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The article “The Very Atmosphere of Heaven”: Lessons from South Lancaster” by Shawn Brace in the February 2015 issue, page 10, first full paragraph, middle column stated “The meetings, which began on Friday, January 11, 1888,” instead of the correct year, 1889. We apologize for any confusion.

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Lessons from South Lancaster

Shawn Brace's article on the South Lancaster experience (" 'The Very Atmosphere of Heaven': Lessons From South Lancaster"—February 2015) is right on. For a number of decades, our churches have rediscovered the message of Christ, our righteousness, in a wonderful way. Still, I have to wonder why it has not had the Spirit-filled impact that we have all been waiting for.

Could it be we have received an intellectual assent without the crucial experience? I've had the privilege of being at a couple of the Northern New England Conference prayer rallies, and I'm convinced more of these types of prayer and Bible study experiences would be crucial to the spiritual growth of our people throughout the churches of North America.

Thank you, Shawn, for the well-written article.

—John Fournier, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada

Another aspect of ordination

I just read Dan Serns's article ("Ordination: The Neglected Dimension"—February 2015). While it does not specifically address women's ordination, the point is well made that we should all be "ordained ministers" to share God's love and truth.

Thank you for printing this important article.

—Ruth Wright, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, United States 





Spiritual leadership

When I lecture on the subject of leadership, I ask the participants to name three individuals—biblical or nonbiblical, alive or deceased—whom they consider to be leaders, and why. The responses generally revolve around qualities that manifest themselves in actions: for example, Moses was a delegator; Nehemiah was a visionary; and Martin Luther King Jr. was a motivator.

So often when discussions take place about leadership, we place the focus on the externals. As necessary as these attributes are, there are other qualities that carry a more spiritual tone. Indeed, spirituality must be at the foundation of delegation, vision, and motivation. But it is possible to delegate, cast a vision, and motivate without being spiritual.

So what does the Bible say about spiritual leadership? What does such a person look like?

Self-sacrificing

The children of Israel, under the guidance of Aaron, were worshipping a golden calf. At that moment, it mattered very little to them how much Moses or the Ultimate Leader, God Himself, had done for them. They insisted on pursuing their own agenda.

God spoke to Moses, saying, “Let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them; and I will make of you a great nation” (Exod. 32:10).^{*} Moses pleaded with God to not annihilate His chosen ones. “Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people” (v. 12). The next day Moses pleaded with God again. “Alas, this people has committed a

great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!” (vv. 31, 32).

God seeks spiritual leaders who place the interests of their flock above those of their own—for Christ set this example.

A servant

The mother of James and John requested of Jesus that He place her two sons on either side of Him—making them great in the kingdom they all expected Him to establish.

Jesus dashed her delusions of grandeur with a sweeping statement: “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:26–28).

A servant? A slave? It couldn’t get any lower than that in Jewish society. But Jesus exemplified His belief system when, as recorded in John 13, He poured water into a basin and washed the feet of His proud disciples. “I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. . . . A slave is not greater than his master” (John 13:15, 16).

God seeks spiritual leaders who consider others before themselves—not living for self, rather, living to bless others.

Humble


Reflecting on the life of Christ, Paul wrote to the church in Philippi: “Have this attitude in yourselves which was

also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself. . . . He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5–8).

Humility is among the rarest of qualities in earthly leaders. Hubris, arrogance, conceit, and narcissism seem to be the order of the day. But the spiritual leader does not think highly of himself (see Phil. 2:3); rather, he or she willingly fades into the background—often lifting others up onto the pedestal that some consider rightfully belonging to the leader.

The leader does not maintain humility for personal gain or glory. Indeed, humility earned Jesus’ death on a cross. But God Himself notes the humility of the leader and rewards him or her in His own time (see Phil. 2:9). Humanity may never applaud the humble leader; but such a one doesn’t mind, because it’s not about the earthly leader; it’s about the heavenly Leader and those for whom He died.

God seeks spiritual leaders who empty themselves and allow the Holy Spirit to fill them with His presence and power so that they may uplift others.

When the leaders whom God calls allow Him to have complete control of their lives, the spirit of self-sacrifice, servanthood, and humility will exert a power for good over those they influence. The example of their lives informs leadership theory and approaches—be it delegation, consultation, participation, and so forth—and the church and society will be moved for God! 

* All scriptural references are from the New American Standard Bible.

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Humble servant leadership:

An interview with Ted Wilson

R. Clifford Jones (RCJ): *How do you define leadership? In other words, what is leadership to you?*

Ted Wilson (TW): Humble servant leadership is pointing people to Christ and His mission. It is helping people discover God's plan for their lives and the world as found in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. True spiritual leadership, which is leadership led by the Holy Spirit, focuses on success for God's church rather than on personal gain. Christian leadership lifts up Christ, His righteousness, sanctuary message, Sabbath, three angels' messages, and Christ's soon return.

RCJ: *What do you consider to be the most important characteristic of a spiritual leader?*

TW: There are many important characteristics, but probably one of the most important is a humble and teachable spirit, grounded in complete trust in God, His Word, and what God intends to accomplish through a dedicated life.

RCJ: *What are some other characteristics you consider vital to effective leadership?*

TW: Characteristics that are essential for effective leadership include an ability to quickly grasp the details of a particular situation, to reasonably

analyze a problem, a willingness to examine all sides of a situation, fairness in dealing with issues and people, and the ability to not be overwhelmed with superficiality. An effective leader must be a highly spiritual person—a loving and lovable person who stays close to the Lord through Bible study; a careful study of the Spirit of Prophecy; and a vibrant, personal prayer life.

RCJ: *What about vision? How important is vision to leadership, and how have you gone about casting your vision for the church?*

TW: Vision is vital. It is seeing the big picture. Vision is seeing what can and should happen, and it comes through total dependence on the Holy Spirit, who opens the eyes of the leader to where God wishes to lead the organization. The effective leader also listens to other Spirit-led leaders and people to lift the vision of the organization and those in it. God will give you His full vision picture as you faithfully study His Word and the Spirit of Prophecy.

RCJ: *What if people resist the leader's vision? What should the leader do then?*

TW: Leaders should not be afraid to humbly share with care and conviction that which God has revealed to them. If people are resistant, the leader should seek to listen more

carefully to what people have to say. Further discussion and prayer, private and corporate, will be necessary as the leader attempts to achieve consensus. We must remember that the Holy Spirit always leads to truth, and we must believe in God's power to accomplish that.

RCJ: *As a leader, how have you managed conflict and differences of opinion?*

TW: The Lord wants His people to be united, and Jesus earnestly prayed for unity among His people, as we read in John 17. He urged that we be one in Him as He is One with the Father. But Christ knew that there would be evil forces at the end of time that would try to divide God's church. I've discovered that careful listening in the context of a Spirit-led dialogue goes a long way in dealing with differences of opinion. It is also vital that you prayerfully and carefully engage in methodical discussion with church leaders and church members.

RCJ: *Where does teamwork come into play when talking about leadership, and how have you gone about the important task of building a leadership team?*

TW: As Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, a united effort is vital to the achievement of the goals of an

organization. We must work together as the various parts of the body must work together if the human body is to function optimally. For me, the members of a leadership team must be people who are committed to God's Word and have an understanding of the prophetic role of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's remnant church. They must also know how to humbly work with people and must fully trust in God's power. Finally, they must be people of prayer. People who pray together find a strong common bond in Christ.

RCJ: *How do you go about fostering an atmosphere in which people are motivated to pursue mutually beneficial goals?*

TW: It is difficult to name just one biblical character who exemplifies Christlike leadership. However, Moses is one of the most striking examples of a meek, yet determined leader. Moses derived strength from his complete dependence on God, and he was so unselfish that he wanted only the best for God's people. The same could be said for Joshua, Joseph, Esther, Daniel, and Paul. Their leadership and accomplishments show what happens when talented, skilled individuals place their all before the Lord to be used as God sees fit.

John Hus is an example of the type of leadership God seeks. By his stalwart and unbending belief in God's Word, Hus inspired thousands

highlights that Christian leaders must do what is right, must love mercy, and must walk humbly with God if they are to be effective. Finally, James 1:5 shows that Christian leaders desperately need wisdom and guidance if they are to succeed. I try to claim that promise every day.

RCJ: *Do you think people should aspire to be leaders?*

TW: It is God who equips people for service. If God has gifted someone to lead, that person should humbly embrace and use the gift of leadership to the glory of God. People should never use God's gift to bring glory to themselves.

Leaders must seek input from others and must encourage the full engagement of those they lead.



TW: It is important that a Christian leader cultivate a context in which people feel empowered to pursue their goals without undue micromanagement. Leaders must seek input from others and must encourage the full engagement of those they lead. Leaders must seek to obtain involvement by as many as possible, and it is vital that leaders express appreciation and gratitude for the ideas and support they get from others.

RCJ: *Name one biblical character, other than Jesus, and one nonbiblical person whom you consider to be shining examples of effective leadership.*

of people to stand for truth, including Martin Luther. John Hus was so connected to the Lord that he went to the stake singing. He died in the flames while singing and asking for mercy from God. What trust in God!

RCJ: *Which Bible verse or passage best encapsulates or conveys your idea on the understanding of spiritual leadership?*

TW: I have several, the first being Joshua 1:6–9, which underscores the importance of courage to leadership. Next is Joshua 24:14–18, which shows that complete commitment to and dependence on God is vital. Micah 6:8

RCJ: *Do you believe that great leaders are born or made? Do you think you were destined for leadership?*

TW: As I said earlier, it is God who bestows the gifts of the Spirit. But God expects us to sharpen our gifts under God's guidance and leading. I believe that God provides opportunities for leadership at various levels and at different times and that we should use the opportunities God presents. I also believe that God will, in His own time, open other doors for greater leadership roles. What God calls for is faithfulness wherever He places us.

RCJ: *What do you consider to be your most important task as the leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?*

TW: Perhaps the most important task is to help church members realize that this church is not just a denomination but a prophetic movement—the Advent movement. We are God’s remnant church, and our heaven-born assignment is to proclaim the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14. Ours is a highly spiritual undertaking that calls for us to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ and His Word. It also calls for us to pray humbly for the latter rain of the Holy Spirit and Christ’s soon return. According to the books of Daniel and Revelation, and also the Spirit of Prophecy volume *The Great Controversy*, we are very close to the end of time. We must understand who we are and what God intends to do through His precious remnant church.

RCJ: *As we get further into the twenty-first century, what kind of pastoral leadership do you think the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to fulfill its mission?*

TW: The church needs pastors who are equipped to feed the flock with the pure Word of God and who spend considerable time visiting their members while training them to do personal evangelism and outreach. One of the most wonderful blessings pastors can provide is to cast a vision for soul winning that causes their members

to move forward under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our pastors should not be creating churches whose members focus on the pastors themselves. Rather, pastors should be planting and growing churches whose members are excited about nurturing the churches while the pastors proclaim the three angels’ messages through evangelistic activity in a united way—pastors and members united in personal and public evangelistic outreach and mission.

RCJ: *What are the core values we need as a church to succeed in our mission?*

TW: We need complete humility before the Lord. We need revival and reformation, which will come through study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, as well as through intense prayer and a reliance on the Holy Spirit. We need people who will commit themselves totally to the Lord and His work, people who are so grateful to the Lord for salvation that they are willing to sacrifice everything for Him. We need a thorough understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a heaven-born, prophetic movement, and we need people who believe God’s Holy Word as it is written, not imposing the historical-critical methods on the Bible when the Bible is supposed to interpret itself. We need complete trust in God and His Word that leans totally on Christ.

RCJ: *What are you passionate about? What drives you as a leader?*

TW: I am passionate about Christ, His righteousness, and His great plan of salvation. Salvation is a wonderful gift to all who will accept it. I am passionate about the marvelous explanation of salvation through the sanctuary service, and I am passionate about Christ’s soon second coming and what that means for our future. I am passionate about God’s plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, His remnant church, as it proclaims the three angels’ messages. I am passionate about the authenticity and relevancy of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and I am also passionate about mission to the cities, where more than 50 percent of the world’s population now lives. Lastly, I am passionate about the wonderful destiny of the Advent movement.

RCJ: *It has been asserted that, with regard to leadership, being is fundamentally more important than doing. Please comment.*

TW: As far as leadership is concerned, there must always be a healthy balance between “being” and “doing.” A leader’s vision and plans must be grounded in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy if they are to be successful. Oftentimes, the leader will have to be patient, as results are not always immediately apparent. Truth will always prevail. A leader must inspire, which will happen when the leader has a very close walk with the Lord. I believe that it is absolutely critical that the leader personally leans completely on Jesus at all times, claiming James 1:5 for wisdom.

RCJ: *To whom have you looked for mentorship?*

TW: My father was my primary mentor. I paid close attention to how he dealt with problems and challenges, and I enjoyed the conversations we had about leadership. Over the years, I have also had the privilege of having some excellent teachers, pastors, and administrative leaders who have given me good, sound advice and counsel. I



have been blessed with several wonderful role models.

RCJ: *As a spiritual leader, what do you do to nurture your relationship with the Leader, Jesus Christ?*

TW: I engage in Bible study and studying the Spirit of Prophecy. I seek to be constantly in a posture or mode of prayer, and I try to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit through impressions and the counsel of others. Proclaiming the last-day Bible message to the world requires a humble and teachable spirit. Complete submission to the Lord is the only way a spiritual leader can truly be successful.

RCJ: *Please name a book or two that you would recommend to someone who*

desires to know more about Christian leadership.

TW: My favorite books, beyond the Bible, are the books comprising the Spirit of Prophecy. I would encourage all leaders to spend more time in the Conflict of the Ages series and books like *Testimonies to Ministers*, as well as the nine-volume set *Testimonies for the Church*. *The Ministry of Healing* is also a must, as are *Medical Ministry*, *Evangelism*, *Steps to Christ*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*. I wish to emphasize that Christian leadership comes more through an association with God's truth and counsel than it does from attending seminars or following trendy leadership methods, as good and necessary as those may be. However, it is highly instructive for all leaders to do

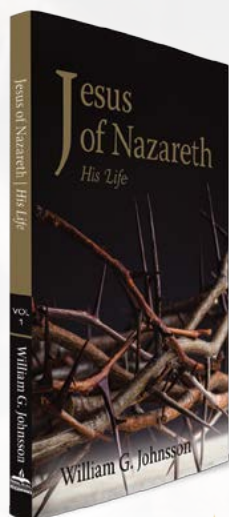
a lot of listening and watching to see how other leaders handle situations. Much leadership education can be achieved from observation and then processing that information through personal reflection and review based on biblical principles.

RCJ: *What final thought would you like to share?*

TW: True spiritual leadership comes from connecting with the Lord and listening to His still, small voice as the leader progresses through the challenges of leadership. When Christian leaders depend completely on the Lord, they will see incredible and supernatural changes that take place to God's glory. Our great God will direct their paths. 🙏

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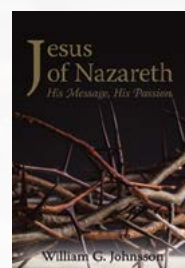
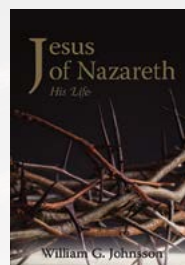


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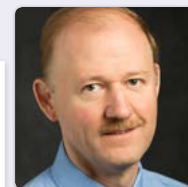
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Pastors as gatekeepers: *Congregational encounters with mental health and substance abuse issues*

The vocation of a pastor is to care for the spiritual needs of a congregation and community. However, as many clergy know well, pastoral care is multifaceted and complex. For example, one of the hats that pastors frequently wear is that of pastoral counselor. Although pastors have traditionally offered support and pastoral care to congregants, they are beginning to spend more hours counseling both congregants and community members. One study indicated that pastors were spending time in pastoral counseling equivalent to that of marriage and family therapists in private practice.¹ The same study showed that pastors are encountering persons and families experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges more frequently than they have in times past. These trends indicate that the needs of congregations, and the broader community, may be shifting. As these needs shift, so does the role of the pastor.

Unmet needs

Mental health and addiction problems are becoming increasingly common and widespread. The United States has the highest rate of mental health and substance abuse disorders

among developed nations.² Many who struggle with a mental health disorder also have co-occurring substance abuse or dependence. Unfortunately, most do not receive treatment. A Substance Abuse and Medical Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) report shows that, in 2010, only 11.2 percent of individuals with a mental health or substance abuse disorder received treatment.³ Others did not seek treatment, did not have medical insurance or assistance to pay for treatment, or were concerned about the stigma. The percentage of individuals who do not receive treatment is even higher among ethnic minority groups.⁴

It is no coincidence, then, that as the number of experiences of mental health and substance abuse problems rises, the time clergy spend caring for these needs also rises. Although many do not seek treatment, those who do often contact their clergy. In fact, clergy may be contacted more often than psychiatrists or general doctors, and over half of those who seek help from clergy do not contact other providers.⁵

A quick look at pastors' weekly activities would likely illustrate how pastoral care and counseling are prominent roles in their ministries, and rightly

so. Pastors are perceived as trustworthy and caring helpers, often even by people who are not members of their congregation. Pastors are able to build valuable long-term relationships with individuals and families, which fosters trust. Further, these relationships allow pastors and clergy to notice changes or distress in their congregants' lives and offer help. Pastors are also more accessible. As stated above, many individuals do not seek treatment due to costs and the stigma of mental health treatment. Yet seeking help from a pastor is usually free, is more comfortable, and holds far less stigma.

A survey and its results

The experiences of pastors serving individuals with mental health needs and the indications of previous research highlight the connections between pastors/clergy and mental health treatment providers. An email survey, sponsored by the DeVos Family Foundation and conducted by the Center for Community Impact Research at Andrews University, focused on these issues. There were 215 pastors and clergy in Kent County, Michigan, from more than 50 different denominations who responded. The survey asked these ministers about their

knowledge of mental health issues, how often they encountered congregants who were experiencing mental health or substance abuse challenges, their willingness to refer to or work with treatment professionals, and how often they had made referrals to mental health services.

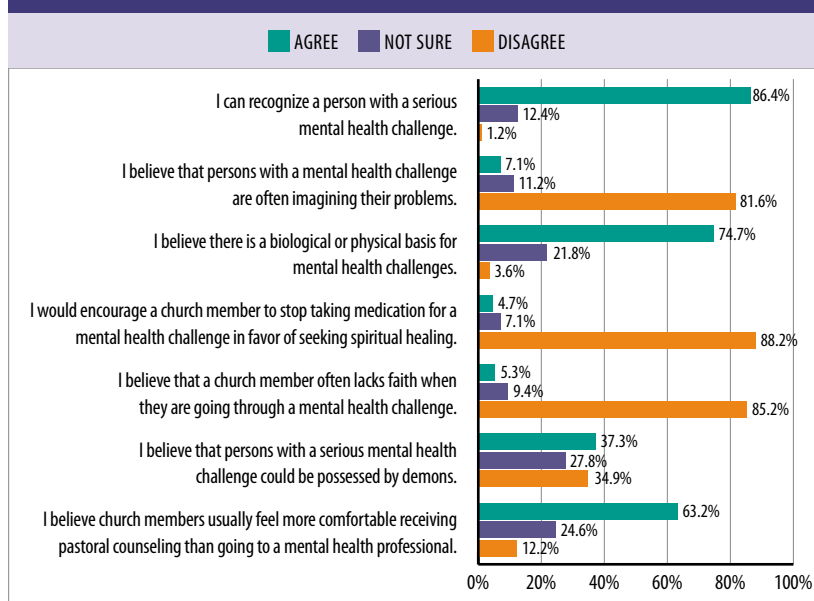
What follows is a summary of the findings from this survey and implications that these findings bring to the role of pastors in mental health care.

The 215 pastors who responded to the email survey were most likely to be male (88 percent), be more than 50 years old (59 percent), be well educated (72 percent had a master's degree or higher), and have had experience (75 percent having served for 11 or more years in ministry). Pastors' ethnicities roughly reflected the county population (67 percent Caucasian, 16 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 12 percent African American). The denominations represented also reflected the county population. There were more pastors (35 percent) who were from the Reformed tradition. Other respondents were Evangelical, Pentecostal or Charismatic, Catholic or Orthodox, and other Christian traditions such as mainline Protestant.

Pastors' understanding of mental health issues

Figure 1 shows how pastors understand the causes and challenges of mental health problems. A large majority (86.4 percent) of clergy believe they can recognize a serious mental health crisis. Almost two-thirds (63.2 percent) understand that church members often prefer clergy help and support more than they do the formal mental health community. Most clergy (74.7 percent) favor a biological or physical explanation for serious mental illness. As such, they are usually (88.2 percent) supportive of medication usage and *do not* think church members are imagining their symptoms (81.6 percent) or are lacking in faith (85.2 percent). This recognition often translates into a referral to a mental health professional when the issue becomes serious. However, more than one-third of clergy (37.3 percent) believe that individuals experiencing

Figure 1: Pastors' understanding of mental health issues.



serious mental health challenges *could* be possessed by demons. Though the phrasing of this question is somewhat ambiguous, it does highlight an area where further education and study would be helpful, in understanding both the sources of severe mental health symptoms and demon possession.

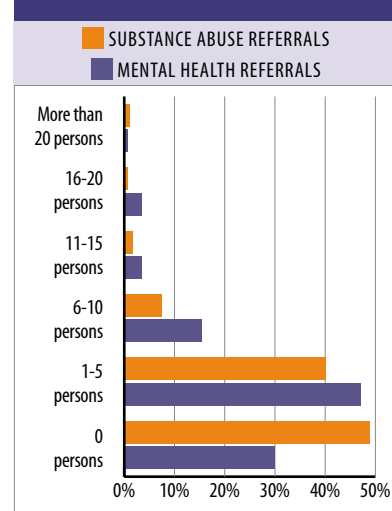
Pastors' encounters with mental health and substance abuse issues

Pastors say that they regularly encounter serious and challenging mental health and substance abuse issues. On a weekly basis, pastors generally help with marriage and family problems (42.7 percent), mental health challenges (31.4 percent), and substance abuse problems (26.5 percent) most frequently. Although incidents of violence (9.3 percent) or sexual abuse (3.5 percent) are reported less frequently, these challenges are often more intense and have a significant impact on a family or community, which can trigger other mental health issues. Furthermore, the experience of substance abuse and violence is more prevalent in ethnically diverse communities that often experience greater economic challenges.

The survey also asked respondents to state the number of referrals they had

made to a mental health or substance abuse counselor within the past six months. Figure 2 shows that almost half (47 percent) of the respondents reported making 1 to 5 mental health referrals within the past six months, and 7 percent reported referring 6 or more people to a local mental health center. More than one-third (40 percent) reported making 1 to 5 referrals for substance abuse or drug treatment, 8 percent reported having referred between 6 and 10 people, and

Figure 2. Frequency of referrals to a substance abuse or mental health counselor.



3 percent reported making 11 or more referrals in the past six months.

Pastors' referral choices for mental health problems

As seen in figure 3, when clergy were asked how they would handle a church member with a serious mental health challenge, almost all pastors (94 percent) said they would be likely to make a referral to a mental health counselor. About two-thirds of the surveyed pastors said they would be likely to make a referral to a medical doctor, with less than half likely to make a referral to an emergency room. The variation in these responses, combined with one-third of clergy who responded *Not Sure*, shows that pastors likely wish to consider the nature of the problem before deciding where to refer their church member. Very few of the pastors said that they would offer prayer and spiritual counseling *only*, indicating that most pastors understood the limits of sometimes narrow spiritual solutions to serious physical and mental problems.

However, the decision about which issues were necessary to make a referral depended largely on how comfortable the pastor felt in handling the situation. Between 80 and 90 percent of pastors were likely to make referrals for issues that they viewed as more serious in nature, such as depression, nervous breakdowns, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and alcohol/drug addiction (no graph provided). They likely recognized these issues as often being beyond their scope of training and expertise; thus, they are willing to send church members to mental health professionals for further help. Willingness to refer dropped to about 50 percent with issues relating to anxiety, marital relationships, anger, parenting, and adjustment to life problems. Such a reduction likely reflects what clergy might consider to be less serious problems that they

can more often handle without outside assistance. Issues considered to be least serious, including racism/discrimination, financial difficulties, or problems at work, are least likely to be referred for counseling (less than one-third), possibly again reflecting clergy willingness to comfortably counsel these persons.

The pastors surveyed expressed that they do encounter mental health and substance abuse issues that are beyond their comfort and training level. For example, pastors may not be adequately trained to recognize the symptoms of mental health problems, addictions, and especially abuse. Rarely do pastors have opportunity for intensive training in counseling and treatment methods that would be most helpful in these situations.

Pastors' perceptions of mental health professionals

As seen in figure 4, the large majority (91.3 percent) of pastors expressed willingness to consult and even collaborate with mental health professionals (95.4 percent would make a referral to a mental health professional if necessary), both within and outside of their churches. Most (87.7 percent) are willing to allow mental health professionals to present seminars or lead support groups (81.7 percent) in their churches. More than two-thirds (68.2 percent) are willing to collaborate on community service outreach projects,

and half (51.4 percent) are even willing to allow a mental health professional to have an office within their church. These findings show that pastors are generally open to working with counselors and value their expertise.

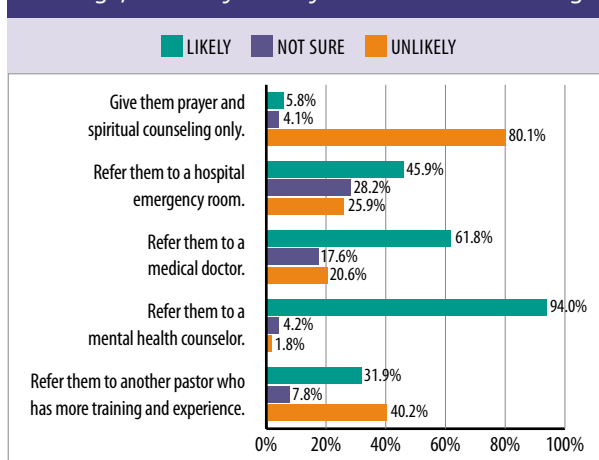
Survey results also show that ethnic background and religious tradition play important roles in the referral decisions of some clergy (no graph provided). While most Caucasian pastors (82.8 percent) do not feel a need to consult with a counselor of the same ethnic background, about half of all Hispanic/Latino and African American clergy prefer this opportunity. African American and Hispanic/Latino pastors are also significantly more likely than Caucasian clergy to prefer that a counselor share a similar denominational background. Further, a very large majority of Evangelical, Reformed, and Pentecostal or Charismatic church clergy feel it important to make a referral to a Christian mental health professional. This issue is substantially less important for Mainline/Other Protestant and Catholic/Orthodox clergy. The significance of the ethnicity and religious tradition of a preferred counselor or treatment professional for these groups reflects the importance of cultural competence in mental health treatment.

A call for creative ministry

Mental health and addiction challenges are a growing reality that calls for creative ministry responses.

The pastors who participated in this survey find encounters with mental health and substance abuse issues are a common part of their ministries. Most also have a basic understanding of the causes, symptoms, and appropriate treatments. The frequency and scope of challenges that pastors encounter provides evidence of the value and trust that congregants place on clergy as helpers. Ministers are an important presence in the community and in the lives of congregants, a presence that reaches well beyond spiritual leadership.

Figure 3. If one of your church members or persons you know was experiencing a serious mental health challenge, how likely would you be to do the following?



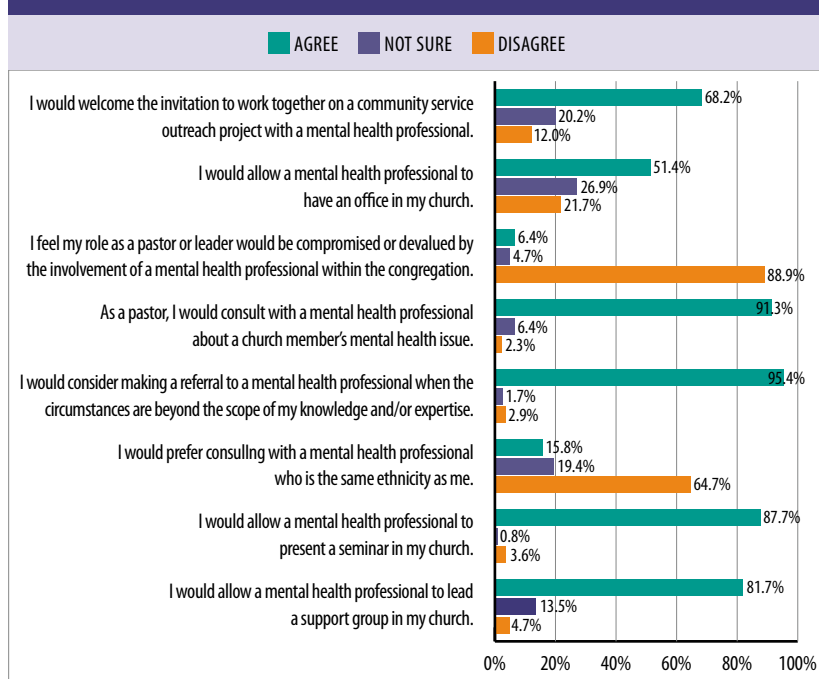
Because of the unique role that pastors play in a congregation, they have significant opportunities to help with mental health and substance abuse challenges in ways not open to other counselors. For example, pastors provide a no-cost, safe space for counseling that is more accessible for many than professional treatment services. Clergy are also in a position to help diminish the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health and addictions issues. In addition, they can provide a welcoming space for individuals and families to share their struggles and victories of the healing that can happen through professional treatment, as well as through prayer and spiritual guidance.

A call for connection and collaboration

The results of this survey also affirm the growing necessity of stronger connections between clergy and mental health treatment professionals. Most of the pastors surveyed recognized that the mental health and addiction issues they encounter are rooted in causes that extend beyond faith and spiritual problems. They also indicated a willingness to refer congregants to a treatment professional, particularly for issues like depression, anxiety, sexual abuse, violence, or a nervous breakdown. The willingness of pastors to connect with treatment professionals through referrals and other collaboration reflects a growing openness in ministry. Because clergy often do not receive the level of training needed to appropriately help with these challenges, mental health and substance abuse treatment professionals, particularly those who are Christian, can provide an important resource to congregations.

A stronger relationship between pastors and treatment professionals will strengthen the ministry of both fields. For example, pastors and treatment professionals could collaborate on training to improve treatment and assessment skills for both mental health and spiritual needs. This collaboration could also enhance cultural competency

Figure 4. Pastors' perceptions of mental health professionals.



in both fields when dealing with differing ethnic and religious traditions. Many pastors also find it helpful to develop a network with trusted Christian counselors for referral purposes and to advise on appropriate treatment decisions. Furthermore, pastors can connect with mental health and addiction treatment professionals to teach a seminar, facilitate a support group, or conduct screenings at their church. Similarly, congregations have an opportunity to partner with community services by inviting mental health professionals to have an office in their church or be included in a ministry team. Finally, some churches may wish to provide a part-time or full-time in-house Christian counselor or offer financial support to help congregants afford mental health and addictions treatment programs.

Conclusion

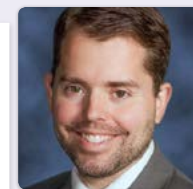
Mental health issues, addictions, family and relational conflicts, and abuse are, unfortunately, part of our experience as humans in community. Clergy have a valuable role in helping those faced with

the challenges of mental health and addiction issues. Furthermore, the regularity with which pastors encounter such challenges shows evidence of the deep connection between spiritual and mental health needs. Pastors and community treatment professionals are hearing a fervent call to work as partners with the same mission, rather than in two separate realms. The gifts of all are needed to join God's work of bringing wholeness and healing to those in need. **M**

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Sex on the Sabbath

During a classroom discussion about the sanctity of the Sabbath, a participant raised an issue: “I am struggling with a sin,” he confessed. “I am tempted to have sex with my wife on Sabbath.”

The topic is not uncommon, and it raises a diversity of opinions,¹ although little has been published.²

What does the Bible say on the subject? We shall consider the question by reviewing (1) the leading argument used against sex on Sabbath; (2) the biblical view of sexuality; (3) perversion of the biblical view; and (4) concluding observations.

Leading argument

The leading argument against engaging in sex on Sabbath is based on Isaiah 58:13: “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day” (KJV). Since sex is pleasurable, scriptural injunction against engaging in intercourse on Sabbath is seen as obvious.³

The context of Isaiah 58 refers to Sabbath on the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement was a day devoted to self-examination, judgment, and cleansing. Every individual was supposed to participate lest he or she be “cut off” (Lev. 23:29). There is no textual evidence to indicate that sex was forbidden on the Sabbath or the Day of Atonement. Rene Gehring argues that in the Hebrew Bible, sexual intercourse within marriage is not ritually defiling at all.⁴ He considers it a fallacy

to use related passages like Exodus 19 to suggest that sex within marriage was forbidden. Even if sex within marriage did cause “ritual defilement,” Roy Gane makes the point that such “ritual defilement” only applied while the Shekinah glory was in the temple.⁵ Thus, within an Old Testament context, sexual pleasure is positive.

This leads back to a study of the word *pleasure* as found in Isaiah 58:13. It is the same Hebrew word found in verse 3 that warns against exploitation. The word is also translated (NIPS Jewish Bible) as “business pleasure” (or one’s own “business interests”). Isaiah 58:13 refers to the Sabbath as a “delight” (NIV). The word *delight* in Hebrew is *’oneg*, meaning “exquisite delight.” The word as a noun, used elsewhere, only applies with regard to kings and queens in their royal palaces (Isa. 13:22).

Thus, the implication of Isaiah 58:13 is that God wants us to lay aside our own agenda and replace it with something far more exquisite. God calls us to live a life of selfless pleasure focused on our relationship with God.⁶ The notion that the Sabbath forbids joyous pleasure during the Sabbath hours is basically a misreading of the original text. As Nancy Van Pelt observes, “If this text actually meant to forbid sex because it is pleasurable, then any pleasure including singing hymns, reading the Bible, or eating should also be forbidden. Isaiah was talking about my seeking my own selfish pleasure. If sex is nothing more than ‘my pleasure,’

it is selfish and therefore wrong not only on the Sabbath but on every other day of the week as well.”⁷

Another significant argument against sex on Sabbath is that it is distracting. For this reason, some Adventist ministers boast that they sleep in separate beds from their spouse on Friday nights. One Adventist scholar, when asked whether sex on the Sabbath is a distraction, replied with another question: “Is it really less distracting when your spouse does not have sex with you?” Those present nodded in agreement that, of course, it was far less distracting to have sex rather than to be left thinking about it. As Richard Davidson observes, “If those who have sexual intercourse understand how much it teaches us about the deepest levels of intimacy, then such intimacy on the horizontal level actually helps us to grasp the nature of intimacy God wants us to have with His creatures. Far from being ‘distracting’ from intimacy with God, sexual intercourse practiced as God intended it leads us to a deeper understanding of intimacy with Him.”⁸

Biblical view of sexuality

Faithful Jews, upon the return from exile, established vigorous codes for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath holy. Rabbinic codes allowed married people to have sex on Sabbath,⁹ and even described it as a special “Sabbath blessing.” Sabbath was considered the bride, and Friday evening was the time of connubial consummation. Even the wife living apart from her husband was

granted the privilege of having relations with him on Friday night.¹⁰ A refusal on the part of the husband was grounds for the wife to take her husband to the rabbinic court for abandonment.¹¹

God created Adam and Eve and made the marriage relationship holy. During the same Creation week, He “made the Sabbath day holy.” These two holy institutions belong together. Sabbath and sexual intercourse were blended together from the very first Sabbath in history.¹² Sexual relations as God intended, and as later expressed by Solomon, are described as this “flame of Yahweh” that helps human beings better understand God.¹³ In God’s original design, sex was intended as the ultimate way for a man and woman, in holy matrimony, to experience the deepest level of intimacy.¹⁴ Adventist ethicist Duane Covrig argues that the Sabbath and marriage are the only institutions that fulfill all six of Jonathan Haidt’s six innate moral foundations (care, fairness, liberty, loyalty, authority, and sanctity). This rich pairing indicates that the Sabbath is a “tool to help all six areas get reinforced in the life of humans.”¹⁵

Such a beautiful gift has been distorted and perverted. God’s concern about sexual perversions, especially as associated with pagan rites and

rituals, was one of the reasons why God enforced such vigorous demands about uncleanness in conjunction with Hebrew worship. Sexuality was something holy but was perverted by other pagan rites and rituals. The perversion of sex was the ancient sin that contributed to the destruction of the human race during the time of Noah and later again with Sodom and Gomorrah. Sexual perversion is a sign of the final days of earth’s history (see Matt. 24:38). Satan clearly wants to distort and pervert such a beautiful gift that God bestowed upon the human race.

Perversion of biblical view

Another perversion came within Hellenistic thinking that denigrated the human body. Early Christian thinkers viewed the soul as trapped inside the body. This concept of the separation of body from soul, a distinctive feature of Platonism, caught on in the early Christian church. It destroyed the meaning of the seventh-day Sabbath and introduced new and unbiblical anthropological teachings such as the idea that the body and soul were separate.¹⁶ Through the influence of a series of thinkers, the early Christian church adopted such views with very little resistance.

The early church fathers discussed sex at great length. Tertullian embraced a rigid asceticism that included fasting and celibacy. It is said that Origen “had himself castrated in order to avoid all temptations of the ‘flesh’ and to be able to engage in spiritual conversation with women but not be erotically aroused.”¹⁷ Augustine, in his autobiography, described his sexual misconduct to emphasize the dramatic nature of his conversion. As perhaps the most influential thinker in early Christianity, Augustine left a “permanent and fateful impact on the Western Church” about human sexuality.¹⁸ He believed that since all human cultures hide private body parts, “humans are deeply ashamed about their sexuality.” The separation of body and soul was evidence when the body took over the rational capacity of the mind to subjugate the body. He thus argued that sex constantly reminds people of their rebellion against God. The human body symbolizes the fact that “[s]exuality and the Christian faith . . . [are] incompatible.”¹⁹

The lasting impact of Platonism and, in particular, Augustine can be seen in their view of Christian sexuality. All sexual urges must be repressed. This view of Christian sexuality had a direct correlation to ecclesiology as

God calls for a revival and reformation

Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of God, and striving to conform their lives to its precepts. . . . God calls for a revival and a reformation.

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.

The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this

reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer, and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife.

A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and

practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.

—ELLEN G. WHITE, *CHRISTIAN SERVICE*, 41, 42.

Revival
and
REFORMATION


monks retreated to outposts and caves. Those who denied themselves of sexual pleasure and became celibate were perceived as more spiritual and thus more deserving of church office. All of this contributed to a theology that moved away from the biblical view of sexuality, similar to the seventh-day Sabbath. Such beauty was lost during the Dark Ages.

Concluding observations

The topic of sex on Sabbath is a deeply personal decision that should be prayerfully discussed between a husband and wife. For some married couples, this may be something that they choose “by mutual consent” (1 Cor. 7:5, NIV) to forgo during the hours of the seventh-day Sabbath in order to maintain their spiritual focus. This is admirable, but for others this may be yet more distracting.

For those married couples who do engage in sexual relations on Sabbath, such a view has deep roots in the original Creation. A view of sexuality that

embraces the whole person connects sex with Creation as God’s beautiful gift to humanity. Satan has distorted such a gift. Whether that distortion comes from the view that sex is self-centered pleasure and therefore needs to be suppressed or from the view of today’s mass media that sex has nothing to do with morality and is at the will and wish of the indulger, Satan is behind every such attempt to rob this precious gift of God’s original design.

Back to our question of sex on Sabbath. The principle the apostle Paul conveyed in another context may apply here as well: “Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him” (Rom. 14:3, ESV). 

- 1 Within less than 24 hours, a social media discussion between pastors about whether sex was permissible on Sabbath resulted in over 100 comments with the majority in favor.
- 2 Gina Spivey Brown and Loretta Parker Spivey, “Sex on Sabbath?” *Adventist Review*, September 1996, 19; Martin Weber, *Adventist Hot Potatoes* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), 86, 87.
- 3 Nancy L. Van Pelt with Madlyn Lewis Hamblin, *Dear Nancy . . . : A Trusted Advisor Gives Straight Answers to Questions*

About Marriage, Sex, and Parenting (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2005), 56.

- 4 Rene Gehring, “Is Sexuality Impure? An Alternate Interpretation of Leviticus 15:18,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 24, no. 2 (2013): 75–115.
- 5 Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 305–314.
- 6 Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, *A Sense of the Supernatural: Interpretation of Dreams and Paranormal Experiences* (n.p.: Gal Einai Institute, 2008), 70fn.15.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Email from Richard M. Davidson to the author, December 27, 2014.
- 9 Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 192.
- 10 Kethuboth 5:9, 65b.
- 11 I am indebted to Alex Golovenko for these insights.
- 12 Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 52.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 I am indebted to Jiri Moskala for this insight.
- 15 Duane Covrig, AIIAS Lecture, October 22, 2014; see also his blog post “The Sabbath as Moral Healing and Training,” *Adventist Ethics*, October 31, 2013, <http://www.adventistethics.com/the-sabbath-as-moral-healing-and-training/>. Covrig furthermore notes that he disagrees with the evolutionary premise but that his identification of these six moral values is helpful for identifying the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath.
- 16 Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 300–21.
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- 18 Ibid., 50.
- 19 Ibid., 51.

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Deepen your commitment

If we ever needed to revive our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the message He gave us, it is now. There is no need to repeat the signs of the end because we know what they are. Satan’s attempts to undermine the mission of the church, which is Christ’s own mission, will intensify, for he knows that his time is short.

To clarify the basics of revival, let me point out the important difference between accepting Christ as Savior and accepting Him as Savior and Lord. Paul repeatedly speaks of Christ as Savior and Lord. This was the issue in eternity past. Lucifer never

accepted the authority of the Son of God over him. No one will be in heaven who does not do so. While Calvary remains the center of our lives, revival means a willing and cheerful surrender to Christ as we pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

To clarify our mission, we need to understand Christ’s mission, for His mission is our mission. There are three important aspects: (1) Christ’s mission means to win souls by preaching and teaching, medical work, and helping those in need. This must be done with the love and compassion Jesus exemplified. (2) Christ’s mission also was to bring glory to the Father,

which is the overriding principle of our mission, for it is all about Him and not about us. (3) Christ did not ignore the coming judgment and the preparation we need.

Let us revive our lives by deepening our commitment to Him who is our Savior and Lord and by deepening our commitment to participate in His mission, which also is ours.

—JACK BLANCO, THD, IS PROFESSOR EMERITUS AT SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE DALE, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES.

Revival
and
REFORMATION

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A delightful day

It was Friday afternoon in Jerusalem, just before Sabbath. The plaza by the Western Wall was filling with people, laughter, and music. A tune began to emerge, a song of Sabbath celebration. A dozen girls held hands and danced together, circling, smiling, singing. The atmosphere bubbled with pure joy, and their delight was contagious. The Sabbath had arrived, and they had come to welcome the most delightful day of their week.

Later, I described the experience to my Jewish colleague. “For some of us, Sabbath is just a day of duty, a day of following all the rules,” she said, “but Sabbath does its most beautiful work in our lives when we discover its deepest delights.”

Discovering delight

What is “delight”? Why is it so important for us to call Sabbath a “delight”? How does God want us to experience the delight of His Sabbath?

“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob” (Isa. 58:13, 14).*

And how do we have delightful Sabbaths without the danger of doing “as we please”?

Edenic delight

Imagine Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, spending their first Sabbath with each other and God. They will experience delight in all its dimensions. They wake together, skin to skin in each other’s arms, gazing at each other’s faces, and growing familiar with every detail. Then God invites them to breakfast, a picnic of His favorite fruits—each one unique, luscious, and dripping with rose and golden sweetness. Their feet feel the freshness of the dew-dampened grass, and the air is filled with the choir of 1,000 different birds, tuned to perfection. Every breath they take is infused with the fragrance of lilies and roses. God smiles, reaches out His hand, and leads them through 1,000 wonders of His freshly created world. A Sabbath of purest delight.

Complex delight

Each of us discovers delight in different things, in different ways, at different times. Sometimes we search out delight for delight’s sake, knowing it will be there when the path ends in the sparkling lace of a forest waterfall, or when we look into the face of a friend and find their love. But sometimes delight catches us by surprise, when we glimpse a tiny flower in the crevice of a desert rock or see the arc of an orca breaking through the surface of the ocean.

Delight is a complex sensory experience—something like wonder mingled with joy and gratitude. It lifts our spirit and sparkles in our heart. Maybe we

are delighted by new concepts, fresh insights into God’s character, or soaring anthems of praise. Maybe we experience delight in the warm, wordless understanding of a loving relationship. Or maybe we are delighted when a familiar scripture opens up its treasure chest and scatters new riches at our feet. We delight in the Milky Way, a newborn baby, the aurora borealis, a snowflake, a mug of steaming hot chocolate on a cold night, and the dance of the flames in a log fire.

God filled the world with every possible shade of color and a countless range of different textures, aromas, flavors, and sounds, just to bring us joy. To share in this delight we need to slow down, look at the world through a lens of wonder, and experience God’s creation through each of our senses. Delight is becoming aware of the many beautiful facets of God’s love for us, our relationships with other people, and our natural environment.

Sabbath is a weekly gift from God. Time to help us slow down and experience the delights He wants to share with us. Time to pause, breathe, and experience His creation in all its diversity and intensity. If we do not experience Sabbath with delight, it is like receiving a picture from the world’s greatest artist and leaving it wrapped in the attic, instead of hanging it on our wall where we can enjoy its beauty.

Delight—but not our own pleasure?

How do we balance the delightful Sabbaths that God wants us to

experience without doing our own pleasure or business? Delightful Sabbaths put God first, not ourselves. Our greatest delights come from focusing on Him and His creation, worshiping Him, and being grateful for all the blessings He showers on us. We make our relationship with Him a priority, and as we experience His love for us, we are inspired to share His love with others. Our delight is a natural consequence of putting Him first. It is not that we do not have pleasure, but we experience our

greatest pleasures when we realign our priorities with His. “I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8, NKJV).

Different delights

Delight is different for everyone. Jeff loves to go pond dipping with a wire-handled jar, searching for the little creatures that live in the lake. Grandpa enjoys sitting on the porch, reading an inspirational book. Kate creates posies of flowers from her

garden and takes them to a care home. Mark photographs trees. Bobby enjoys playing Noah with his set of wooden animals. Susie writes letters to the people who did not make it to church. Vince writes a blog about his spiritual experiences. Anna loves finding creative ways to tell Bible stories to her grandchildren.

Experience what happens when we make delighting in God an important criterion for our Sabbaths, rather than “doing our duty.”

Ideas for how to reflect on delightful Sabbaths

1. Make a list of at least 30 things that fill you with delight.
2. Read through your list and categorize each item under a different heading, such as God, my relationships, nature, my spiritual life, my interests.
3. Think about one of your most delightful Sabbaths. What made the day so delightful? Was it a profoundly spiritual experience; being with people you love; someone you met; experiencing the intricacies of nature, for instance?
4. What was the most delightful moment of your last Sabbath?
5. What three things can you do to fill your Sabbaths with more delight?
6. Rate your Sabbaths from 0 to 10, where 10 is very delightful and 0 is not delightful at all. Why did you score your Sabbaths in that way? What can you do to increase the “delight rating” of your Sabbaths?
7. What can you and your church do to make Sabbath more delightful for the children, teens, parents of young children, and older people in your church?
8. What can you personally do to make Sabbath a delight for the rest of your family, especially when Sabbath can be such a busy time for pastoral families?

Ways to make delightful Sabbaths

- Take time to help your church community reflect together on Sabbath as a delight, and how moments of delight can bring you closer to God and each other.
- Survey your members to find out what would make their time in church on Sabbath more delightful.
- Invite different people in your church to say what they find delightful about Sabbath and share some of their most delightful Sabbath experiences.
- Create a bulletin board of children’s stories and pictures about their favorite and most delightful Sabbaths.
- Invite church members to create a display of different things they did and photos of local places, for example, that gave them a Sabbath delight.
- Plan a Sabbath afternoon where families and church members can experience some interesting, creative, and delightful Sabbath activities, such as Sabbath crafts, singing together, going on a Bible treasure hunt in the neighborhood, making care packages for homeless people, exploring semiprecious gems, or whatever else your church community would like to do.
- Invite everyone in your church to try something new and delightful one Sabbath, and then share their experiences the following Sabbath.
- Reach out to the single people in your community who may be experiencing long, sad, and lonely Sabbaths. What can you do to help them experience a more delightful day?
- Collaborate with your family to create the most delightful Sabbath you can imagine. Plan interesting and engaging worship, sing each person’s favorite song, go somewhere you all love, and invite each person in your family to choose an experience that they would find especially delightful.
- Make a scrapbook or journal of your delightful Sabbaths. Include what made the day so wonderful and how the wonder brought you closer to God.

Vital delight

Delightful Sabbaths are not designed to be an occasional luxury. God wanted Sabbaths to be vital ingredients of our spiritual experience. In John 10:10, Jesus described Himself as coming so that we could “have life, and have it to the full.” He wants our lives to be abundant—filled to the brim with good and delightful experiences. Paul described the evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives—the positive and delightful fruits of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Delight has a positive effect on our lives. Moments of delight bring us joy, soothe us, inspire hopeful thoughts, and help to heal the emotional pain of living in a broken world. When our Sabbaths are delightful, they can enhance our whole week as we remember the wonders of the past Sabbath and look forward to the joys of the next one.

Even when we are facing tough challenges, we can still make an active choice to experience Sabbath delight. Gather some simple things that fill you with delight and will help you have more delightful Sabbaths:

- A collection of inspiring Bible verses
- CDs or a playlist of praise and worship music
- A stack of inspirational books
- Maps of your favorite Sabbath walks
- A collection of nonperishable nature objects that fill you with wonder, such as seed pods, shells, and stones
- A list of favorite Sabbath activities
- Favorite Sabbath foods and meals

Exploring delight together

Delight does not mix well with a list of “don’ts.” While guidelines and boundaries help us have a work-free day for worship, delight focuses on the positive aspects and asks, What can we choose to do to make Sabbath a spiritual, happy, and refreshing day? and How can we share our delightful Sabbath experiences with our local community as an outreach opportunity?

A delight-orientation also asks, What are we doing that might be inhibiting ourselves, and others, from experiencing Sabbath as a delight? because this is also contrary to God’s desire for us. Reflecting on these questions personally and as a church community can be very useful. Capture your congregation’s answers on postcards or sticky notes, including the voices of the children. Then make a large poster of all the ideas, and discuss what you have discovered about making Sabbath more delightful.

Delighted children

It is vitally important for our children to experience delightful Sabbaths. If we want them to choose to be Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we need to make sure that their seventh days are as special as possible. You may find it hard to plan superdelightful Sabbaths when you are a busy parent. Some families take turns to plan special Sabbath activities for all the other families with children in their church. They go for walks in beautiful places, plan picnics, organize scavenger hunts, make things together out of natural materials, identify animal footprints, explore Bible stories, ride bikes, and do service projects together.

Make sure your Sabbath Schools and church services consider the needs of the children and involve them in the worship.

Make a folder for your church of delightful Sabbath things for families to do in your area. Include maps of hiking trails, leaflets for free farms and zoos, fun Bible games, and indoor activities for when the weather is bad, for example. Encourage families to add their own favorite ideas so they can learn from each other.

Help newly baptized church families to experience delightful Sabbaths. They will find it hard to know what to do on Sabbath when they have not grown up in an Adventist family. Some new families are so afraid to do anything “wrong” on the Sabbath that they hardly dare do anything at all. And then Sabbath can stop being a delight and become

something to dread. So invite them to share delightful Sabbaths with other families so they taste the wonder for themselves.


Delightful outreach?

What if it were obvious to everyone who knew us or who lived near our churches that Adventists have delightful Sabbaths? Imagine the difference this would make if we were known as people who had one delight-filled day every week. What difference would it make if we invited people to share our delightful Sabbaths as a form of evangelism? What if people came to our church to experience a delightful day with God in joyful worship; exploring His creation; caring for other people; choosing to be happy, peaceful, and thankful; and sharing simple, healthy food?

Next (delightful) Sabbath

You are a busy pastor. Your week may be crammed with study, ministry, and people who need you. And Sabbaths are no exception. What can you do this week to make next Sabbath more delightful for you and your family? It does not have to be anything big. Buy or pick a bunch of flowers for your dinner table, bring home your family’s favorite dessert, or take time out to watch the sunset together in a beautiful place. You will notice the difference this makes to your spiritual well-being and to the joy of those around you.

Delighted forever

God loves giving us the gift of a fresh new Sabbath every week, and He is thrilled when we call it a delight. There is something about our delightful Sabbaths that connects us with eternity. They are like pearls, strung together, week by week, connecting Eden to the New Jerusalem, reminding us where we are coming from and where we are going, a taste of heaven right here on earth. 

* Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New International Version of the Bible.

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The heavenly temple in the Gospel of John¹

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” (John 14:1–4, NIV).

Through the ages, John 14:1–4 has captured the imagination of Christians because of the assurance that Jesus will return to earth to get His followers. Discussions often concentrate on two things: first, the nature of the assurance of Jesus’ return; second, the size, quality, and type of habitation He is preparing in heaven for His followers. John 8:35—“ ‘Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever’ ” (NIV)—has, by contrast, received considerably less attention.

This study endeavors to fit both texts within a broader framework of heavenly topography. Belief in the existence of a heavenly temple is strongly evident in the Old Testament² and in extrabiblical Jewish writings,³ as well as in the New Testament (NT),⁴ where believers also are a type of temple.⁵

We will first explore temple language in John’s Gospel, and then concentrate on John 8:35 and especially 14:2 to see what John says about the heavenly temple.

Temple language in the Gospel of John

Most temple references in John refer to the temple in Jerusalem. His

favorite word is *hieron*, used 11 times.⁶ A common word to describe the temple, this word carries a nuance of sacredness and holiness, underlining John’s respect for this Jewish institution.

Three times in one pericope John uses the noun *naos* (2:19–21). Having just cleansed the temple (*hieron*) from the money changers and traders selling sacrificial commodities (vv. 14, 15), Jesus invites His accusers, most likely the temple authorities, to destroy “ ‘this temple’ ”⁷ (*ton naon touton*), meaning *His body*, and says that within three days He will rebuild it.

The switch from *hieron* to *naos* is intentional. Whereas *hieron* can be used of other holy items as an adjective,⁸ *naos* refers only to a temple. Furthermore, whereas *hieron* refers to the broader complex of buildings, *naos* refers to the inner structures central to Israel’s sacrificial ritual.⁹ John 2:19–21, therefore, draws a parallel between the temple and its sacrificial system on the one hand, and the literal body of Jesus on the other, implying that the latter supersedes the former.

Five times John uses the noun *oikos*, meaning “house” or “home”; twice as a reference to the temple (vv. 16, 17) and three times in reference to human habitations (2:16; 7:53;

11:20). In 2:16, 17, *oikos* is used in a theologically loaded context. Just as He casts out the money changers and traders from the temple (*hieron*), Jesus condemns those responsible for transforming the “house of my Father” (*ton oikon tou Patros mou*) into “a house of trade” (*oikon emporiou*) (v. 16).

As with the switch from *hieron* to *naos*, here, too, the switch from *hieron* to *oikos* is not incidental. Whereas *hieron* denotes a sacred object or building, *oikos* conveys more intimate realities. The noun can be translated either as house or as home,¹⁰ or even as household.¹¹ The traders are guilty of defiling not just a holy building but the very home and household of God.

The fact that Jesus calls the temple the “house of my Father” as opposed to “the house of God,” we find also significant. If God is the Father and humans are His children, then His children can expect that God’s house can facilitate the worship of all who call God their Father. Moreover, as the unique Son of God, Jesus claims full prerogatives to act with authority in relation to issues of worship and to purify the temple to function within a proper context.

Immediately after the incident of the cleansing, John introduces a

statement, the “ ‘zeal for your house [*oikos*] will consume me’ ” (v. 17). The words come from Psalm 69:9 and appear in a context where the psalmist bemoans the persecution he faces because of his fidelity to God. The quotation from the psalm coupled with the words about the destruction and the rebuilding of the body-of-Jesus temple anticipates His death and resurrection.

The heavenly temple in 8:35

John has two references to the heavenly temple that are interconnected. In both instances, John uses the word *oikia*. *Oikos* and *oikia* are lexically very close but not identical. Goetzmann notes that in classical Greek *oikia* denoted the dwelling place,

that whereas a slave cannot habitually dwell in the house (*oikia*), a son remains there forever. The statement appears to be a common saying regarding everyday realities, but here this word functions to build a contrast between Jesus and His opponents.

The context is important. The exchange takes place in the temple (8:20). Jesus contrasts His opponents’ earthly origin with His own heavenly origin (v. 23). He is not of this world but came from above.¹⁵ He then contrasts their sinfulness with His own close association with the Father (vv. 24–30). He implies that He has no sin because He always does “ ‘the things that are pleasing’ ” to the Father (v. 29). By contrast, His opponents are enslaved because their sin keeps them enslaved (v. 34). This enslavement to sin does

heavenly house/temple of His heavenly Father, Jesus draws a contrast between the purity and holiness of heavenly realities and the corrupt priesthood and leadership of the Jerusalem temple. By using the noun *oikia* instead of *oikos*, He highlights the reality of this heavenly *oikia*. By using *oikia* instead of *hieron* or *naos*, He highlights the intimate relationship He shares with the Father, and one which will also become a reality for all believers. This truth can be seen in John 14:2.

The heavenly temple in 14:2

John 14:2 appears within a discourse in which Jesus states that He will ascend to heaven to the Father’s house, God’s heavenly temple,¹⁷ pre-

If the earthly, shadowy temple was magnificent, the heavenly can be only infinitely grander and of exquisite beauty and glory.

the physical structure or house, while *oikos* could be used in a broader sense either of a physical structure or the dwellers in it, the household or family.¹²

This is also true of biblical Greek. Of the 93 usages of *oikia* in the NT, only 5 refer clearly to anything but a physical structure.¹³ By contrast, of the 114 usages of *oikos*, a full 32 refer to the people in the house rather than the house itself.¹⁴ The switch, therefore, from *oikos* in John 2:16, 17 to *oikia* in 8:35 and 14:2 could be intentional, aiming to affirm the existence of a literal house of God in heaven.

The first of the two *oikia* references to the heavenly temple is in 8:35, in a context of an exchange between Jesus and certain Jews. Jesus declares

not allow them to dwell in the house.

The “house” here, in which Jesus dwells but His sinful opponents cannot, refers to God’s house. God’s house is the temple. But which temple? Not the earthly one. In the Jerusalem temple neither Jesus nor His opponents dwelt “forever.” And at any rate, as indicated elsewhere in the NT,¹⁶ the Jerusalem temple was shadowy and temporal and soon to be destroyed (e.g., Matt. 23:38; 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6, 20). The only “house” in which Jesus dwells “forever” is God’s house in heaven, the heavenly temple. The language probably draws from Psalm 23:6 and David’s confidence that he also would dwell in the house of God forever.

In depicting Himself as the heavenly Son who always dwells in the

pare a place for the disciples, and return to take them home so that they may always be with Him. John uses the word *oikia* again, as in 8:35, possibly for the same reasons. Jesus assures His disciples that in the Father’s house are many *monai*, “mansions” (KJV), “rooms” (ESV, NIV), “dwelling places” (NAB, NASB).

The word *monai* appears only here and in John 14:23. This word comes from the verb *menō*, “to remain” or “abide,”¹⁸ and can be used of habitations of different quality and magnificence, ranging from a room to a mansion.¹⁹ The emphasis is not so much on the structure, its quality and size, but rather on the reality of living or abiding there—in which case, “dwelling places” appears to be a

better rendering than either “rooms” or “mansions.”

The choice of this rare word *monai* is closely attached to John’s “abiding” theology. Of 118 usages of the verb *menō* in the NT, 40 appear in the Gospel of John and 24 in John’s epistles—54 percent of the total. The Father abides in the Son, and this enables the Son to perform all the wonderful deeds that He does and the words that He says (John 14:10). The Holy Spirit also abides in Jesus. John testifies that He saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove not only descend upon Jesus at the baptism but abide with Him (1:32, 33). The implication is not so much that the dove remained upon Jesus but rather that the anointing of the Spirit received at the baptism was not just for the occasion but served to equip Jesus throughout His ministry. Just as the Father and Spirit abide with the Son, so the Son abides with the Father (14:10).

This permanence in divine relationships becomes a reality for believers, too, through the ministry of Jesus. When a believer receives the Son, the Father will abide in him (3:36). He promises believers that if they abide in the Word, they will truly be His disciples (8:31). And just as the branches of a vine receive life nourishment from the vine, so Jesus promises to abide with the disciples (15:4–9). If they abide in Him, they will bear much fruit (v. 5), and their fruit will also abide and it will please the Father (v. 16).

Failure to believe is also related to the concept of abiding. Whoever does not receive the Son abides in darkness, in contrast to the believer who no longer does so (12:46). The unbeliever does not have the Word abiding in him (5:38) but rather the wrath of God (3:36).

More important, the abiding in God’s heavenly temple/house of John 14:2 reflects directly back on the heavenly house of 8:35. There two persons were contrasted: the Son, who, being in full harmony with the Father, can abide (*menei*) in the house for ever, whereas the servant cannot abide (*menei*) because of his earthliness and sinfulness (8:24, 34, 35). The disciples

are presumably also earthly and sinful. But having been set free by the Son, they, too, can also have permanent abiding places, *monai*, in the Father’s house, just like the Son when He returns to take them to the Father’s house.

In 14:23, another temple dimension is added, closely connected to 14:2. In 14:2, the believers gain permanent residence (*monai*) in God’s heavenly temple/palace by abiding in Jesus. But in the meantime and in anticipation of that fulfillment, the Father and the Son build a dwelling place (*monēn*) with the believer (v. 23). The fact that the Father and Son now dwell in believers makes believers, individually and corporately, temples of God. (This concept is more fully developed in passages such as 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5; and Revelation 3:12, among others.) Only by becoming a temple for God now can the believer, in turn, gain access into the heavenly temple. There is therefore a close connection between the believer as a temple individually or corporately, and the heavenly house/temple of God, a connection evident in other NT writings.

The use of *monai*, therefore, to describe the habitations believers will receive after the return of Jesus places the emphasis on the close and intimate relation that will exist between God and the saved for eternity, more so than on the size or grandeur of these habitations. Moreover, this intimate relationship that will exist in the world made new begins here on earth as believers come into close fellowship with God.

The emphasis on *abiding* does not, however, in any way negate the grandeur of the heavenly habitations.

Heavenly temple, heavenly grandeur

The temple in Jerusalem was the heart and pride of the Jewish people. It was not only the center of their religious experience but also their most beautiful and splendid building. In Mark 13:1, the disciples, overawed by the sight of the earthly temple, exclaim, “What

wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” (cf. Matt. 24:1).

If the earthly, shadowy temple was magnificent, the heavenly can be only infinitely grander and of exquisite beauty and glory. In Paul’s ascent to the third heaven, he heard things “that cannot be told, which man may not utter” (2 Cor. 12:4), things of “surpassing greatness” (v. 7). In Revelation, a vision of the heavenly temple is ushered by “flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail” (11:19), while the heavenly Jerusalem is of massive proportions and dazzling in beauty (21:16, 12–22).

The Gospel of John does not give similar descriptions, but two statements suggest he assumes them. First, he assures his readers that the dwelling places in the heavenly temple are “many” (*monai pollai*). John does not envision a structure parallel only to the immediate temple precincts with the Most Holy Place, Holy Place, and adjacent areas. Rather, in view exists a large, magnificent structure fitting to be the dwelling place of God and the center of His authority in which the believers of all the ages will one day be easily and comfortably accommodated.

Second, in John 14:4, Jesus declares that the disciples know where Jesus is going. This statement possibly aims to affirm expectations of heavenly glory. As such, while John left the magnificent descriptions of heavenly grandeur for Revelation, even in the Gospel he gives us hints of the majesty of the heavenly temple.

Conclusion

Like contemporary Jewish and Christian writers, John takes a strong interest in the temple. Most of his references are in relation to the Jerusalem temple and occur in narrative. In one instance, he presents the body of Jesus as a new reality, a new temple that would eventually grow and encompass the nascent church.

More importantly for our purposes, and in parallel with many Jewish and Christian writers, John also envisions a heavenly temple/palace, the house of

the Father. John does not describe this place in detail. He seems less interested in its appearance and more interested in the fact that this is the place where the abiding that Jesus shares with the Father and the Spirit, and that He offers to His followers on earth, will reach a climax and full realization. Nonetheless, the fact that He depicts it as containing potentially numberless habitations suggests a glorious building in line with Jewish and Christian apocalyptic depictions of heaven.

Though his descriptions in the Gospel are by no means apocalyptic, John manifests an awareness of heavenly topography and realities as discussed elsewhere in Scripture, especially in biblical apocalyptic, and utilizes them in theological development of his book. ▢

1 This article is adapted from a longer one to appear in a forthcoming publication from Andrews University Press.

- 2 E.g., Gen. 28:11–22; Exod. 25:8, 20; Deut. 26:15; 1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49; 2 Chron. 6:30, 33, 39; Pss. 11:4; 15:1; 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 6:1–13; 63:15; 66:1–6; Jer. 25:30; Dan. 8:14; Jon. 2:7; Mic. 1:2; Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13.
- 3 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* Exod. 15:17; *Antiquities* 3.6.5; 2 Bar. 4:3–6; T. Levi 2:5–5:2; 8:1–19; 3 En. 1:1–12; 4:6, 7; 5:5; 1 En. 14:8–25; 47:1–4; 4 Ez. 9:26–10:59; in 3 Baruch a heavenly temple forms the background of the whole composition.
- 4 Mainly Revelation (e.g., 1:10–20; 4:1–5:14; 8:1–5; 11:19; 14:15–19; 15:5–8; 16:1, 17), and Hebrews (e.g., 8:1, 2; 9:1–12). Elsewhere we find mostly allusions and echoes (e.g., Matt. 23:16–22; Acts 7:55, 56).
- 5 Matt. 26:61; Mark 14:58; John 2:19–21; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 3:12.
- 6 John 2:14, 15; 5:14, 28; 8:20, 59; 10:23; 11:56; 18:20.
- 7 Unless otherwise noted, scriptures are from the English Standard Version.
- 8 Dan. 1:2; 1 Esd. 1:51; 2:7; 4 Macc. 8:33; 4 Macc. 6:30; Mark 16:8; 1 Cor. 9:13; 2 Tim. 3:15.
- 9 See Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Temple,” 8:1071.
- 10 E.g., Matt. 9:6; 7; Mark 2:11; Luke 1:23; Acts 2:2; 19:16; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 11:34; 14:35.
- 11 E.g., Matt. 10:6; Luke 1:27; Acts 2:36; 7:42; 11:14; 16:15, 31; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5; Heb. 3:6.
- 12 Jürgen Goetzmann, *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, “House,” s.v. vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 247.
- 13 Matt. 10:12, 13; 12:25; John 4:53; 1 Cor. 16:15.
- 14 Matt. 10:6; 15:24; Luke 1:27, 33, 69; 2:4; 10:5; 11:7 (2x); 19:9; Acts 2:36; 7:10, 42, 46; 10:2; 11:14; 16:15, 31; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16; 1 Tim. 5:4; 2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19; Titus 1:11; Heb. 3:2, 5, 6 (2x); 8:8 (2x), 10; 11:7.
- 15 See C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction With Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1978), 341. The “above” refers to the heavenly world and the “below” to the earthly realm, as indicated by the next phrase, which mentions “the world.”
- 16 See Kim Papaioannou, “Sanctuary, Priesthood, Sacrifice, and Covenant in the Book of Hebrews,” *Ministry* (November 2014), 23–27.
- 17 Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 456, sees the Father’s house as a reference to the temple and compares it with Luke 2:49 and John 8:35. He does not quite call it the “heavenly temple” and indeed seems to understand the whole heaven as God’s habitation and therefore the reference as pointing to the whole of heaven. However, the use of *oikia* suits better a specific locale and edifice than the realm of heaven as a whole. Gary Burge, “Gospel of John,” in Craig Evans, Isobel A.H. Combes, and Daniel M. Gurtner, eds., *Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: John, Hebrews-Revelation* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2005), 126, calls it “the heavenly dwelling where he [God] lives” and compares it with Hebrews 12:22.
- 18 G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981), 284.
- 19 E.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.41.1; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* XVI 7.1.8; Philo, *De Abrahamo* 2.237.2; *De Aeternum Mundi* 116.3; Vettius Valens, *Anthologies* 4.12.5; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* bk. 2, 6.28.6.

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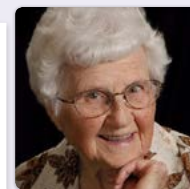


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Moses *and* Jesus

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ,” so says John (John 1:17, NIV).¹

What does this passage say about the position of Jesus and Moses on the law? Is it one of antagonism—Moses versus Jesus, law versus grace? Such an antagonist position was common among the legalists, both Jewish and Christian, at the time of John’s Gospel, as it is common among antinomian Christians of today, who would do away with the law in order to establish grace. A second position is continuum—Jesus built upon Moses; New Testament grace and truth were built upon Old Testament grace and truth (*chesed* and *’emeth*, “steadfast love and faithfulness”).²

This paper will argue for the continuum position: Jesus built on what went before, and He did not discard the law; indeed, He overwhelms the law with the fullness of grace and truth. The difference is between partial and the full revelation.

The legalist charge: Jesus was antagonistic to Moses

Obviously, the Jewish leaders at the time of John’s Gospel³ regarded Jesus as antagonistic to Moses. They asserted that they were disciples of Moses rather than of “‘this fellow’” (John 9:28, 29, NIV).

John’s Gospel details the Jews’ prolonged lawsuit against Jesus, and Jesus’ countersuit against them.

Central to the debate is the law of Moses. The Jews tried Jesus on charges of blasphemy, deception, and sedition. On two occasions He was also accused of Sabbath breaking because on Sabbath He healed a paralytic (5:16, 18) and a man born blind (9:16). Claiming to be followers of Moses (v. 28), the leaders were zealous for the laws of the Sabbath (5:10).⁴ Ultimately Jesus was condemned to death for blasphemy because of His claims to be divine: “‘We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God’” (19:7, NIV).⁵ Jesus’ execution at the hands of the Romans was the climax to the Jewish lawsuit against Him.

Jesus’ defense and countersuit: Moses supports His claims

Jesus answered the charges against Him by allying himself with Moses, calling upon Moses to support His claims: “‘If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me’” (5:46). Jesus was not antagonistic to Moses. Rather, the Sabbath miracles were signs that the Creator, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Lord of Moses, was walking in their midst. He who had created the world by the word of His mouth (1:1–3; Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6, 9) healed the paralyzed man by the word of His mouth (John 5:8). He who had created Adam from clay (Gen. 2:7) restored sight to a blind man by applying clay to his eyes (John 9:11). Jesus claimed to be co-Creator with

God (5:17; cf. 1:1–3), doing the works of the Father even to raising the dead and giving them life (5:19–21). It is part of John’s irony that Jesus’ own people tried their own Creator on charges of breaking His own law!

Then in a sharp reversal, Jesus arraigned His accusers before the judgment seat of God by projecting before them the spectacle of the dead coming forth from the tombs to be judged by Him (vv. 25–29). He shocked them further by asserting that Moses, the very one they defended, would be their accuser because they did not believe in the One about whom he wrote (vv. 45–47).

The Jews were right in claiming that the greatest revelation of God in their history was the torah, of which Israel was the guardian. In the torah, God revealed Himself through His mighty acts of Creation and Exodus. John shows that God’s “mighty acts” foreshadow the life and work of Jesus.

Creation. The opening of John’s Gospel evokes the language of Genesis 1:1–3: “in the beginning,” creation by God’s “Word,” light dispelling darkness, the making of the children of God (John 1:1–5, 12, 13). When John indicates that Jesus was “the Word of the Lord” by which the heavens and all else were made (v. 3; Ps. 33:6, 9), he inserts Jesus into the Genesis record: Jesus was the co-Creator with God, the one God consulted when He said, “‘Let us make’” (Gen. 1:26; John 1:2). The major theme of Jesus as Life-Giver, bringing physical, spiritual,

and eternal life now and hereafter, proclaims that He is the Creator (see especially John 11:25).

The Exodus. The Exodus theme lies prominent in the book of John. Jesus surpasses the giving of the law. Jesus did not abrogate the moral law; rather, He intensified it by introducing a new commandment to His disciples: “‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another’” (13:34, 35). The command to love was not new. Already the torah had proclaimed, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might’” (Deut. 6:5), with its complement, “‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Lev. 19:18). What was new was the dimension of the love required: “‘even as I have loved you, that you also love one another’”—an infinite dimension!⁶

Consider some instances of how John portrays this infinite dimension:

The miracle of the manna is infinitely surpassed by Jesus’ gift of living Bread (John 6:32, 33). Whereas the manna spoiled (Exod. 16:20), the bread Jesus gives endures to eternal life (John 6:27). Those who ate the manna hungered again; those who eat the living Bread never hunger (v. 35). Those who ate the manna all died (Judg. 2:10), but those who eat the living Bread will live forever (John 6:33, 48–51, 58). The manna sustained only Israel; the living Bread gives life to the world (v. 33).

Water from the smitten rock (Num. 20:7–13) is surpassed by the stream of living water from the smitten body of Jesus (John 19:34; cf. 7:37–39; 4:14).

The healing of those bitten by serpents by a look at the bronze serpent (Num. 21:8, 9) is surpassed by the salvation of the world through beholding Jesus lifted up on the cross (John 3:14, 15; 12:32; 19:17, 18).

Fulfillment: Symbols and feasts. Jesus transformed the feasts by presenting Himself as the reality to which they pointed. John stresses that Jesus’ crucifixion took place on Passover day

(13:1; 18:28; 19:31) to make the point that Jesus was the Antitype of the Passover sacrifice.

At the Feast of Tabernacles when the great lamps were lit, commemorating the pillar of fire (Exod. 13:21), Jesus proclaimed Himself as the Light of the world (John 8:12).

Jesus came as the fulfillment, the embodiment of the tabernacle built by Moses. When the Lord entered the tabernacle built by Moses, “the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exod. 40:34).

Later, when Solomon replaced the ancient tent of Moses by a magnificent temple, “the glory of the LORD filled the temple” (2 Chron. 7:1). So great was the glory that no one could enter God’s dwelling.

So it is natural that when Jesus entered the tabernacle of His human body, He would reveal His glory: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt [Greek, tabernacled] among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14). What was the glory of the Baby in a manger? He revealed the character of a God who would hide His splendor in a tent of humanity in order to dwell with His people.

Thus, Jesus fulfilled the symbols of religion: temple, light, bread, water, and tabernacle. He was the reality to which the symbols pointed.

Glory: Moses and Jesus

Sinai was the greatest revelation of God’s glory that human beings had ever seen (Deut. 4:32, 33). God appeared to Israel with overpowering thunder, lightning, fire, earthquake, and trumpet blast (Exod. 19:16–19). In the wake of these pyrotechnics, it seems surprising that Moses made the further request, “‘I pray thee, show me thy glory’” (33:18).

While God did not permit Moses to look upon His face—“‘You cannot see my face . . . and live’”—He revealed His character to Moses: “‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast

love and faithfulness’” (34:6). Moses received a revelation of God unsurpassed in human experience (see 33:12–23; 34:5–7).

John had Moses’ experience in mind when he exclaimed, “we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . . And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace” (John 1:14, 16).

John says “grace upon grace” or “grace instead of grace” (Greek, *charin anti charitos*)—one new vision taking the place of the previous one. The words “grace and truth” are generally recognized as the equivalent of the Hebrew *chesed* and *’emeth*—loving kindness and faithfulness. There was an abundance of grace and truth in Moses’ day, but the grace and truth shown in the life of Jesus excel even the previous revelation of God in the torah.

What was the new revelation of God’s glory that surpassed the torah? Was it the wonder of the incarnation—that the Creator of “all things” (1:3) would strip Himself of His divine majesty to become flesh and dwell among His people (v. 14)? Was it the glory of Jesus’ servanthood—that the One whom angels delight to serve stripped Himself of His garments to wash the dust from His disciples’ feet (13:3–5)? Was it the Lord Himself stripped of His clothing and dignity (19:23, 24), lifted up from the earth so that all who looked on Him might live (3:14; 12:32)? For our redemption God gave His only Son (3:16), and Jesus gave His life (10:11). Father and Son gave until there was no more to give. And this very self-emptying was His glory (12:23–25).

And the ultimate moment of Jesus’ glory on the cross was the ultimate moment of the law’s permanence.

John caught the significance of Jesus’ concept of glory. To the Savior, His hour of shame and suffering was His hour of glory. Jesus frequently had said that His hour had not yet come (2:4; 7:30; 8:20). But shortly before the Crucifixion, He announced that the hour had come (12:23)—the

hour for Him to be buried in the earth (v. 24), the hour for the Father to glorify His name (v. 28), the hour for Him to be lifted up, the hour for Him to draw all men to Him (v. 32), the hour for the ruler of this world to be cast out (v. 31). Though He dreaded the hour, He moved resolutely to meet it (v. 27).


Conclusion

What effect did Jesus have on Moses? What happened to the symbols—animal sacrifices, feasts, and even the temple itself—with the coming of Jesus? These dropped off like faded flowers before the ripened fruit of the reality of Jesus. He Himself was the Lamb, Light, Water, and Temple to which the symbols pointed. How do “the mighty acts of God” in Creation, Exodus, and giving the law, relate to the coming of Jesus? Jesus repeats the mighty acts in greater

grandeur—ultimate salvation and the re-creation of human beings. What about the glory of the revelations of God to Moses? These are the dawning rays leading to the sunrise of the glorious revelation of God in human flesh. The full blaze of His glory awaits His second coming when believers will see the glory that He had from the foundation of the world (17:24).

So the text “the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” shows not contrast but intensification. “The law has been neither destroyed nor preserved intact by the coming of Jesus, but *transformed by being transcended*.⁷”

Moses and Jesus are related as the prelude to the finale, the journey to the destination, the partial to the fullness. “And from His *fulness* have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace

and truth came through Jesus Christ” (1:16, 17; emphasis added). 

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, scripture references are from the Revised Standard Version.
- 2 Raymond E. Brown posits that John considers law “a magnificent act of God’s love,” and that verse 17 “contrasts the enduring love shown in the Law with the *supreme* example of enduring love shown in Jesus.” *The Gospel According to John, I–XII* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 16.
- 3 John often uses “the Jews” as a pejorative term referring to Jesus’ critics, the religious leaders (e.g., 1:19; 5:10, 18; 9:18).
- 4 Their initial charge was that Jesus told the healed man to carry his pallet—a violation not of the laws of Moses but of the oral traditions of the Jews. *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. “Law in First-Century Judaism.”
- 5 For the Jewish understanding of Jesus’ claims, see John 5:18 and 10:33. For the death penalty on blasphemers, see Leviticus 24:16.
- 6 The commandments of the law gave way to the commandments of the Father to Jesus, and the commandments of Jesus to the disciples. The will of God, once expressed in the law, is now communicated by Jesus. Severino Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 450.
- 7 Ibid.

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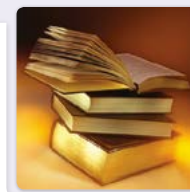
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Learning to Walk in the Dark

by Barbara Brown Taylor, New York: HarperOne, 2014.

Learning to Walk in the Dark by Barbara Brown Taylor, Butman Professor of Religion at Piedmont College in Georgia and an Episcopal priest, challenges our traditional views about darkness and night and gently leads us into a new paradigm of learning to appreciate darkness as well as light.

Weaving the Bible, science, history, life events, and uncommon sense, Taylor delves into the subject with skill and compassion, and examines darkness internally, externally, and eternally. Though I do not agree with several of the author's perspectives on faith and practice, I appreciate the book and would recommend it as an insightful read.

Taylor begins with exploring our fear of things in the dark, as well as our fear of God, by taking the reader through a study of examples in the Bible. In addition, she reviews the experience of many in history: the courage of Saint John of the Cross, the wisdom of Augustine, the poetry of Li-Young Lee, and insights of the French resistance writer Jacques Lusseyran as he became blind.

The author provides a way to find spiritual meaning in those low times in our lives when we do not have all the answers. From admitting that *we do not have to have all the answers*, she posits that we can learn from the dark times of life and be enriched by them. While this theme is not entirely novel, the book presents a fresh approach to the subject—a perspective without offering spiritual bromides, claiming to provide a “twelve-step plan” to deal with the challenges of darkness.

Taylor seeks to correct the widespread assumption that light is to be associated with goodness and joy while darkness with evil and sorrow. Does

not God work in the nighttime as well as daytime? God encourages us to put away our fears, anxieties, and worries and explore the adventure of learning to walk in the dark.

The author speaks about “endarkenment” as well as enlightenment and argues that we need to move away from seeing God as light alone and relegating all things dark to the devil. From the beauty of the ever-changing moon, the author develops an appreciation for “lunar spirituality.” The point: through darkness we find courage, we understand the world in new ways, and we feel God’s presence around us, guiding us through things seen and unseen. In fact, *Learning to Walk in the Dark* is a call to put aside fears and anxieties and explore what God has to teach “in the dark.”

The book’s nine chapters deal with common views on the dark and our foibles about night, a brief Bible exploration about night and darkness and their implications, insights on the phenomena of light and darkness, our emotions and struggles with dark feelings, seeing the world through the eyes of the blind, caving in pitch blackness, the experiences of those who grappled with physical and figurative darkness, and creative approaches to using the dark as a help versus defaulting to it as a hindrance.


This well-spread map of arguments helps Taylor to build the thesis that darkness can be the forum for reconstructing a more strong and robust faith—a faith that can walk in the light and face the encounter of being in the dark. Darkness is strategic, and there is no point in denying it or hiding from it. Indeed, along with the sunrise, we need to watch the moon rise as well. Darkness must give way to creation. God separates out the

light from the darkness. We can come out of the cover of darkness into the light of illumination.

The book concludes with an “Epilogue, Blessing the Day,” sub-headed by Psalm 19:2: “Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.” Though Taylor does not exposit the text, she finds in it one of her major thrusts: it is in the day, in the full day, filled with light and darkness, one can discover God’s complete will and purpose.

The book focuses well on the Bible being the inspiration and instruction for learning to walk in the dark. Her confession is a balm in itself: “Among the other treasures of darkness I have dug up along the way are a new collection of Bible stories that all happen after dark, a new set of teachers who know their way around in the dark, a deeper reverence for the cloud of unknowing, a greater ability to abide in God’s absence, and—by far the most valuable of all—a fresh baptism of the truth that loss is the way of life” (186).

Like believers of all ages, Pastor Taylor knows that final point is perhaps the key for not only learning to walk in the dark but the path to eternal life. So she humbly adds, “That last one is a hard one to trust, which is why I need to keep walking in the dark.” How will she do that? By faith and practice “to keep seizing the night as well as the day” (186).

So this book, whatever its limitations and imperfections, accomplishes its purpose: learning to walk in the dark. 

—Reviewed by Delbert W. Baker, PhD, general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

► Adventists in South Sudan urged to be ambassadors of peace

Juba, South Sudan—On February 10, 2015, Seventh-day Adventist Church President **Ted N. C. Wilson** encouraged Adventists to be ambassadors of reconciliation and peace in South Sudan, where a yearlong conflict has caused two million people to flee their homes and prompted the establishment of a major Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) program.

Wilson was welcomed to the country's capital, Juba, by a jubilant parade of hundreds of Pathfinders and other church members. The colorful throng marched from the city center to a compound that houses the local Adventist Church headquarters.

Wilson told the crowd that he had come especially to make sure that they felt like they were part of the Seventh-day Adventist world family. "They are so happy to be part of God's great family: wonderful, friendly, and faithful people," Wilson also pointed to 2 Corinthians 5, where Paul says

believers are "ambassadors for Christ" and speaks of how God "has given us the ministry of reconciliation."



Pathfinders welcome Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson and his delegation to Juba, South Sudan, Sunday, February 8, 2015.

South Sudan has been mired in interethnic conflict since December 2013. The country's president and his rival reached a power-sharing agreement last month, but the terms have yet to be determined. Of the 2 million

people who have fled their homes over the past year, 1.5 million remain displaced within South Sudan, and the rest have sought refuge in neighboring countries, according to the United Nation's figures.

ADRA has ongoing health-related work in South Sudan and, because of the conflict, has teamed up with the United Nations to provide emergency food supplies to internally displaced people, said **Imad Madanat**, vice president for programs at ADRA International. "The rainy season has made it nearly impossible to access remote villages with food supplies and emergency health care," Madanat said. "The situation in South Sudan is still dire, and we are striving to reach as many internally displaced persons as we can."

The Adventist Church in South Sudan has 23,000 members worshipping in 59 churches and 166 companies. [Andrew McChesney/*Adventist Review*]

► In Thailand, Adventist university hosts mobile eye surgery clinic

Muak Lek, Saraburi, Thailand—A Seventh-day Adventist university in Thailand recently hosted a group of volunteer ophthalmologists who offered free eye care for more than 250 nearby elderly residents in need. The church's Asia-Pacific International University in the Saraburi Province hosted the mobile eye surgery clinic, sponsored by the province's Red Cross Society during February 2 to 6, 2015.

Patients were diagnosed with cases of cataracts, pterygium, and other

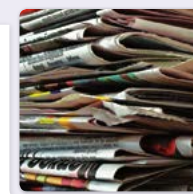
eye-related conditions. The surgeries for most cases took five to ten minutes to complete, while more challenging cases took up to an hour.


The mobile clinic was set up in various spots around campus, including a multiuse room, dining room, and church parking lot. The clinic served underprivileged elderly from five districts—Muak Lek, Nong Khai, Kaeng Khoi, Wiha Daeng, and Wang Muang.

The program was also supported by **Varangkna Tongkamsai**, an

ophthalmologist for the Nations Relief and Community Health Protection Society, who conducted the eye operations. Organizers said the highlight of the five-day event was a February 4 appearance by **Phan Wannamethee**, secretary general of the Thai Red Cross Society and a representative of **Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn**, executive vice president of the Thai Red Cross Society.

The Princess Sirindhorn Mobile Eye Surgery Clinic was established in 1995 to commemorate Princess Maha



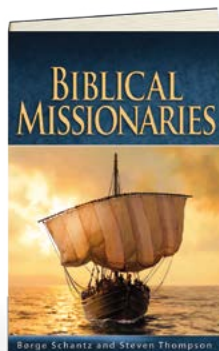
Chakri Sirindhorn's fortieth birthday. The project has advanced to be a mobile surgical unit to provide free eye treatment for people with cataracts, glaucoma, and diseases of the eyelids. So far, the project has provided treatment for more than 158,000 people and performed operations on 40,000 patients. [Kannika Seesookphu and Patthita Chotwittayagan] 



In Thailand, volunteer ophthalmologists from Saraburi Province's Red Cross came to Asia-Pacific International University in Muak Lek to provide free eye surgeries for underprivileged elderly from surrounding districts. Phan Wannamethee, secretary general of the Thai Red Cross of Thailand, also attended the five-day event. [photo courtesy APIU]

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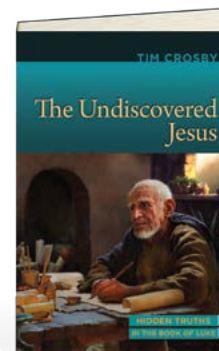
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Alton D. Johnson, MA, is a retired pastor, chaplain, and chief audio technician, living in Calimesa, California, United States.



Seven suggestions for the sound system specialist

The audiovisual (AV) specialist in the local church could be considered the “forgotten person.” Working behind the scenes, he or she is usually ignored except when the audio cuts out or loud feedback “squeals” are heard.

While a smaller church will be happy to find anyone with normal hearing to serve as AV specialists, larger congregations can be more selective in fulfilling such critical and demanding positions. In addition to nominal technical skills, certain personal traits are essential. Can they be content to work in the background with little attention or praise? Are they punctual? Can they be depended upon to open and test each microphone (mic) and piece of equipment in the system before the church is half full? Will they take the time to attend rehearsals of special events that may require changes in mic locations, for instance? Will they graciously accept the criticism (due or undue) that inevitably accompanies any important position?

Following are seven suggestions to pass on to your AV specialist:

1. Avoid word clipping

When several microphones are being used on the rostrum, constantly opening and closing each one often results in missing the first few words of the prayer or the opening sentence of the sermon. Under normal circumstances, no harm results by leaving frequently used mics “open.”

2. Prevent microphone feedback

Failing to prevent microphone feedback is the most common “atrocious” of public address (PA) operators. Feedback occurs when the microphone picks up the amplified sound from a loudspeaker behind it and then sends the sound

back again to the same speaker, causing an endless-loop squeal. Therefore, the mic should not be directly in front of a loudspeaker. The setting at which feedback frequently occurs should be clearly marked on the mixer *gain* slider.

3. Adjust mic levels

For each new person speaking, the AV specialist must be alert to quickly adjust the mic loudness. The new presenter may have a softer or louder voice than the preceding one. Presenters also vary in the distance their mouths are from the mic. Once the norm for a given speaker is established, the operator should not continually compensate for the speaker’s volume and inflection variations, for without them a good speaker’s delivery would sound monotonous.

Mixer board meters can be useful, but they cannot assess the subtleties of real-life situations. They cannot, for example, advise the AV specialist to increase the level for a large crowd and lower the volume for a smaller attendance. Just the difference of a few people can affect the acoustic balance. The operator’s ears should never be covered with headphones while determining the correct audio level.

4. Adjust mic heights

The AV specialist should delegate someone to sit in the front row and, if necessary, quickly adjust the height of mic stands or the pulpit mic for the height of each new person on the podium. Of course, the volume should be cut while the stand or gooseneck is being adjusted.

5. Use rechargeable batteries

Nothing can be more frustrating than having a wireless mic lose power

halfway through a sermon. Some operators think they can judge when it is about time to replace a battery. To avoid having to discard a half-used battery every week or so to guard against failure, consider it more economical to use rechargeable batteries. After the last Sabbath service, the batteries can be left to charge until the following Sabbath, thus ensuring no battery power failures.

6. Avoid operator manipulation

The location of the PA system is crucial. If the audio mixer board’s location seems too remote or not near the rear-center of the church and real-time audio monitoring is difficult, then the AV specialist should delegate two or three deacons to sit in separate locations and signal when the volume is optimum. Allowing just anyone in the congregation to ask the operator to raise or lower the volume would result in the same dissatisfaction as allowing everyone access to the church thermostat.

7. Beware of ungrounded microphones

I have a pastor friend who was electrocuted in the baptistry after touching a wired but ungrounded mic. While we find it rare now to discover a wired mic in a baptistry, if one is being used in or near the baptistry, it should be removed and the pastor provided with a wireless one. No danger exists with any type of *wireless* mic, whether in the water or not.

AV specialists are a vital link in providing a smooth, seamless church service. Pastors and church leaders should praise them periodically in public and private, especially after they have handled special or demanding services well. 🙏

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