord. Eli was a mentor who was attuned to Samuel, his mentee, and to Yahweh. He, as a mentor, created a safe space for Samuel to obediently explore the role of a prophet (1 Sam. 3:15–18) while being obedient to the inner voice of God himself. His attentiveness to Samuel's seemingly unimportant questions became an opportunity for Eli to witness a deeper work that God was doing in Samuel and allowed him to give his mentee the tools to encounter the living God (1 Sam. 3:4–10).

### Practical suggestions for mentoring emerging adults

We suggest three practical applications to meet the unique needs of those in this life stage through mentoring relationships.

1. *Give space and freedom to explore without fear.* Emerging adulthood is fraught with many pressures: mapping out the rest of life, selecting the right mate, and discovering the perfect job. These critical questions are difficult for emerging adults to answer without a period of healthy and safe exploration. Thus, effective mentors need to identify with their mentees' fears and then validate their underlying faith and identity questions. Instead of giving into cultural pressures to have everything "figured out *right now*," the mentor can assure their mentee in this unique time to explore their gifts and personality by pursuing different jobs, church positions, and hobbies, for example. Mentors can then help an emerging adult to identify where they excel as well as their limits, what brings them joy as well as what exhausts them. Through this intentional process of exploration,

## EMERGING ADULTS LONG FOR MENTORS WHO WILL HELP THEM PROCESS WHO THEY ARE AND HOW THEY ARE UNIQUELY GIFTED.

reflection, and discernment, the mentor creates a space for the mentee to discover God's answers to these critical identity and vocational questions.

2. *Share vulnerably.* One of the appeals of having a mentor is the opportunity to interact closely with someone who has had more life experience and who can share the wisdom gained from their journey. Effective mentors are ones who willingly and vulnerably disclose the joys and pains of their own story. Mentoring with authenticity creates a safe space for mentees to feel understood and also share their struggles, questions, and discoveries without fear of judgment. Choosing to disclose our painful experiences and mistakes may be a catalyst for our mentees to feel understood as well as to recognize that they are not alone in this process. Mentors who take the time to reflect on their own journeys of identity and vocational discoveries will be a storehouse of wisdom for emerging adults who might be struggling with similar questions.

3. *Give wise, nondirective, prayerful advice.* Effective mentors have learned the art of giving wise, prayerful, yet nondirective advice. Often times mentoring becomes most effective when a mentor asks open-ended, engaging questions that draw out the mentee's hopes, dreams, joys, desires, and fears. As emerging adults are in the process of forming their beliefs and making decisions about their future, the decision making should be left up to them. If mentors can help draw out key issues and allow their mentees to answer their own questions, the developing adult will remember and take ownership of what they themselves have declared.

### Conclusion

Our roles as mentors have many facets and implications on the future of the church. As we recognize the shift towards this new life stage called emerging adulthood, we as the church, need to respond with sensitivity and openness to these adults in a way that enables

their healing and transformation as well as their inclusion in the church body. While the generational gap between emerging adults and the larger congregation poses challenges in reaching this adult population, we hope to emphasize that emerging adults desire to connect not only through singles group ministry, but also within one-on-one relationships with other members of the church. As the church comprehends and creatively plans to meet the needs of all of its members—including emerging adults—it is our hope that mentors will be a key resource. ■

- 1 Jeffery Jensen Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development From the Late Teens Through the Twenties," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (2000): 471.
- 2 Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), vi, 4.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 8; emphasis in original.
- 4 James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 154.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 179.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 182.
- 7 Amy Drennan served with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Texas for five years, and Jermaine Ma served with Asian American Christian Fellowship in Washington and California for seven years.
- 8 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New International Version (NIV).
- 9 For more information on attachment theory, see Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell's book, *Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive* (New York: J. P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2003), 102 and Timothy E. Clinton and Gary Sibly *Attachments: Why You Love, Feel, and Act the Way You Do: The Secret to Loving and Lasting Relationships* (Brentwood, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2002), 23.

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# Early onset Alzheimer's: Living with the unthinkable

David Wolter



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One of the most mysterious and discouraging ailments is Alzheimer's disease (AD), "a progressive, degenerative brain disease" affecting the memory, thinking, and behavior of more than four million Americans (USNLM/NIH 2006). With Alzheimer's, a person's "nerve cells in the brain (neurons) collapse and die, making it difficult for the brain's signals to be transmitted properly" (CCHS 2001). This affects the day-to-day living, social life, and relationships with those closest to the person with AD.

In the most common form of late onset AD, symptoms show up after the age of 60, but the prevalence of early onset AD remains alarmingly high—up to 10 percent of all AD cases. Early onset AD is more closely tied to genetics and can show up in a person's 30s and 40s (Alzheimer's Association 2004), or as late as their 40s and 50s (CCHS 2001).

Alzheimer's disease leads down the slow and painful road to death. According to some (Bird 2005; Alzheimer's Association 2004), death occurs within 8 to 10 years of onset, while others place it at within 15 years (USNLM/NIH 2006). The typical range is anywhere between 1 to 25 years (Bird 2005). The family of the person with early onset AD therefore has to deal not only with the debilitating effects, but also with the stages of grief over their loved one's looming death. Facing this can lead to dread and despair for all involved, and most assuredly results in depression and anxiety for many victims and caregivers (ICS 1998).

## **Early onset Alzheimer's disease: Painful symptoms**

Imagine that you are a man or woman in your midforties. Your three children are in their midteens and you begin to see some of the early symptoms of Alzheimer's in your life: you hear yourself repeating statements, you misplace items, you have trouble finding the names for common and familiar objects, you get lost in familiar places, your partner complains of your personality changing, and you lose interest in things you once found enjoyable (USNLM/NIH 2006). After a little research, you realize that you could have early onset Alzheimer's disease, so you make an appointment with your family practitioner and go through a battery of diagnostic tests. When done, she then tells you she is 90 percent sure you have early onset Alzheimer's disease.<sup>1</sup> She tells you that the prognosis is poor and that most patients live only another eight to ten years; they begin to show a significant decrease in health and cognitive function all along the way. Total debilitation is common, and most victims of early onset Alzheimer's disease can no longer understand language, recognize family members, or perform basic activities of daily living like eating, dressing, or bathing (USNLM/NIH 2006). When you ask about the dying process, she says that these kinds of deaths usually result from a lack of vitality (inanition), malnutrition, or pneumonia (Bird 2005).

## **Early onset Alzheimer's disease: Af- fects on caregivers**

Convinced of the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's disease in your own life, you begin to think about your partner and children, your boss and coworkers, as well as friends and family. You and your partner do some Internet research and come across some important fact sheets about Alzheimer's disease and how to cope with it as a family (see bibliography). At your next visit with your doctor, you ask about the pain that family members will experience. The physician is impressed with your research and adds that many caregivers are surprised and dumbfounded by the changes in personality and behavior that Alzheimer's disease brings. You are warned of things like anxiety, suspiciousness, agitation, delusions, and hallucinations (Alzheimer's Association 2004). In addition, the physician adds, "Because more than 70% of people with Alzheimer's disease live at home, where family and friends provide most of their care . . . it places physical, emotional and financial stress on caregivers as they assume growing

responsibilities that may include meeting physical needs, managing daily routines and making important medical and legal decisions” (Alzheimer’s Association 2004). You are now aware of the intense burden you will become physically, financially, socially, and mentally.<sup>2</sup> Both you and your partner are now filled with despair. Despite the incredible love you have for each other, the situation seems hopeless.

### **The question, the challenge**

However frightening, I believe that there is an answer that can bring joy and delight in the toughest of situations. While many resources aim to help a person cope,<sup>3</sup> the Bible does much more than that—it offers a way to thrive. The apostle Paul states in Romans 5:2–5, “And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”<sup>4</sup> James said, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2–4).

What, then, can we do when a loved one comes down with the disease? This article presents principles that may help people affected with Alzheimer’s disease. I do believe it is possible to help those afflicted with early onset Alzheimer’s disease to take delight in God in the middle of their horrible dilemmas. I have found six principles that can give people a holistic Christian worldview to help them in this situation. These principles will also help us working with church members who have the disease.

### **Principle one: Alzheimer’s disease teaches us about true love**

Caring for a person with Alzheimer’s disease is very difficult: it requires giving and giving with very little in return.

It begs the question, What is love? Most of the time when we say we love someone and give them our love, they give something in return; so we become programmed to think of love in terms of giving and getting in return. Yet we are challenged in Scripture to love as Jesus has loved us (John 13:34). We are taught in 1 John 4:10 that love gives without the thought of return: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

Despite the ugliness of the effects of early onset Alzheimer’s disease on victim and caregiver alike, we are reminded that true love is not reciprocal. We cannot care for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease and live the illusion that we will be cared for in return by them.

### **Principle two: Alzheimer’s disease instructs us as to the true nature of human dignity**

The Bible clearly says that God views human dignity as arising from their being, not their doing. We are human beings, not human doings. Psalm 139 expresses a beautiful song about God’s creativity and purpose in making us and in guiding us through life. We are instructed to think of each one of our days and all the events therein as arising from God’s foreordained purpose and plan. So when we think about a person becoming aware of an Alzheimer’s diagnosis, God is there and has been there long before the person was even created. He is not shocked by the medical finding, nor is He in dismay. He thinks no less of the person whose mind becomes increasingly more crippled. God’s love for the severely mentally retarded is as strong as that for the nuclear physicist, with His love based on our being, not our doing.

When God created human beings, He made them in His own image (Gen. 1:26, 27). We mirror, as it were, the personality and character of God in that He has emotion, thought, and will. When we see Alzheimer’s disease in a loved one, we can become quick to assume that the mirror is broken, if not shattered. After all, where is human dignity in uncontrolled bowels? Or in

locking a 55-year-old man up as if he were a toddler?

Yet the truth about Alzheimer’s disease is that it reminds us, even instructs us, to look at human dignity as dwelling in our being, not our doing. A person has worth because God created them with worth, not because they do something worthy.

### **Principle three: Alzheimer’s disease teaches us about God’s love**

Early onset Alzheimer’s disease can remind us of God’s incredible love. Though we might have spiritual dementia, God will never forget us. He loves us not because we are something special or because we can outperform others or even increase our performance. We often forget our ability to lose our mind, and God’s ability to still shower His mercy on us. Titus 3:3–7 reminds us: “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

This passage shows us that we have done such foolish things (v. 3), and yet, it is as if we still believe that God loved us because of the “righteous things we had done” (v. 5). Have we forgotten what was just stated in verse 3? Do we have a form of convenient spiritual dementia that allows us to think that we somehow *merit* God’s kindness? Alzheimer’s disease teaches us that God loves us and that His love for us is not based on our ability to deserve it.

### **Principle four: Alzheimer’s disease reminds us of the fragility of human life**

Isaiah 40:6–8 instructs us as to the glory of humans being like the flowers

and our flesh being like grass. In time, it fades and withers. Only God remains unchanging. Scripture reminds us that our very breath comes from God (Acts 17:24–28). He holds all things together by His powerful word. While no loving person would wish early onset Alzheimer's disease on anyone, for some reason God has allowed it and can use it to remind us of our own mortality, our own fragility, and our own need for Him.

We do not live as the masters of our own destiny. We have a God who lives in the heavens and does exactly as He pleases (Ps. 115:3). So lest we allow the pendulum of our thinking to swing either to the extreme of our human mastery or to the extreme of our victimhood, Scripture and a wholly Christian worldview remind us to think soberly of ourselves and our life here.

### **Principle five: Alzheimer's disease instructs us on the value of relationships**

Jesus told a story in Luke about a farmer who had it all wrong:

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:15–21).

The man had possessions and accomplishments but had failed to develop a life that was oriented towards God and His values. God seems to be much more concerned with how we treat others than what we accomplish or accumulate. The one thing that Alzheimer's disease does to the caregiver is that it slows the person's life down immensely so that face-to-face time with the sufferer becomes a necessity. Life, in terms of things to do and people to impress, freezes, and our values come into question. While this is a very difficult process, the person who wants to submit to God and become more like Christ will grow to trust God even in this time of their life. It is the nature of the Christian life. Though not necessarily immediate or complete, it is a process that God works in us to change us and renew us day by day.

Alzheimer's disease teaches us the value of relationships over achievements and our sundry collections. We have to slow down and care for the person in need. It is a form of submitting to that person when we place our agenda beneath their requirements.

### **Principle six: Alzheimer's disease reminds us that we are pilgrims on earth**

Early onset Alzheimer's disease brings you face to face with the reality of pain and the ultimate questions in life. Why are we here? What is life for? Is this all there is? When we look at Scripture, including Hebrews 11:13, which reminds us that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (KJV), we see that in the past great Christians of the faith looked forward to a better land, a better country, a heavenly one. Living with pain as a Christian reminds us to long for heaven and to live our lives with the understanding that this physical existence is only part of the big picture. We know that we can't please God without faith, trusting in Him (Heb. 11:6), and that Abraham had to make similar choices (Heb. 11:8–10, 17–19). Scripture encourages us to have this view of ourselves, living as aliens and strangers here on earth (1 Pet. 2:11), rather than thinking that we have all that we need here and now.

The suffering of Alzheimer's can and should draw us to the Father, who loves us and has a plan for our lives set out from the beginning of time. It reminds us that we were not only created for life here on earth, but this life can be described as shabby compared to the life we will have with God for all eternity.

### **Conclusion: Christians can have hope and joy in the worst of situations**

The pain and sorrow of early onset Alzheimer's disease is pervasive. It undoes the lives of the sufferer and their caretaker. Few paths of suffering are worse, especially without a healthy mind-set and belief system. Alzheimer's disease can lead directly to doubt and despair, and to dread and disillusionment. Only belief in a Christian worldview, steeped in Scripture and a deep relationship with God, can make something of value come from this horrible situation. ■

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## Endnotes

1 Unfortunately, there is no way to determine whether a person has AD for certain until they have died and their brain tissues can be

chemically tested (USNLM/NIH, 2006), although "a skilled physician can diagnose AD with 90% accuracy" through a battery of diagnostic tests (Alzheimer's Association, 2004).

2 "Despite the gratifications that maintain caregivers in the caring role, the experience of a sense of burden is universal amongst carers. . . . Caregiver burden has been defined as: 'the physical, psychological or emotional, social, and financial problems . . . experienced by family members caring for impaired . . . adults.' This definition has helped to lead to the conceptualization of caregiver burden in terms of a number of domains: physical health (higher blood pressure, negative physical effects); mental health (stress, distress, depression, anxiety, alcohol dependence); social participation (limited outside social contacts, isolation) and financial resources (loss of income, increased medical expenses). Caring for someone with dementia has an influence on all of these caregiver domains" (ICS, 1998), 26f.

3 The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television channel special broadcast, "The Forgetting:

A Portrait of Alzheimer's," is a PBS two-hour documentary that premiered on January 2004. It features a 90-minute documentary based on David Shenk's book, *The Forgetting*, and aims to help people cope with the effects of Alzheimer's. On the PBS Web site at <http://www.pbs.org/theforgetting/coping/index.html>, one can find their seven hints for coping with the disease: (1) take time for yourself, (2) find something to anticipate every day, (3) go with the flow, (4) expect the unexpected, (5) find a common bond, (6) recognition is more than a name, and (7) know that there is life after Alzheimer's. While this is practical and helpful, it is limited in its ability to radically change the caregiver's life.

4 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV).

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## LETTERS *continued from page 3*

disciples or many other of the "movers" in Christian history. But these were great church leaders not because of the right relationships, rather because there was a truth to die for and they were involved in spreading it.

Relationships are weighty with meaning and always have been. But they are the means to an end. If we want the young people of the past, let's go back to embracing truth like we did in the past. Besides offering a positive relationship, we should avoid allowing relativism to have its hands on the truth and being passive about the all-important need to be *involved* in its proclamation.

This was a good article, but it just wasn't enough.

—Micheal Goetz, pastor, Bucks County Seventh-day Adventist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States

Some good suggestions are made in Dr. Martin's article. I was in my early twenties when I joined the church. Several couples invited me into their homes; and it was during one such invitation that I met my wife.

However, Mike Cauley, as referenced by Martin in his article, speaks of planting churches to reach kids under 25. Is Christ divided? Here we sit on the brink of eternity, and apparently we can't meet in the same room without a liturgical fight breaking out. Can families not worship, pray, and work together anymore? Are the needs of the twentysomething generation so specialized that they cannot worship with Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa?

—Dave Moench, email

### Ministering to families affected by autism

Thank you for Debra L. Ketelsen's wonderful article ("Ministering to Families Affected by Autism," May 2008). However, I'm not sure of all the helpful suggestions in the article. For example, my ex-wife and I probably aren't looking for a day out at the spa. But understanding? That would be wonderful. We haven't attended church regularly in eight years. Our autistic son is ten years old.

Attending church has been extremely difficult for us. The perpetual exhaustion

from dealing with an autistic child rarely left us with energy to even consider going to church. The difficulty of dealing with him in any public place when we had the energy to go, was beyond our ability to handle with dignity. The questioning looks from other adults was frustrating, and watching our son being excluded was too painful to bear.

Just reading this article gave me a warm feeling. It means that there are others who have the same experience, and that *Ministry* cares enough to print the article. At this point, I'm not sure if we'll ever come back to the church, but an understanding, compassionate community would nearly be irresistible.

—Jeff Evans, email

### A note of appreciation

I've read the July 2008 issue of *Ministry* from cover to cover and want to express my appreciation for the entire content, especially Jim Cress's article, "The Miracle of Working God's Way."

—Ann L. Wyatt, Zephyrhills, Florida, United States

# Deaconesses in the church—

## Part two of two

Nancy Vyhmeister

*Editor's Note: Part one (July 2008) traced the role of the deaconess in the New Testament church and through history until deaconesses and their function disappeared during the Middle Ages. Part two examines the role of the deaconess in the Adventist Church.*



Nancy Vyhmeister, PhD, is professor emeritus of missions at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

After their disappearance during the Middle Ages, deaconesses were “rediscovered” by Protestants in Holland in the sixteenth century. By the nineteenth century, they were trained for nursing, teaching, and parish work, on both sides of the Atlantic. Leslie McFall quotes an eighteenth-century source saying deaconesses were to “assist at the baptism of women, to instruct children and women before baptism, to supervise the women in Church and rebuke and correct those who misbehave.”<sup>1</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church grew up at the time when the office of the deaconess was gathering strength. It cannot be considered strange that Adventists also considered the possibility of having women serve as deaconesses.

### Early Adventism

As early as 1856, Joseph Frisbie wrote about deaconesses as church workers. He referred to the choosing of the seven deacons of Acts 6 and Phoebe the deaconess (Rom. 16:1), noting that they “were considered servants, helpers or laborers with the apostles in the gospel, not

that they preached the word, but ministered or served their temporal wants.” He approvingly quoted from Clarke’s commentary: “ ‘There were deaconesses in the primitive church, whose business it was to attend to the female converts at baptism; to instruct the catechumens, or persons who were candidates for baptism: to visit the sick, and those who were in prison; and, in short, perform those religious offices, for the female part of the church, which could not with propriety be performed by men.’ ”

Frisbie then asked, “Would it not be well then brethren to appoint in all the churches deacons and deaconesses who may answer the qualifications that are laid down clearly in the Bible, with an understanding of what their duties are?” He then summarized these duties:

1. To see to the poor and destitute, the widows and orphans, the sick and afflicted
2. To raise funds and care for church finances
3. To make preparation for the ordinances, including keeping on hand good [unfermented] wine from grapes or raisins<sup>2</sup>

In 1870, J. H. Waggoner published his ideas about “The Office of Deacon.” His presentation, based on Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8–12, emphasized the spiritual characteristics of the deacons. Where Frisbie had earlier included deaconesses, Waggoner makes no mention of them.<sup>3</sup>

### Ellen White and deaconesses

A large number of books, sermons, and pamphlets regarding deaconesses and their work were published in the United States in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Ellen White had none of these in her library.<sup>4</sup>

A search for White’s position on the appointment, ordination, or work of deaconesses proved disappointing. Only one reference was found: a letter written in September 1902. In it White scolded A. T. Jones for listening to the private woes of women: “When a woman comes to you with her troubles, tell her plainly to go to her sisters, to tell her troubles to the deaconesses of the church.”<sup>5</sup>

Yet White’s 1895 message on the setting apart of women is key to the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the work of the deaconess. “Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart

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to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church.”<sup>6</sup>

Records show that on the strength of this declaration, at least three ordination ceremonies for deaconesses took place. The first was August 10, 1895, at the Ashley Church in Sydney, Australia, where “Pastors Corliss and McCullagh of the Australian conference set apart the elder, deacons, deaconesses by prayer and the laying on of hands.”<sup>7</sup> The second known ordination took place at the same church on January 6, 1900, with W. C. White officiating, as he noted in his diary.<sup>8</sup> The third occasion was an ordination service in February or March 1916, when E. E. Andross, then president of the Pacific Union Conference, officiated, citing as his authority Ellen White’s 1895 *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* article.<sup>9</sup>

### Adventist deaconesses in the twentieth century

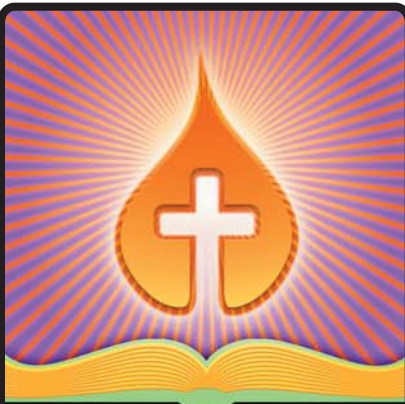
Not having to prove their existence, we will consider only two of the three aspects considered in the first article. The two are ordination and tasks.

*Ordination of deaconesses.* The early ordination of deaconesses in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was soon forgotten. In the *Church Officers’ Gazette* of December 1914, deacons and elders are to be ordained, for “until this is done they are not properly qualified to attend to all the duties of their office.” The work of the deaconess, “closely associated with the deacon in looking after the many interests of the church,” is “of the greatest well-being of the church,” with nothing said about the deaconess’s ordination.<sup>10</sup> In spite of this, in 1921, F. A. Detamore described a visit to a church in Sarawak (Malaysia), and noted the ordination of “Sister Lee [as] deaconess.”<sup>11</sup>

With the publishing of the first *Adventist Church Manual* in 1932, the

New Testament origin of the deaconess was noted. The manual stated that “there is no record, however, that these women were ordained, hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by our denomination.” This sentence appeared in the *Church Manual* through the edition of 1986.<sup>12</sup>

The Annual Council<sup>13</sup> of 1984 recommended that the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* delete the sentence about not ordaining deaconesses and include Ellen White’s 1895 statement about laying hands on women who would “consecrate some of their time to be of service to the Lord.” The 1985 General Conference Session took up an amended statement for consideration: “The church may arrange for the ordination of deaconesses by an ordained minister who holds current credentials from the conference.”<sup>14</sup> After a delegate objected to calling Phoebe a deaconess, the General Conference Session of 1985 voted to refer the amendment to the standing



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9. Sing a new song.
10. Pray often for others.
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13. Plan your prayer time.
14. Learn to fast and pray.
15. Find a prayer partner.

—Ruthie Jacobsen

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Church Manual Committee for further consideration.<sup>15</sup> The 1990 session voted to use the word “induction” rather than “ordination.” Thus the 1990 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* reads, “The church may arrange for a suitable service of induction for the deaconess by an ordained minister holding current credentials.” The recognition of Phoebe as a deaconess was included.<sup>16</sup> This same sentence appears in the 2000 edition.

This “appropriate ceremony” may include the laying-on of hands, but ordination of deaconesses is still not generally practiced. For example, in the year 2000, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southeastern California reported that only 38 percent of its congregations ordained women as deaconesses.<sup>17</sup>

*The tasks of deaconesses.* Possibly the oldest reference to duties performed by deaconesses is W. C. White's recollection of his father's calling out the Battle Creek deaconesses in 1863 to repair a torn evangelistic tent.<sup>18</sup>

Further perusal of historical Adventist materials provides no information until 1909, when T. E. Bowen wrote in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* that “the work of the deaconess, properly carried on, is of great importance, and will bring much blessing into the church.” Besides attending to the Communion service, they should visit “the sick and those in need of loving help.”<sup>19</sup> In the same year, in a plea for the use of proper baptismal robes, Mrs. S. N. Haskell pointed out that “Those who accept, at the hand of the church, the office of deaconess, obligate themselves to spend time to attend to the things pertaining to the Lord's house.”<sup>20</sup>

In June 1914, the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to publish instructions for local church officers in *The Church Officers' Gazette*. Its first two issues carried articles delineating the duties of deaconesses: “caring for the appointments of the church building, and looking after the welfare of the members of the church.”<sup>21</sup> The article emphasized “systematic visiting” and rendering “such assistance as may be required.” Deaconesses were to care for the sick, provide food and clothing for

those in need, help people find work, and teach the sisters how to cook and care for home and children. In this work deaconesses were to involve other church members, “thus leading them to become interested in one another's welfare and uniting the church as one family.” Finally, the deaconess was to keep record of the “poor fund . . . administered by the deacon and deaconess.”<sup>22</sup>

The second article spoke of the care of different aspects of the church building: arranging the platform, placing flowers on the desk, and dusting the sanctuary. Deaconesses were entrusted with the preparations for communion and the women's ordinance of humility, which consists of washing the feet of another person. They were also to care for baptismal robes and help the women who were baptized. Summarizing their duties, the unknown author stated, “To faithfully perform the duties that belong to the office of a deaconess means much hard work and self-denial.”<sup>23</sup>

The article “Deacons and Deaconesses” in the October 1919 *Church Officers' Gazette* gives only one short paragraph to the care of the sick and the poor. Much more importance is given to the deaconess's part in preparing for the “quarterly [Communion] service.”<sup>24</sup> The *Gazette* recapitulates the duties of deaconesses in its issue of July 1923. While the practical help deaconesses may render “in the home or sick-room” did not disappear, the emphasis shifted from caring for and visiting the members to a concern with “dishes, decanter, goblets, and linen cloths” for Communion.<sup>25</sup>

The first *Adventist Church Manual*, published in 1932, dedicates five short paragraphs to the work of deaconesses. Their major tasks were preparing the Communion table, overseeing the footwashing ceremony, assisting in baptisms, and doing “their part in caring for the sick, the needy, and the unfortunate, co-operating with the deacons in this work.”<sup>26</sup>

In *The Church Officers' Gazette* of October 1948, deaconesses were instructed regarding the highly choreographed Communion service. After folding the napkins covering the

bread, "the deaconesses, always moving 'in sweet accord' and unison, return to the table to remove and fold the large cloth that covers the wine service. Somehow, women's fingers can do this so much more skillfully than men's."<sup>27</sup>

Child care during church services is added in a 1940 issue of *Ministry*. The deaconess should be in charge of the mothers' room, supplying "picture books, crayons, blocks, and other busywork . . . for the little tots."<sup>28</sup>

In a 1956 article in *Ministry*, Bess Ninaj delineated six major duties of deaconesses: (1) Communion service, including preparation of bread and wine; (2) ordinance of humility; (3) baptisms, especially of women; (4) caring for the sick and poor; (5) greeting people at the door; and (6) visitation of members, at least quarterly but better each month. Ninaj noted that the last of these tasks was "neglected or unrecognized."<sup>29</sup>

The emphasis on the deaconess and the Communion service, including preparation and footwashing, appears in a two-part *Ministry* article in 1972. The

later article even contains a recipe for Communion bread.<sup>30</sup>

A half century ahead of his time, Leif Tobiassen suggested in 1952 that the church be divided into small groups under the leadership of deacons and deaconesses. "This ideal," wrote Tobiassen, "can most surely be reached by the pastor if he takes pains to educate the deacons and deaconesses to enlarge their vision of the significance of the part they should take in the spiritual and missionary management of the remnant church."<sup>31</sup>

A ministry description, dated 2002 and prepared by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America for deacons and deaconesses, lists the duties of deacons and deaconesses. Deaconesses are to help with the baptismal service, which includes preparing robes, laundering and storing equipment, and assisting women candidates. The functions regarding footwashing and Communion follow the earlier pattern. One item, however, is new: "It is appropriate for either deacons or deaconesses, who have been ordained,

to assist in distributing the emblems and uncovering and recovering the table during the service." In addition, "They will join with the pastor and elders in visiting church members. Some churches assign a geographic area or certain number of members for deacons and deaconesses in teams of two or three to visit."<sup>32</sup>

In 1999, Vincent White published a book, *Problem Solvers and Soul Winners*, based on a workshop given for deacons and deaconesses. The more traditional duties include helping to maintain reverence in the service and seeing that the preacher has a glass of water by the pulpit. Deaconesses make arrangements for funeral dinners and "serve as flower bearers." In addition, deaconesses are to "privately call the pastor's attention to candidates who may be wearing colorful cosmetics and jewelry." If dressed appropriately in white, deaconesses may participate in the Communion processional and veil and unveil the table (for which activity specific details are given). Deaconesses also prepare the Communion kits for those who were



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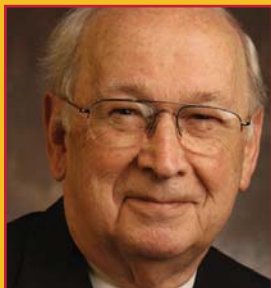


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**Israel Bamidele Olaore** is the senior university pastor and head of the Division of Spiritual Life at Babcock University, Nigeria, Africa. Dr. Olaore has been a senior pastor in Tucson, Arizona and Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. Additionally, he has had pastoral experience in Nigeria as a hospital chaplain, church planter, and university lecturer. Dr. Olaore has studied at Fuller Theological Seminary, Andrews University and University of Arizona in the United States from where he earned a Ph.D. The focus of ministry for Dr. Olaore has always revolved around empowerment and equipping of lay professionals for ministry in the marketplace. He has ministered in South America, Asia, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and Bermuda.



**Chris Oberg** currently serves as the senior pastor of the 1200 member Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calimesa, California, U.S.A. She describes her assignment as "life's grandest blessings: to be among colleagues for whom Church matters, and to be with a congregation seriously seeking to follow Jesus in a complex world, well, it doesn't get more rewarding." Weekly, Chris opens the scriptures—which are both inspiring and troubling, comforting and challenging, simple and yet profound—yet always ancient words relevant for today. Chris Oberg is a double-alumnus of La Sierra University, School of Religion, in Arlington, California, U.S.A., completing both a BA and an MA in Religion, with emphasis in New Testament Studies and Theology.



**Michael Quicke** is professor of preaching at Northern Seminary in Illinois. Educated at Cambridge and Oxford Universities, he spent 21 years in pastoral ministry in Blackburn, Lancashire, England and at the historical city-center church of St. Andrew's Street in Cambridge, England where a mission center was developed and opened serving 4000 people weekly. Since 1993 he has served in seminaries, first as Principal of Spurgeon's College, the largest Baptist seminary in Europe, and since 2000 by teaching preaching in the United States. His reputation as a Christian communicator has grown through television and radio appearances and at conferences throughout Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Author of many articles and book chapters, his main books include *360-degree preaching and 360-degree leadership*. He was recently named as "one of the premier thinkers and writers on preaching today" by *Preaching* (July 2007).



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unable to attend, form part of the team that takes Communion to shut-ins, and dispose of the emblems of Communion by burning the bread and pouring out the wine on the ground.<sup>33</sup>

But Vincent White goes further—as the title of his book suggests. Deaconesses should participate in visitation of church members so that all families receive one 10 to 15 minute visit per quarter. When they find problem situations, they are to use a nine-step problem-solving method to meet the physical, social, and spiritual needs of those they work with. They are backed up by interdisciplinary teams in the local church. In addition, the head deaconess, together with her male counterpart, organizes the telephone committee and helps train those who participate. Deaconesses are to be soul winners and help disciple new members.<sup>34</sup>

With Vincent White's book and the 2002 ministry description, one might say that Seventh-day Adventists have returned full circle to the early vision of the deaconess: consecrated women carrying out a ministry of caring for things and people. Whereas for much of the century, the emphasis was on details, now the deaconess has a place in the pastoral team.

## Conclusion

Adventism was born as a grass-roots movement. Everyone—including females—was needed to spread the message.<sup>35</sup> As early as 1856, Frisbie called for women deacons. Later Ellen White pleaded for women who gave part-time service to be ordained by the church. The women that Frisbie and White envisioned as serving the church were not to be ascetics or members of sisterhoods, living separate from the world. They were to be people involved in everyday life, giving of themselves; they were not clergy, but lay people ordained to specific tasks.

Twentieth-century Seventh-day Adventists, for the most part, lost the impetus and potential of the early deaconess movement. Deaconesses in pastoral ministry became a rarity; instead, to a great extent, they were lovely ladies who poured wine and water and kept

Communion linens and baptismal robes. Selective tasks, such as greeting people at the church door and distributing welfare to the poor, were sometimes added, but deaconesses were not a force to be reckoned with. Suggestions for instructing and organizing deaconesses appear as isolated calls to use the female talents in the church, but seem not to have been heeded.

Perhaps twenty-first century Seventh-day Adventists can learn from history. Deaconesses may yet be recognized as lay ministers. Perhaps the church will find ways to instruct and enable them so that they may serve the church and their Lord with love and creativity, becoming a force for strength and growth within the church. ■

- 1 Leslie McFall, *Good Order in the Church*, [http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12/HTML-GOITC/women\\_as\\_elders.htm](http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12/HTML-GOITC/women_as_elders.htm), chaps. 4, 5 (accessed May 21, 2007).
- 2 Joseph Birchard Frisbie, "Deacons," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 8, no. 13 (July 31, 1856): 102; the quotation is from Adam Clarke's *Bible Commentary* on Romans 16:1, 2.
- 3 J. H. Waggoner, "The Office of Deacon," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 27, 1870, 116.
- 4 Warren H. Johns, Tim Poirier, and Ron Graybill, comps., *A Bibliography of Ellen G. White's Private and Office Libraries*, 3d. ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993); she did, however, have Clarke's *Bible Commentary*, quoted by Frisbie in 1856.
- 5 Ellen G. White, Letter to A. T. Jones, *Manuscript Releases* 21, MR no. 1520, 97.
- 6 Ellen G. White, "The Duty of the Minister and the People," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 9, 1895, par. 8.
- 7 Jerry Moon, " 'A Power That Exceeds That of Men': Ellen G. White on Women in Ministry," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1998), 201–203.
- 8 Arthur N. Patrick, "The Ordination of Deaconesses," *Adventist Review*, January 16, 1996, 18, 19.
- 9 See Ellen G. White, appendix C to *Daughters of God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998), 253–255.
- 10 O. A. Olsen, "The Duties of Deacons and Deaconesses," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, December 1914, 1.
- 11 F. A. Detamore, "First Fruits in Sarawak, Borneo," *Review and Herald*, December 8, 1921, 11.
- 12 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1932), 34; General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1986), 64.
- 13 The Annual Council is the full meeting of the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Its worldwide membership consists of some 300 individuals.
- 14 Minutes for the 1984 Annual Council, October 15, 1984, 253–284G.
- 15 "Ninth Business Meeting, Fifty-fourth General Conference Session, Tuesday, July 2, 1985," *Adventist Review*, July 4, 1985, 9.
- 16 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990), 64.
- 17 Kit Watts, "SECC Members Value Gender Inclusiveness," *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 2000, 31.
- 18 W. C. White, "Memories and Records of Early Experiences," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 28, 1932, 6.
- 19 T. E. Bowen, "Questions Answered," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 7, 1909, 19.
- 20 Mrs. S. N. Haskell, "Baptismal Robes," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 11, 1909, 10.
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## Adventist youth march against street crime

**L**ondon, England—**Mark Prince** stepped up to the microphone during a rally in Kennington Park on June 7, 2008, to address 5,000 youth who had just marched throughout London with a message of positive living to combat street violence.

"We are the answer for this knife crime—you, right here, the young people," he said referring to his 15-year-old son who was stabbed to death in 2006. Since then, Prince said he has needed to love and to forgive. "If it means I have to forgive the guy who killed my son, then that's exactly what I'm going to do because I need some mercy myself, I need some forgiveness myself," he said.

Church leaders say this event was sparked by violence that has led to the murders of 16 teenagers in London, killed since January 1. The rally and march were not planned just to combat violence but to offer a positive alternative.

"Our message was clear: live intentional lives," said **Colin Stewart**, director of youth ministries for the Adventist Church in south England.

Thousands carried banners throughout the streets of London with the theme "Living Intentionally Versus Existing." Adventist youth and supporters were accompanied by drill brigades and drum corps along the route that passed the Houses of Parliament and the prime minister's residence.

London Deputy Mayor **Ray Lewis** told the crowd at the rally that it was the type of initiative that London needs. Other noted speakers included opposition leader **David Cameron** and Cabinet Minister **Tessa Jowell**.

"We recognize that those involved in this kind of violence do not watch the news, but this event helps to raise the issue and get through the barriers," Stewart told the London Broadcasting Company.

Since the event, church youth leaders have received calls from mothers looking for support and a way to move forward after losing loved ones. [BUC News/TED News Staff/TED News]

## Women celebrated in Iraq

**Baghdad, Iraq**—On June 14, 2008, the Women's Ministries (WM) Emphasis Day was celebrated in Baghdad, as

church members fellowshiped together, enjoying the program "Show Me the Savior—Then I Shall See."

In spite of the Adventist Church in Baghdad being closed for the last two years due to severe damage by bombs, church members are still gathering for worship in homes every Sabbath.

"When we think back on how our church was filled to capacity before the war in 2003, it saddens our hearts that we would end up being just a small group meeting in private homes. We are praying for strength and courage until the day when the situation will improve and our many church members can return to their beloved church, to their houses, and their jobs," said **Basima Nahab**, Women's Ministries director for the Adventist Church in Iraq.

The president of the Adventist Church in the Middle East, **Kjell Aune**, said, "Many of our members in Iraq have for safety reasons fled to Western or neighboring countries. I have personally met them in different parts of the world and know their dedication, their love for Iraq and the church, and their longing [to return] back to their country. [B. Nahab/A.M. Wollan/TED News Staff/TED News]"

## RESOURCES



discovery that many others share that particular conviction, then significant happiness awaits in Bryan Ball's *The Soul Sleepers*. This is what might be called a "large" book, both in the depth of its writing and its cost, but on both counts, I believe the investment is worth it.

Ball, a retired professor and department head at Newbold College, who holds a PhD from the University of London, and was principal of Avondale College in Australia and president of the South Pacific Division, is one of those who subscribes to the nonimmortality

of the soul. Salvation brings eternal life, as John 3 shows, but between death and eternity is a period of rest, which many have referred to as "soul sleep."

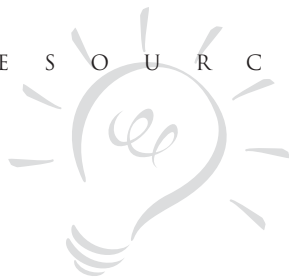
This belief is subscribed to by millions of Adventist Christians, among perhaps millions of others in various churches and sects and, to be candid, some groups whose main theology diverges sharply from orthodox, Trinitarian Protestantism. But many evangelicals also subscribe to psychopannychism, as Ball refers to it, including scholars such as the late Oscar Cullmann, author of the landmark 1958

## BOOK REVIEW



***The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley***, by Bryan W. Ball, Cambridge, England: James Clarke and Co., 2008.

If you've ever imagined yourself to be the only person on earth to believe a certain idea, only to make the pleasant



book on the subject, *The Immortality of the Soul or the Resurrection of the Body*, and J. I. Packer.

But all these—Seventh-day Adventists, Cullmann, and Packer—are contemporary, or at least of recent vintage. What if William Tyndale, Joseph Priestley, Martin Luther, or John Milton were among the psychopannychists of centuries past? Then, you would have the elements of a tradition more easily connected to the early church and its “fathers,” divorced from Hellenistic elements, which, critics contend, crept in after the death of the original disciples, as did other elements that stand in opposition to Bible teaching.

Ball’s history, though deep and detailed, is not in the least bit dull. Indeed, the discussion of psychopannychism is reminiscent of an American television series of a few decades back, in which various figures from history are summoned to discuss great ideas at a roundtable. Ball isn’t a spiritualist by any stretch, but as one reads *The Soul Sleepers*, one gets the sense of being there among the various discussions, back-and-forths between supporters and critics, and the overall shaping of Christian doctrine. Such a “ringside seat” at this discussion is, again, well worth the price of admission.

Some psychopannychists, it must be conceded, are less desirable as overall allies: Ball includes Michael Servetus, who fell victim not only to John Calvin’s intellectual attack, but to Calvin’s execution order as well. Servetus may have been a “soul sleeper,” but he also denied the Trinity, another view that made Calvin furious. Joseph Priestley, medical pioneer and thinker that he was, also embraced this concept, but at the end of his spiritual journey was a Universalist, a position with which many Christians would have trouble. But their inclusion in *The Soul Sleepers* does not imply total endorsement of their other viewpoints.

This book offers readers what I believe are two valuable benefits: an

up close view of the development of a key doctrinal argument, and additional support for the psychopannychist cause, something that remains a point of contention in Christian circles today. This book is worthy of the investment of money and time of any honest seeker after truth.

—Reviewed by James A. Cress, Ministerial Association secretary, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

## BOOK REVIEW

***Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage: Unlocking the Secrets to Life, Love, and Marriage*** by Mark Gungor, New York: Atria Books, 2008.

Mark Gungor is a pastor, motivational speaker, and CEO of Laugh Your Way America! The book is based on one of his seminars. He explains that it is not about the benefits of laughter in marriage or about funny marital anecdotes, but carries the title because the points he makes about how to succeed in marriage are often funny. His philosophy can be summed up in these two sentences: “A successful marriage is *not* the result of marrying the ‘right’ person, feeling the ‘right’ emotions, thinking the ‘right’ thoughts, or even praying the ‘right’ prayers. It’s about doing the ‘right’ things—*period*.”

After a couple of introductory chapters, the book is divided into three main sections. The first is called the “Laws of Marriage Physics.” These “laws” are listed in a chapter each and cover the topics: “Men and women are not created equal,” “Men and women think differently,” “Men and women communicate differently,” “Men and women

want different things” (two chapters), “Women are givers; men are takers,” “The law of desire,” and “The law of love.” It can be seen that a major theme of the author is the differences between the genders and how those differences should be approached.

The second section is on “Sex, Lies, and the Internet.” The author states that the five steps to great sex are romance, foreplay, endurance, privacy, and exclusivity. He has a lot to say on the perils of unfaithfulness. He condemns fantasy in general but links it mostly with porn and fails to distinguish it from the positive fantasy that married couples may have for each other. He also comes down very strongly against masturbation, but he does not do it from a biblical or moral viewpoint, but because he believes it will prevent satisfactory marital relationships later on.

The final section on “Till Death Us Do Part” is about hanging in there, all the way. He discusses fair fighting and what he calls “cloth diaper marriages,” the kind you throw away when they get dirty. His chapter on “Idols” challenges the Western philosophy of individualism. We worship happiness, the easy road, and cannot tolerate disappointment, so if marriage gets rough, we feel free to bail out. He attacks the myth that divorce is the answer and champions the “reset button” of forgiveness.

As a pastor, Gungor laces his work with biblical references and is, in general, a conservative evangelical, though rather frank in his discussions. Much of the material in this book is not really new, but the author has assembled it in a way that reflects a unique style. I did find a few laughs along the way, but on the whole, I didn’t think it was particularly humorous. It could be a valuable tool for couples who are trying to grow a stronger and more satisfying marriage.

—Reviewed by Roger L. Dudley, director of the Institute of Church Ministry, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

# Power-filled church growth

JAMES A. CRESS



In preparing for a year of evangelism, remember that personal work is as essential as public proclamation. Society's situation does not demand an either/or approach. We need effective preaching to the masses, and we need effective personal ministry to individuals. By reliance upon God's power, our efforts become His work from initiation to completion.

"There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit."<sup>1</sup>

**God provides the power.** "'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you'" (Acts 1:8).<sup>2</sup> With the Holy Spirit we can accomplish everything; without Him we can accomplish nothing.

**God provides the process.** "'And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'" (Acts 1:8). Begin at home. Follow the natural sequence of first reaching your own family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Then expand wider until, ultimately, the entire world is lightened by the gospel.

**God provides the promise.** "'This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven'" (Acts 1:11). Jesus' own promise to gloriously culminate His kingdom at His second coming motivates our ministry.

**God provides the premise.** "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:14). Start where

His first followers started—with unity, prayer, and seeking the Holy Spirit.

## **God provides the proclamation.**

"Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins'" (Acts 2:38). The content of our preaching is specific and clear: Jesus, repentance, and baptism!

## **God provides the prophecy.**

"'And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children'" (Acts 2:38, 39). The same gifts that the Holy Spirit poured out upon Christ's church at its inception are available to Christ's church today.

## **God provides the projection.**

"'And to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call'" (Acts 2:39). Scripture envisions a saving message that encircles and enlightens the entire globe.

**God provides the purpose.** "He testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation'" (Acts 2:40). Devise bold initiatives that are for the specific purpose of saving people.

## **God provides the persuasion.**

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). At Pentecost, Peter's preaching was so powerful that his listeners happily acted upon their convictions.

## **God provides the product.**

"And that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). Abundant results follow relying upon God's plan.

## **God provides the program.**

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Organized, determined efforts to disciple new believers include:

Bible study—preaching and teaching. Prayer—seeking the Holy Spirit. Fellowship—visitation and nurture. Witnessing—telling of God's blessings. Obedience—developing believers into disciples.

**God provides the proof.** "Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (Acts 2:43). Marvelous manifestations accompany life-changing experiences.

**God provides the portion.** "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common" (Acts 2:44). A unified church sees to the needs of all.

**God provides the participation.** "And sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (Acts 2:45). A unified church encourages all to share and to sacrifice.

**God provides the presence.** "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:46). Jesus remains in the midst of His people through the indwelling of His Spirit.

**God provides the praise.** "Praising God and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:47). Living in praise brings joy in our journey and favor among all who observe.

**God provides the prosperity.** "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Heaven envisions an ongoing process, more than a one-time event.

**God provides Himself the prize.** "'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God'" (Rev. 21:3). ■

1 Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942), 143, 144.  
2 All Bible verses are from the NKJV.

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