

The background of the cover is a photograph of a tree trunk. A section of the trunk is wrapped in bright blue tape. The bark is light-colored with some darker patches and moss. Green leaves are visible at the top right.

Ministry®

NOVEMBER 2015

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

**“All
Israel
will be
saved”**

*Establishing a
basis for a valid
interpretation*

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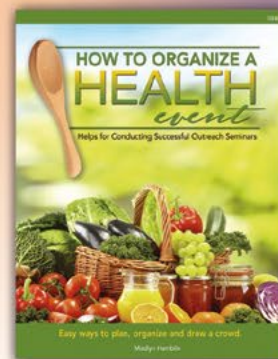
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“Evangelism must be our core business. Ministers cannot train the laity if they do not set an example themselves, and while many members are good at visiting, and can conduct successful Bible studies, a minister is often needed to help people decide to follow Jesus.”

The fall of Lucifer

I really appreciated Kéldie Paroschi's article (“The Fall of Lucifer in Isaiah 14: Is the Interpretation Still Valid?”—September 2015). It is not far-fetched to understand that the judgment on the king of Babylon is couched in terms that identify him with Satan. I believe that the article's thesis is supported by Isaiah 1:10, in which the same literary technique is used, Jerusalem being addressed as Sodom and Gomorrah.

—Robert Hellam, pastor, Del Rey Oaks, California, United States

I read the article on Isaiah 14 by Kéldie Paroschi with great interest and then much disappointment in her conclusion. It proved to be a testimonial to the fact that the long held traditional but erroneous interpretation is difficult to give up even when the facts seem to warrant it and is more to be desired than the clear and certain statements of the biblical text.

The author made a valid argument against the traditional view that Isaiah 14 is in part about Satan; but then quickly, easily and without Scriptural warrant rejected her own well stated

argument and stubbornly clung to the untenable traditional interpretation.

One doesn't need to turn to Near East myths and sagas to refute the traditional belief. One needs only to be a good exegete of the biblical text and accept only what it clearly says and reject what it doesn't say.

—Robert L. Kramer, email

When will Jesus return?

I found Alberto Timm's article (“Longing for His Appearing”—July/August 2015) to be great. What happens when you insert the idea that God created time, but is not confined by it? Is ALL time “now” according to God? If God is not confined by time, then why would He set a date, rather than wait until “the Fullness of the time” when His foreseen conditions merited His return? Does this place time parameters squarely on our shoulders?

—Phil Kuntz, email

Church, Scripture, and adaptations

As a non-Adventist, receiving *Ministry*, I find many articles of great benefit. Thank you for the generous subscription.

In the September issue, the second part of an article by Dr. Nicholas P. Miller (“The Church, Scripture, and Adaptations: Resolute in Essentials, Considerate in Peripherals” [Part 2 of 2]—September 2015), the references to several instances in which the people demanded adaptation to special circumstances were helpful. The fact that God has been willing to make allowance for specific needs, and accepted them, reveals that God is adaptable in non-essentials. This is illustrated in the appointment of a king (1 Sam. 8:10–22), the daughters of Zelophehad (Num. 27:1–11), Deborah and Barak (Judges 4:4–9), King David and the Moabite Restriction (Deut. 23:3; Ruth 4:10, 16–20), David and the Showbread (1 Sam. 21:3–6), and concerning circumcision (Acts 15:24–29; Rom. 2:29).

—Byrum C. Lee, retired pastor of the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana, United States

Balancing pastoral responsibilities

I was disappointed when I read Joseph Kidder's article on balancing a busy life (May 2015). The core business of a Seventh-day Adventist minister—visiting, Bible studies, and evangelism—received a brief mention, and in the suggested time allocation, no time was allocated for it.

I believe people will only be won to Jesus as we spend the time to visit and study the Bible with them. To me, all other church administrative duties must be secondary to this. Evangelism must be our core business. Ministers cannot train the laity if they do not set an example themselves, and while many members are good at visiting, and can conduct successful Bible studies, a minister is often needed to help people decide to follow Jesus.

—Gordon Stafford, retired minister, western Australia



Miraculous life transformation

Recently, I met a fellow pastor and ministry leader, Dr. Paulraj Massillamony. Over breakfast one morning, he told me a remarkable conversion story.

Paulraj grew up in the small village of Kanniseripudur in south India. His family religion was a mixture of animistic Catholicism mingled with popular Hinduism. To supplement his income as a government schoolteacher, Paulraj's father practiced palm reading and communicating with the dead.

One evening a lay Bible worker named Jeyaseelan knocked on their door. He was visiting their village as part of an evangelistic team in their area. Jeyaseelan made a simple request: "Could I please have a drink of water?" Since this act of hospitality was expected in their culture, Massillamony agreed. After drinking the water, Jeyaseelan went on his way. The next day he returned, expressed his thanks for the cup of water, and asked whether he could offer a prayer of blessing for the Massillamony family. The persistent lay Bible worker returned the following day, asking whether he could read a text of Scripture and offer another prayer for the family. His persistence was being rewarded. Jeyaseelan returned again the next day and asked whether he could explain the Scripture he had read the previous day.

After building a bridge of friendship, Jeyaseelan invited Massillamony to attend an evangelistic meeting in the neighboring town. He agreed. As he listened to the Bible-based presentation, Massillamony was deeply moved. He returned again and again for more than a month, excited to learn about the

truths of God's Word. But Massillamony was also experiencing intense internal conflict. The teachings of Scripture were challenging his long-held traditions and superstitions. There was an intense tug of war. Was this teaching really the truth or just another person's opinion?

One day while walking to work, Massillamony encountered a whirlwind on the road and was unable to move forward. Then a gentle voice called to him from out of the whirlwind: "Massillamony, I am with you. I call you. You are on the right track."

This supernatural revelation gave him courage. Massillamony encouraged his wife and seven children to embrace the truths he had recently discovered. Using his gift of teaching, he also shared this revelation with his neighbors and friends.


Massillamony became a Christian leader in his village, and his three sons all became Christian pastors. His oldest son, Dhanapaul, pastors a church near their family village in south India; his middle son, Jeyapaul, pastors in Beirut, Lebanon; and Paulraj pastors a church and serves as a leader for pastors in Singapore. All together, 33 family members are involved in active ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. And the miracle began with a simple request for a drink of water.

Does that story remind you of another incident in the Gospels? John records the story of Jesus asking for a drink of water. His subsequent conversation with a Samaritan woman resulted in her miraculous life transformation. This woman's witness would impact an entire city. According to the

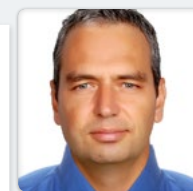
There was an intense tug of war. Was this teaching really the truth or just another person's opinion?

apostle John, "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman" (John 4:39, NKJV). And that miracle also began with a simple request for something to drink.

Every conversion is a remarkable miracle of God. Sometimes those miracles are accomplished in spite of apparently insurmountable obstacles. Take, for example, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He was not merely disinterested, like Massillamony, or mildly resistant, like the Samaritan woman. Saul was openly hostile. Yet, his life was so radically transformed as a result of an encounter with the risen Christ that his name was changed to Paul. He knew, firsthand, the miracle of life transformation.

May this issue of *Ministry* give you an opportunity to reflect again on the miracle of your own conversion and rejoice that your name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20). 

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“All Israel will be saved”: *Establishing a basis for a valid interpretation*

All Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).¹ Confronted with this statement, commentators usually ask, “Which Israel, physical or spiritual?” “Physical Israel” is Jews who are physical descendants of Abraham, considered by many to still be God’s chosen people. “Spiritual Israel” is believers in Jesus. Those who hold to a “spiritual Israel” concept will often believe that physical Israel was once God’s people, but their rejection of Jesus meant that God moved on. He offered the gospel to all the nations, and the community of faith in Jesus became “spiritual Israel”; spiritual in the sense that they have no physical ancestry in Abraham but are counted as God’s people by faith.

Physical Israel?

Is the concept of “physical Israel,” either now or in Old Testament times, biblical? I believe the answer is no.

Though Abraham had at least eight biological sons (Gen. 16:11; 21:3; 25:1, 2), one became part of the covenant, the others did not (Gen. 21:10; cf. Gal. 4:30; Gen. 25:6). Conversely, others not biologically related to Abraham became part of the covenant: “He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your

house or bought with money *from any foreigner who is not your descendant* . . . And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (Gen. 17:12, 13, emphasis supplied).

Indeed, one of the reasons God chose Abraham was that he would teach not only his children but all people in his household irrespective of background: “‘For I have chosen him [Abraham], that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD’ ” (Gen. 18:19, ESV).

Abraham’s household was large, numbering probably over a thousand; on one occasion he armed 318 men “born in his own house” (Gen. 14:14) to liberate Lot. That his household may have shared his faith is indicated by the fact that he trusted one of his servants with finding a wife for Isaac and did so by having him swear “‘by the LORD’ ” (Gen. 24:1–3).

The direct physical descendants of Jacob who entered Egypt numbered 70 (Exod. 1:5). At the Exodus, Israel numbered 600,000 men of military age (Exod. 12:37; cf. Num. 1:46), plus women, children, and elderly men, making a total of somewhere between two million and three million people. No realistic biological growth rates could have produced such growth.

But if we understand Israel inclusively in the sense that Abraham’s household was inclusive, then it is much easier to understand the amazing numerical growth. The two to three million who left Egypt then were not biological offspring of Abraham, but all attached to Israel’s household, by joining the faith—wives, husbands, servants, helpers, of any and every national background.

Indeed, at the time they left Egypt, a mixed multitude joined Israel (Exod. 12:38), partaking fully of the covenant. The full integration of believing foreigners was evidenced by the fact that one of them, Caleb, became the leader of the largest tribe of Israel, the tribe of Judah (Num. 13:3, 6). There is no reason to assume that such accessions to Israel took place only during the Exodus and not before, albeit in smaller numbers.

When God renewed the covenant with Israel (Exod. 19–24), it was an open covenant. Participation was voluntary. Numerous individuals who had no direct descent from Abraham became part of the covenant. Joseph had married an Egyptian (Gen. 41:45); Moses a Midianite (Exod. 2:16–21); Caleb, already mentioned, was a Kennizite (Num. 32:12); Rahab a Canaanite (Josh. 2:1, 2); Ruth a Moabite (Ruth 1:4); Uriah a Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3). King David

himself was only partially Israelite (Ruth 4:17).

Not only individuals but whole groups of foreigners joined the covenant. In addition to the “mixed multitude” already mentioned, Canaanites not destroyed or expelled were eventually integrated, with the Rechabites becoming especially respected for their fidelity to God (Jer. 35:1–19). David’s elite bodyguards were Philistines (1 Chron. 18:17) who had presumably converted, for it is hard to imagine David’s palace filled with pagans.

Throughout the monarchy there were thousands of foreigners in Israel

During the intertestamental period, the Jewish king, John Hyrcanus, converted the whole nation of the Idumeans (Edomites) to Judaism on the point of the sword.⁴ Out of them came the notorious family of Herod.⁵

In New Testament times, the Pharisees were known for their missionary zeal (Matt. 23:15). Synagogues were filled with foreign converts or God-fearers (e.g. Acts 13:16, 26; 16:14; 17:17). Foreigners flocked to Jerusalem to worship during the feasts (John 12:20), with 15 nations mentioned, both “Jews and proselytes” (Acts 2:9–11), as participating in the feast

extent this was carried out we do not know, but the provision was there. The word *apostasy*, or “falling away from the faith,” is not uncommon in the LXX to describe Israel’s sometimes rebellious attitude towards God (e.g. Josh. 22:22; 2 Chron. 29:19).

It is evident, then, that any person of any background could join the covenant and hundreds of thousands (millions?) did so throughout Israel’s history; and that anyone of whatever background could choose to exit the covenant.

In today’s language we could say that Israel functioned in many ways like

When God renewed the covenant with Israel (Exod. 19–24), it was an open covenant. Participation was voluntary. Numerous individuals who had no direct descent from Abraham became part of the covenant.



(1 Chron. 22:2; 2 Chron. 30:25) whom the Septuagint (LXX) calls *prosēlutoi*, converts.² In Solomon’s time their number was 153,600 (2 Chron. 2:17).

During Esther’s time after the collapse of Haman’s plot, “many of the people of the land became Jews” (Esther 8:17). Esther 9:27 indicates that this wave of conversions continued even after the momentous events described in the book. Artaxerxes authorized Ezra to appoint judges for the people in the province “beyond the River” who knew the law, and to teach “those who do not know” (Ezra 7:25), possibly an authorization to convert people of other nations.³

of Pentecost.

God intended the covenant to be open to all nations: “‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’ ” (Isa. 56:7). The fact that for a few such as the Moabites there were certain limitations on when they could enter the covenant (Deut. 23:3) indicates that for others access was unhindered.

Not only could any person of any background join the covenant, but those within it could opt out or be forcefully ejected. To be “cut off” from the people of Israel was a punishment for a number of sins (e.g. Exod. 30:33, 38; 31:14; Lev. 7:20, 21, 25, 27). To what

a church—people joining and people leaving. Indeed, *ekklēsia*, “church,” is the very word Peter chose to describe Israel of old: “This is he who was in the congregation [*ekklēsia*] in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). Lest one be tempted to consider this a lone example, the LXX uses *ekklēsia* 77 times, almost exclusively as a reference to Israel.

In light of the evidence above, it is unbiblical to speak of “physical Israel,” Abraham’s physical descendants. Though Israel did exist for much of its Old Testament history as a nation, in God’s eyes true membership of Israel depended not on ancestry but on faith (cf. Rom. 2:29). Paul acknowledges

this when he points out that out of the whole nation of Israel during the time of Ahab, only 7,000 had remained faithful to God, a remnant, and it was they who constituted the true Israel (Rom. 11:1–5). Biblically therefore, Israel was a spiritual community to/from which people were added and/or removed with no consideration of ancestry or race.⁶

With such a background in mind, we can understand Paul's statement that all Israel will be saved, and the context.

The parable of the olive tree

In Romans 11:16–24 Paul takes this concept of spiritual identity and develops this in order to explain the relationship between the nascent church and Jews who had rejected Jesus. He does so through the parable of the olive tree.

The parable draws from Jeremiah 11:16, 17, where Israel is compared to a “green olive tree, beautiful with good fruit” (11:16, ESV). But because the people had done evil following after Baal, God would burn some of the branches with fire. Part of the reason for this punishment was that they had rejected the warning messages of Jeremiah (Jer. 11:17–23).

Paul employs this parable to explain the relationship between the nascent church and Jews who had rejected Jesus. The olive tree, representing Israel, a covenant community, was once beautiful and complete. But, like Israel rejected Jeremiah—that “gentle lamb” (Jer. 11:19, ESV)—so would they reject another much gentler and greater Lamb, the Lamb of God, Jesus, and lead Him to slaughter. Not only that, but after He rose from the dead and His disciples proclaimed the good news of the resurrection, many Jews still rejected Him.

Paul compares the unbelieving branches in Jeremiah's time that would burn, those Jews who had rejected Jesus, to olive branches “broken off” (Rom. 11:17) “because of unbelief” (11:20). To be broken off means to be excluded from the family of God (11:20, 21).

Two things are important here. First, only dead branches—individuals who failed to believe—are broken off. The tree itself was not rejected; indeed, it continues to be holy (11:16), to nourish, and to support the remaining branches (11:18). Second, since the tree represents Israel and the unbelieving branches are broken off, it follows that they are no longer part of the tree, no longer part of Israel. No unbelieving branch is part of the true Israel.

With its branches broken, the once beautiful tree now looks tattered. How does God deal with this problem? Branches from other olive trees, wild olive trees, are grafted onto the good olive tree. These branches are individuals from all and any nations who come to have faith in Jesus, both then and now: “you [Christians of all nations], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them” (11:17).

An important point needs to be noted here. God does not plant a new tree, the Christian Church. Rather, the once wild branches are grafted onto the same old tree (“grafted in among them” 11:17), which continues to exist and provide nourishment. Since the tree is Israel and the wild branches are grafted onto Israel, they become part of biblical Israel; they are not a new Israel. In a sense, the Israel of the Old Testament that, as we saw, was a spiritual entity, continues to exist and thrive, after it has undergone a process of pruning through the cutting off of unbelieving branches and the adding on of new believing ones.

The tree was once beautiful and complete; then it became tattered because some branches were broken because of unbelief. Now that new branches have been grafted in, the tree is once again beautiful and complete. The new branches become the natural continuation of this wonderful tree.

The church has not replaced Israel. The church is the natural continuation of Israel, just like the branches are the natural continuation of a tree! Believers in Christ are the true Israel.

It is important to note that in taking such an approach, Paul was well within

the thinking patterns of his time. The concept of “official” Judaism being in apostasy or “broken off” was not uncommon in the turbulent times of the turn of the era. The Pharisees, who eventually dominated the theological development of Judaism, emerged from pious Jews who rejected the adoption of the high priesthood by the Hasmoneans in the second century BC and considered themselves as separating from the outlook of the ruling elite.⁷

Indeed, the name *Pharisee* derives from the Aramaic, *perisa*, meaning, “set apart, separated.”⁸ Likewise, the Essenes, who were contemporaries of Jesus and Paul, considered the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood apostate and themselves to be the true Israel. They separated from mainstream Judaism, not only theologically and ceremonially but also physically, by forming the well-known commune in Qumran.⁹ When Paul therefore considered Jews who had rejected Jesus to be broken branches and believers in Jesus to be the true branches, he was operating within theological grounds that were very familiar to his contemporaries.

Moreover, at this early stage Paul did not anticipate, or at least discuss, the sharp break between Christians and Judaism that began maturing a generation later. At this early stage, Christians were mostly of Jewish background and operating within the context of the synagogue and Judaism. So to see some participants of the synagogue service as healthy branches and others as broken off would be a familiar concept. That Christians and Jews eventually went completely separate ways perhaps serves to reinforce the paradigm Paul was espousing.

“All Israel will be saved”

Paul concludes his parable of the olive tree with the statement with which we began this study—a statement that is often discussed and nearly always misunderstood: “all Israel will be saved” (11:26). The question that is usually asked is, which Israel will be saved, “physical” or “spiritual?”

The key to understand this actually very simple text is to interpret the words in harmony with the parable of the olive tree of which they form the conclusion.

Israel, God's people, was once beautiful and complete. But then "blindness" (NKJV) or a "hardening" (ESV) came in part to Israel (11:25). In other words, some of God's people hardened their hearts (cf. Heb. 4:7).¹⁰ They refused to accept the saving work of God in Christ Jesus. The hardening of the hearts parallels the breaking off of some of the branches. So the once beautiful and complete Israel is now tattered, exactly as was the case with the olive tree. The failure of Israel as an Abrahamic covenant community in the rejection of Jesus turned God's expectation of the olive tree into a disappointment. But God's intention for the olive tree is that it should bear fruit—fruit from faith in the grace of God manifested through the cross for the redemption of humanity—cannot and must not fail.

How does God deal with this? He brings in "the fullness of the Gentiles" (11:25). Brings into where? Into Israel, of course, to fill the void left by those whose hearts were hardened. The Greek word *plērōma*, "fullness," is a verbal noun that indicates something that is partially empty or void being filled up.¹¹ So, the void left by those who failed to believe is filled by the Gentiles who come in and take their place. Paul argues that Gentiles—the wild olive branches, strangers to the covenant—are grafted in, and behold the Christian community of faith—a fruit-bearing tree, gathering in the entire human race.

Paul then announces: "And so all Israel will be saved" (11:26). The words "and so" indicate a concluding statement. Israel was complete; some fell off because of unbelief; others came in to fill their place; so now Israel is complete again. Paul can happily declare that all Israel will be saved.

"All Israel" therefore does not refer to "physical Israel," a concept we saw as problematic. "All Israel" refers to all believers of all the ages, from the

patriarchs of the Old Testament to believers today; to put it another way, from the roots of the olive tree in the Old Testament, to its last and tiniest branch, believing Christians today. All Israel refers to the totality of the people of God throughout the ages.


Summary and implications

This study has endeavored to establish two main points. First, the term *Israel* in the Bible is not a referent to physical descent but a term denoting those committed in faith to God; a spiritual, not racial, community.

Second, according to Romans 9, this spiritual Israel has never been rejected. True, the death, resurrection, and rejection of Jesus by members of Israel marked a major turning point in God's dealings with humanity (cf. Dan. 9:24–27; Matt. 21:43). But it was individuals who were rejected. Israel as a referent of God's people continues to exist. It is made up of anyone and everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior irrespective of ancestry or race. Believers in Jesus are the true children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7).

What are the implications? Several, but we will mention three:

1. With regard to modern Jews, there is absolutely no room for anti-Semitism. Their Scripture is part of our Scripture, their biblical heritage our heritage. They are not a rejected nation. They are broken branches, brothers and sisters who have failed to believe, and our call is to love them to faith, as we should all fellow humans.
2. But neither are they God's chosen people. God chose and nurtures the tree. The branches that were broken off are no longer part of the tree. They can be reintegrated, but only through faith (Rom. 11:23). God's purposes will be fulfilled in the tree—believers in Jesus—not the broken branches.
3. Christians would do well to re-explore the roots of biblical Israel,

including the biblical Sabbath, and see it as fully, not indirectly, our heritage. The sharp break between biblical Israel and the church, which is part of many theologies today, is arbitrary and unbiblical. It has robbed the Christian church of much that is valuable. The church is the natural continuation of Israel just like the branches are the natural continuation of the tree. A fuller rediscovery of our roots can enhance our spirituality and worship. 

- 1 Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture passages are from the New King James Version.
- 2 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "proselutoi" (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1945).
- 3 Commentators usually understand this text as authorization to minister to lapsed Jews, for they consider it unlikely that Artaxerxes would have authorized open evangelization of pagans. However, the fact that in Ezra 7:23 Artaxerxes recognized God as the "God of heaven" could indicate that the directive had broader application, including a permission to convert non-Jews.
- 4 Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.9.1. See also Bernard M. Zlotowitz, "Sincere Conversion and Ulterior Motives," in *Conversion to Judaism in Jewish Law: Essays and Responses*, ed. Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer (Pittsburgh, PA: Rodef Shalom, 1994), 67.
- 5 E.g., Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.1.3.
- 6 Jews today understand this very clearly. Any person who converts to Judaism is considered a full Jew and receives full rights to immigrate to Israel; by contrast, Jews of noble heritage who, say, accept Jesus as their Savior, are no longer considered Jews and lose the right to immigrate to Israel.
- 7 See Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 514.
- 8 Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "perisa."
- 9 Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 521–531.
- 10 The Greek *apomeros* that relates to the hardening can be interpreted either (a) that the hardening was "partial" or (b) that the hardening came to "a part" of Israel as opposed to the whole. The second option is preferred for three reasons. First, the noun *meros* most naturally refers to one part of a bigger whole. Second, the word for "hardening" is *porōsis*, a strong word that in the two other instances it is used implies rejection of God (Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:18). So it is difficult to speak of a partial hardening (contrast *porōsis* with the softer *sklēros* and derivatives, often used for hardening that, nonetheless, does not imply rejection). Third, context requires that the hardening came to a part of Israel (the branches that did not believe) as opposed to all branches suffering a partial hardening.
- 11 Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, sv *plērōma*. Cf. LXX Psalms 23:1; 49:12; 88:12; Jer. 8:16; Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 10:26.

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Interim ministry: *What it is, what it can accomplish*

After 37 years of pastoral ministry, I chose to retire. But in ministry there is no such thing as permanent retirement. As one called by God who has spent an entire lifetime serving the gospel of Jesus, I know I can continue to be of service to God in whatever way He wants me to serve.

One day that way opened when I was invited to serve as an interim pastor. Since then I have served as an intentional interim pastor in five churches. All were different. All were challenging. All were gratifying. I will share three experiences.

The first church was a “healthy” congregation in a university town, and their previous pastor had made a remarkable contribution to the church. Every member seemed to have loved her—her sermons, visitation, involvement in church growth, and perception of the church’s future and its role in the community. But after ten years of being a parish pastor, Sue accepted an executive position in the general offices of her denomination. She felt she had to move on.

“What are we to do?” was the collective reflection of a congregation in mourning.

Against that background, I was invited to be the interim pastor until a permanent pastor could be found to replace Sue—not an easy task. I soon found that the spiritual mourning in

the congregation ran deep and collectively. The message I got was simple and straightforward. “Our church was growing. We were doing so well. We just can’t see anyone replacing her.”

That kind of reaction is quite normal. Church families grieve over such a leadership loss just as we do over a loss in the family. But we should remember that grieving can be healthy or destructive, depending on how one handles the grieving process. I listened often to members of that congregation as they told me how much they loved Sue and what wonderful things they did together. My first task was to help them shift out of the “loss” mentality and focus on the future. In time the congregation was on the way to full recovery—and growth.

My second experience was at a rural church that reminded me of my first full-time pastorate. Unlike that first parish, this was, literally, a dead-end congregation. Once, the church was positioned on a main state road. Traffic flowed past the church daily. The church sat in a high profile position along this thoroughfare. Then, the interstate came, terminating the road just beyond the church property. For more than a decade, the church struggled, now sitting on top of a hill at the end of a road that led to nowhere. Here, my goal was to assist the church members in rebuilding a sense of self-esteem by making their presence more prominent in the community while they waited for a full-time pastor.

The third was a very suburban congregation. Once healthy, it was torn apart when the pastor recast the worship services with little communication or consultation with the members. In years past, before moving to the suburb, this had been a downtown congregation known for its musical program and large choir with paid soloists. In the abrupt change and ensuing arguments, more than half the congregation left. And then the pastor, too, had to leave. I was invited to be the interim pastor, and one morning, out-of-town friends came to worship. Their most telling comment at lunch that afternoon was: “We could feel the pain as soon as we walked in the front door. You could cut the tension with a knife.” This congregation viewed itself as irreparably damaged and unable to accomplish any goals with a membership half the size of what it was a year ago. Near the end of my first year of interim ministry, the church held a “Miracle Service,” received a special one-time offering of more than \$100,000 in cash or in kind, and paid off the outstanding mortgage. The church members could not believe what this greatly-reduced-in-size congregation had accomplished. Interim ministry proved that given God’s leadership and believers’ faithfulness, a church could see new horizons.

Such was my experience in interim pastoring. But what insights did I gain that could help churches that are in

transition find a new pastor? How can those called to serve a church on an interim basis fulfill their role so that the congregation moves from a feeling of loss and emptiness to a sense of new beginnings and opportunities?

I will share five major emphases: (1) interim ministry needs to be intentional; (2) interim ministry cannot be the same as regular ministry; (3) interim means “temporary” but not “partial”; (4) interim ministry is an opportunity for renewal; and (5) interim ministry is a time for congregational rediscovery.

Interim ministry needs to be intentional

Interim ministry, a temporary arrangement, involves calling a pastor to provide transitional leadership to a congregation during a period of pastoral vacancy. Such vacancy may arise because of a pastoral move, resignation, retirement, death, or some other reason. When the vacancy arises, the congregation and the administrative body of the denomination may need time to think through the appointment of a new pastor. Sometimes such replacement may take as much as a year. During this interim period, the congregation needs an experienced pastor who can fill the gap, help heal any wounds or sense of loss the congregation may be suffering, and provide a continuation in ministry—in preaching and pastoral caring. Such an interim ministry is not just filling a gap but providing a bridge and preparing the congregation for a meaningful future.

An interim ministry can be successful only if it is intentional. That word *intentional* should apply to all parties involved—the interim pastor, congregation, and administrative bodies.

Interim ministries are times of great opportunity. In many cases, congregations that lose their pastors are susceptible to feelings of low self-esteem. Though some members may celebrate the minister’s retirement or moving, others will see it as a cause for mourning and wonder how they can carry on. Even in solid, healthy congregations, there are matters to work on and improve before a congregation

is ready to welcome a new minister and begin a fresh phase of life and ministry. Whatever the challenge, the interim ministry can be effective only if the pastor comes with the full intention of making it efficient and successful.

The selection of a new pastor is not in the hands of the interim pastor. It is a task dependent on the congregation, usually through a search committee, working in close coordination with higher administrative bodies of the denomination.

Style of interim service varies from situation to situation, from church to church, and from one clergyperson to another. One characteristic that is increasingly common, however, is that this interim person comes to his or her job with a full understanding of what he or she is expected to do. Such an experience may come from past ministerial or interim-pastor experience, such as in my case. But today training in interim ministry and various courses in interim education are available for those interested in getting retooled for the specifics of this transitional ministry. For example, the nondenominational Interim Ministry Network, based in Baltimore, Maryland, United States, offers valuable courses in interim pastoral work. Their “Standards of Practice of Interim Ministry” serves as a basis for regular workshops and other training opportunities that prepare members for certification and accreditation. The rigorous training involves managing the effects of change, congregational grief management, conflict resolution, and preserving/restoring spiritual wellness and growth of the congregation.* The interim pastor’s ability to analyze quickly and follow a specific course of action could lead to a turnaround in a fading congregation.

Interim ministry cannot be the same as regular ministry

My experience taught me that there are decided differences between ministry as a full-time senior pastor and ministry as an interim pastor. Interim ministry is a transitional ministry—one

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Such an interim ministry is not just filling a gap but providing a bridge and preparing the congregation for a meaningful future.

that prepares the congregation for a sense of void, loss, or change left by the departure of one pastor and the uncertain factors involved in the arrival of a new pastor. Bridging the gap can be a profound opportunity to show that the church belongs to God and that He will do what is needed.

While being an interim pastor is not the same as being a regular one, it allows the pastor to minister to congregations in ways that regular full-time ministers might find difficult. The interim pastor knows that his or her time with a congregation is limited. This knowledge allows the interim pastor to deal forcefully and energetically with situations and circumstances that could derail the ministry of an incoming senior minister.

One of the gifts that interim ministers bring to congregations is emotional distance. Because they are not completely absorbed in the congregation, interim pastors are able to view and assess the needs of the congregation in an unbiased appraisal.

Interim means “temporary” but not “partial”

Interim ministry is much more than just leading worship services on the Sabbath. When a pastor leaves a church, the life of the church does not suddenly become limited to Sabbath mornings. It continues in all its complex and varied dimensions throughout the week, and the need for effective and sustained pastoral leadership continues as well. Though “interim” means temporary, it does not mean partial, incomplete, or part-time.

Because the interim minister has a limited amount of time to prepare for

the coming of the next full-time pastor, he or she must hit the ground running. Contact with many families—all of the families in a smaller congregation—is highly valuable in establishing a working relationship between pastor and people. Ideally, the interim pastor is identified as one who has the expertise of an outside consultant and holds such credibility. This is a valuable asset when bringing a congregation to view itself with honesty in order to prepare for the future.

Interim pastors should establish, at the beginning of their ministry, that they are not available for permanent calls in these congregations. Making themselves available makes the work of the search committee too easy and bypasses work that every congregation in transition needs to do. By making themselves unavailable, they can lead the necessary evaluation and planning in an objective manner.

By having the time to look back, grieve, evaluate, and thoughtfully move forward, the congregation can do much more than merely endure the transition.

Interim ministry is an opportunity for renewal

Because the interim pastor’s stay is temporary, he or she can feel less threatened by possible future repercussions of his or her leadership advice. That does not mean the interim pastor should act alone or arbitrarily; he or she should work toward a cooperative endeavor for a sustainable future while the congregation awaits the new pastor. In this process of building a bridge between past and future, an interim pastor not only can offer encouragement but also can act as a catalyst for action because

of their outsider’s perspective regarding how the congregation functions.

Interim periods are times between the times. Interim periods celebrate the temporary. Interims are times for reflection and growth. The concept of “interim” is Scriptural. Without “interim” we cannot understand the grandeur of the *hosanna* and the cry for crucifixion, the grief of the burial and the glory of the resurrection—all in one week; we never would know the nature of servanthood at the Lord’s Supper, the cost of redemption at the Cross, or the practice of patience learned on the most painful Sabbath of the crucifixion week, or the triumph of the resurrection early on the first day.

During the interim, while the disciples were “constantly in prayer” (Acts 1:14, NIV), God prepared the people for the gift and reception of the Holy Spirit. Interims are important times in our faith and congregational life. Those who provide leadership at these particular passages have a special ministry of renewal.

Interim ministry—a time for congregational rediscovery

Interim ministry provides the congregation an opportunity to move through the “in between” time, freed from a sense of uncertainty and crisis. Some tasks your congregation can undertake during the interim ministry period are as follows:

- Come to terms with the congregation’s history. A congregation may experience a sense of loss during pastoral transition. There may be widespread grief that needs to be addressed. If the pastoral relationship was severed under trying circumstances, anger may be expressed, and healing needs to take place. The congregation may need release from the restricting power of the past in order to openly and fully prepare for and accept a new pastor.
- Maintain the viability of the congregation. One of the interim leader’s primary roles includes helping the congregation continue its programming and, if possible, offering

suggestions that will make these programs more meaningful.

- Accept shifts in lay leadership. When a pastor leaves, new patterns of lay involvement may develop. Often feelings of anxiety and uncertainty about change may manifest themselves. The interim ministry can help provide the environment in which change can occur positively, creatively, and helpfully.
- Resolve feelings and reclaim values. Through pastoral visitation and group meetings, the interim pastor can provide opportunities for feelings about the past and ongoing concerns to be reviewed and resolved. At the same time, the interim pastor can assist the congregation in reclaiming its core values and discover a new identity. The interim ministry provides the congregation with both time and process to take a look at *themselves*, find out who they are (core values), and project realistically who they want to become (new identity).
- Correct, if necessary, the congregation's course and make needed changes.


- Assist the search committee in its search process. The interim pastor, however, should not become involved in making decisions about particular candidates.
- Increase the potential for the successful ministry of the incoming senior pastor. The interim minister acts as one who is future-oriented. His or her role is to help a congregation prepare for the arrival of the new pastor and to offer observations that help the congregation.
- Strengthen regional and denominational ties. During an interim period, congregations often find themselves in close contact with regional administrative offices, particularly through the search and call process. The interim period is a prime time for the local church to remember its covenant relationship with the wider church.

Conclusion

The role of the interim pastor is primarily to facilitate an easy and enduring transition from the departure time of a pastor to the search and arrival of

a new pastor. The congregation may go through a process that involves a climate of exploring, healing, dreaming, building, and, most of all, continuing to be the body of Christ.

If the pastor and the people view this interim ministry as more than marking time, the interim ministry becomes an opportunity for the congregation to capitalize on its strengths "between the times."

Most interim ministries may last up to a year, some shorter. It usually takes several months to work through the search and call process. When the end of the interim time approaches and the congregation has called a new pastor, the focus begins to shift. At that point, the interim pastor and congregation gear up to welcome the new pastor. This transitional time need not be a period of anxiety or simply marking time but can be valuable and creative, preparing the ground so that under the leadership of the new pastor, the church can flourish and bear greater fruits. 

* See Interim Ministry Network web page: www.imnedu.org.

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Youth witnessing

On one of my visits to El Salvador I met a young man named Leonel Arteaga. Leonel was a faithful Seventh-day Adventist employee in the San Salvador City Hall. While working there as a young professional, he discovered that eight years earlier the local conference Youth Ministries Department had asked the city of San Salvador for permission to erect and unveil a monument of the Ten Commandments in the central square. The request was tabled and forgotten by the authorities all those years. Leonel decided to request a personal interview with the mayor of the city, who graciously received him in the highest office of that government building.

After introducing the main reason for his interview, Leonel gave the mayor a copy of the original request and presented the project on behalf of the Adventist youth in San Salvador.

I was privileged to unveil an impressive monument of the law of God in the central square of that capital city while serving as Youth Ministries director of the Inter-American Division. Since that day, millions have received the impact of that witness of the Lord by reading the Ten Commandments posted there!

Leonel's witnessing reminds me about an inspired quotation that I joyfully ponder with my fellow ministers around the world: "In the closing scenes of this earth's history many

... children and youth will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power."

—Alfredo Garcia-Marenko serves as assistant editor, *Elder's Digest*, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

* Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), 166.

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Ardaine Gooden was a graduate student at the time of this writing at the Howard University School of Divinity, Washington, DC.



Partiality: *The sin often ignored by many*

Editors' note: *This manuscript merited one of two second prizes in the most recent Ministry Student Writing Contest.*

We live in a world where the saying “all men may be created equal, but some are more equal than others” portrays the harsh reality of our human existence. The gap between the rich and the poor is no narrower than it was centuries ago, creating imbalances favoring one group at the expense of the other. The Epistle of James develops a polemic argument against such practices in chapter 2:1–13 within the context of a faith community, albeit a quasi occurrence of the world.

The admonition against partiality

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism” (James 2:1).¹

Thus states the apostle James, one of his great pronouncements of practical Christianity against a sin often ignored by many: the sin of favoritism. The apostle begins by addressing the believers as “my brothers” to arrest their attention to the community of faith in which they are called. He employs a relational language to establish the bond they share as brothers and sisters. The verse thus acts as an imperative² and a strong prohibition

against favoritism. The word translated “favoritism” (NIV) is the Greek *prosopolempsia* and found only here in the New Testament. The word may also be translated “partiality” (NKJV), “respect of persons” (KJV), “snobbery” (NEB), and “worship of ranks” (TCNT). As Martin Dibelius argues, this “admonition warns against combining the faith with partiality.”³

What James says is that a believer who professes faith in Christ cannot show partiality or favoritism in the community of faith. God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11; Col. 3: 25). Thus, to claim faith in Him while discriminating against others is unacceptable; God does not discriminate; neither should His people.⁴ It is absurd to believe that faith and partiality are compatible.

Illustrating partiality in action

James further argues the point by giving an example. “Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor person in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges who have evil thoughts?” (2:2–4). In this section, James deals sternly with

the issue of partiality by drawing on an illustration to make his point. Evidently such blatant partiality was occurring in the synagogues either in worship or judicial settings,⁵ but James is referring not to such synagogue gatherings but to a gathering of believers in Christ (2:1).

The apostle brings to focus two contrasting persons entering the meeting place: the first garbed in gold and fine clothing and the second a poor person in worn-out clothes. Elsewhere in the epistle, James draws similar analogy between those in humble positions and the wealthy (1:9–11, 22–27; 5:1–6). Although he does not say in 2:2–4 that the first person is rich, the description of his appearance and further reference in verse 6 implies such status. The treatment given to the two individuals is an apparent antithesis. In commenting on the behavior of the believers, Roy B. Ward posits, “Partiality is demonstrated in the way these men are seated, based solely on outward appearance.”⁶ The rich person was comfortably accommodated, while the poor person was handled in a demeaning manner.

James sees this as an unacceptable act. Such an act conjures up an imagery of an enemy subject to a conqueror. The poor man in this incident was despised in a similar manner, unfortunately, by those professing faith in Christ. As Keenan rightly states, “such differential treatment is an example of

discrimination.”⁷ This discrimination in the treatment of two individuals in the faith community was an indictment on the believers. In doing this they were violating the principle of Leviticus 19:15 that outlines how the poor and the rich should be treated. “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.” By their own actions, they were making themselves judges and unjustly carrying out the law. The believers were violating the principle of the law that demanded fair justice for all. As Keenan further states, the phrase rendered “evil thoughts” (v. 4) can be “interpreted to mean judges with evil reasoning, who evaluate who is important and who is insignificant . . . based on their social status.”⁸ Such discriminatory behavior based on appearance, James tells the believers, is tantamount to rendering judgment with evil intent. For people may “look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

God's election of the poor

The apostle is now ready to make a most interesting shift and render a stern rebuke: “Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?” (James 2:5–7).

By these strong words, the apostle questions their unjustified behavior. As Dibelius suggests, “the author brings two factors to bear against the degradation of the poor and the show of favoritism to the rich: (a) the poor are chosen by God as heirs of the Kingdom of God, (b) but the rich have frequently proven themselves to be the enemies of Christianity.”⁹ In his agonizing plea to the believers, James seizes the opportunity to affirm the poor. In the ancient world, the poor were seen as people of devalued social means and

status, in destitute or near-destitute circumstances, who had failed to maintain their standing in society and fallen to a marginal position in the social order.¹⁰ The picture is more than a social dilemma; the poor were totally dependent on others for their survival.

For James, the believer's lack of affirmation towards the poor was a statement of dishonor to God who had elected them. David Edgar states, “There is consistent evidence within the gospel traditions that socially marginal people were of considerable impor-

enters the assembly, they act toward a community member the same way the rich act toward them.”¹³

At this juncture, James reminds the believers that most of them are poor, who themselves are being oppressed and dragged into the court by the rich. The word *oppress* is often used in the Old Testament in prophetic denunciation of the exploitation of the poor by the rich.¹⁴ For example, Amos thunders: “Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, ‘When will the New Moon be

Exercise of genuine faith means treating all members of the household of faith equally.

tance in the ministry of Jesus: they are described as favored, because God's kingdom is theirs (Luke 6:20; Matt. 5:3).¹¹ Thus, James was charging those who show partiality toward the rich as acting contrary to God. The community of faith was acting according to the ancient world's measure of values in which the rich and powerful are shown honor in hopes of receiving from them a benefaction in return. Employing the language that fits within that world of honor and shame, James observes tersely that they have dishonored the poor person.¹²

The apostle further points to the folly of the situation by showing how they have been mistreated by those who are rich. “James attacked their double-mindedness further by showing his readers that their behavior contradicts not only their faith but also their own experience. They are a community oppressed by the rich. This activity of the oppressive rich will be described even more graphically in 5:1–6. . . . Yet when a poor person

over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?’ skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat” (8:4–6).

Often the rich advanced in society at the disadvantage of the poor. Edgar comments: “*Plousios* meant rich, having access to a more than average extent of material resources, but access to such a measure of limited resources often implied that others had to do without, were deprived and exploited in order for the rich selfishly to accumulate their extra share.”¹⁵ Therefore, the poor and marginal are often treated with injustice at the powerful and influential hands of the wealthy.

James is arguing that the discriminating actions of the believers reflected the oppressive behavior of the wealthy meted out to them. He further censures the believers for taking side with the rich who are “blaspheming the noble

name of him to whom you belong” (James 2:7).

What is this noble name James is referring to? Many questions have been raised as to whom this refers. Traditionally, it has been interpreted to be Christ. Even so, when we look at the Old Testament, such a phrase refers simply to God, Yahweh, because that

shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not murder.’ If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker” (2:8–11).

James criticizes the believers by quoting the royal law, taken from Leviticus 19:18. What is this royal law that James is citing? Dibelius asserts

A person who claims to live by the law of love yet practices discrimination and favoritism that the law of love forbids has broken the law entirely.

According to Cain Hope Felder, “throughout vs. 8–11, there are indications that James considers the law as the basis for the measuring of sin and transgressions.”²⁰ To support his argument, James tied in the unitary nature of the law by pointing out that the commandments “Do not commit adultery” and “Do not murder” came from the same source. These two commandments are singled out as representing the entire torah. Since the entire law comes from the same God, the entire law should be considered royal. For Keenan, “to avoid adultery but commit murder sets a person against the very source of Torah.”²¹ This example is meant to confirm James’s judgment concerning partiality in the assembly. If they have discriminated among themselves on the basis of appearance, then they have entirely missed the meaning of the law of love.²²

is the name invoked over the people, showing that they are His possession (Num. 6:27; Isa. 43:7; Jer. 14:9; Amos 9:12).¹⁶ As Robert Wall stresses, “If God has called the poor into the congregation as heirs of the kingdom, then their oppression not only undermines God’s special relationship with them but also runs the risk of God’s final judgment”¹⁷ (James 2:13). The believers, in so treating the poor poorly, were guilty of siding with the rich and dishonoring God in the process. The believers were “weighed in the balance and found wanting.” The double-mindedness of the community of believers shows that they had fallen short of the standard as established in the apostle’s thesis in verse 1.

Emphasis on the royal law

As James contemplates the situation, he makes his point by appealing to the law: “If you keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, ‘You

that *royal law* means “the law with royal authority, and or the law that is set for the kings.”¹⁸ James’s assertion is no doubt to the royal law of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus, to love your neighbor is a law that comes from God, the Lawgiver. The word *neighbor* is not restricted to one who is rich. The law does not say, “Love one’s rich neighbor.” Jesus said in Matthew 5:43–45: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” As the good Samaritan story illustrates, one’s neighbor is anyone in need. A person who claims to live by the law of love yet practices discrimination and favoritism that the law of love forbids has broken the law entirely.¹⁹ James denounces partiality in words that cannot go unnoticed: those who are indulging in favoritism are breaking the law. Favoring the well-to-do over the poor in a place of worship is transgressing the law of loving one’s neighbors. Such a partiality is a serious matter, and this constitutes a sin. “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4).

Harmony in words and deeds

To bring home his point, James makes a final entreaty to believers: “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:12, 13). In verse 12 James counsels “speak and act.” That is to say, whatever one professes must be revealed in their actions. Building on his teachings in the previous chapter, James sets into motion the framework of faith in action. He implores the believers to “speak and act” using the Greek imperative mode to emphasize the continual nature of these actions. Believers are commanded to be consistent in their Christian conduct. One test of such consistency is how we act toward the poor, how the motif of mercy reflects the inner reality of faith. In the Old Testament, mercy is a theme demonstrated by caring for the marginalized, oppressed, and social outcasts (Mic. 6:8; Zech. 7:9, 10). As to what happens to those who fail the test of mercy, James in 2:13 provides the answer: “judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.”²³ In essence,

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Anthony Kent

PREACH coordinator for *Ministry*, International Journal for Pastors

those who do not show mercy will not be receiving mercy in judgment. Allusion can be made to Matthew 5:7: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” An attitude of mercy signals the presence of Jesus Christ, the one who always provides mercy. James takes painstaking efforts to reiterate the believer’s breaching of the law in what may seem a simple matter of seating in a worship assembly (James 2:2–4) as having monumental eschatological consequences.

Conclusion

The Epistle of James stems from a community of believers in Christ who were acting contrary to their calling. James counters the partiality impulse of the community by clearly showing that this was ungodly and a breach of the law. If any believer is in Christ, partiality cannot be found in him or her. The believer’s life is one of consistency,


where words and deeds are in harmony, and faith and works go hand in hand. Exercise of genuine faith means treating all members of the household of faith equally. James’s focus has profound implications for our contemporary Seventh-day Adventist church and other faith communities that have congregants of varying status and shades of people. Indeed, the church should be a place where the royal law embodies and governs fellowship. 

- 1 All Scripture passages are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
- 2 See W. E. Oesterley, “The General Epistle of James,” *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, vol. 4, as quoted in John B. Polhill, “Prejudice, Partiality and Faith: James 2,” *Review and Expositor* 83, no. 3 (1986): 397.
- 3 Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975).
- 4 Lorin I. Cranford, “An Exposition of James 2,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 29, no. 1 (1986): 21.
- 5 See John P. Keenan, *The Wisdom of James* (New

York: The Newman Press, 2005), 67; Roy B. Ward, “Partiality in the Assembly: James 2:2–4,” *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (1969): 90.

- 6 Ward, “Partiality in the Assembly,” 87.
- 7 Keenan, *The Wisdom of James*, 68.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 9 Dibelius, *James*, 137.
- 10 David H. Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor? The Social Setting of the Epistle of James* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press 2001), 112.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 12 *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. 12 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 192.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 192–93.
- 14 Keenan, *The Wisdom of James*, 70.
- 15 Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor?* 122.
- 16 Robert W. Wall, *Community of the Wise: The Letter of James* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997) 118, 119, as quoted in Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor?* 72.
- 17 Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 119.
- 18 Dibelius, *James*, 143.
- 19 *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. 12, 193.
- 20 Cain H. Felder, “Partiality and God’s Law: An Exegesis of James 2:1–13,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 39 (Fall82/Winter83): 2.
- 21 Keenan, *The Wisdom of James*, 76.
- 22 *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. 12.
- 23 See Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2000), 117.

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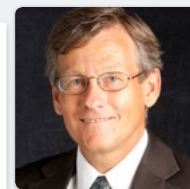
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Old Testament principles *relevant to* consensual homoerotic activity —Part 2 of 3

This, the second part of a three-part study, seeks to identify principles in the Old Testament relevant to the relationship between God's community of faith and individuals who engage in sexual activity outside (heterosexual) marriage. My primary focus is on *mutually consensual homoerotic activity* as practiced within the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community.

Legal prohibitions of homosexual practice (Leviticus 18 and 20)

Leviticus contains the following laws concerning homoerotic activity:

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination" (18:22, ESV).

"If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them" (20:13, ESV).

Leviticus 18:22 serves as a categorical and apodictic prohibition addressed to the Israelite male regarding an action that he (the subject) should not do to another male (as direct object). Following this prohibition is

an expression of the Lord's assessment of the act: "it is an abomination."¹ Leviticus 20:13 expresses the same idea in a casuistic formulation, specifying that both men who (voluntarily) engage in this, i.e., the giving and receiving partners, have committed an abomination, and adding the penalty of capital punishment under Israelite theocratic jurisprudence.²

As with legislation regarding other serious sexual offenses, Leviticus 18 and 20 offer no qualifications, limiting cultural factors, or mitigating circumstances, such as a loving, exclusive, committed relationship. We are simply forbidden to engage in a male homosexual act, regardless of one's intentions. Obviously, the death penalty that applied under the Israelite theocracy, which no longer exists, cannot be enforced on the authority of Leviticus in a secular state. However, this penalty indicated God's attitude toward the act, which was to be entirely excluded from the community of His people. Furthermore, those who deliberately violate any of the laws in Leviticus 18 are additionally condemned to the divinely inflicted punishment of "cutting off" (v. 29), which God Himself can carry out anytime and anywhere. One

who is "cut off" loses his afterlife, which can occur through extirpation of his line of descendants.³

In Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the defining element of the homoerotic act is described as (literally): "lay (verb from root škb)" a male the lyings down (pl. of *miškab*) of a woman." The verb for "lie" (from the root škb) describes the sexual activity as a whole process, like our modern English expressions, "go to bed with," "make love," or "have sex." So Leviticus excludes the process or any part of it. The fact that the sexual process covered by the Hebrew verb would normally include penetration and male ejaculation does not limit its meaning to these elements and, therefore, justify anything short of penetration.⁵ To specify the idea of penetration by itself, the Hebrew language uses a different expression: verb *ntn* + noun *šēkobē* + preposition *b*, which literally means, "put (one's) penis in" (Lev. 18:20, 23; 20:15; Num. 5:20).⁶

In Numbers 31:17, 18, 35 and Judges 21:11, 12, "the lying down of a male" is what a female experiences when she has sexual relations with a man.⁷ In this light, "the *lyings* down of a woman," in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, would describe what a man experiences

when he has sex with a female. So the point is that a man should not have the kind of sexual experience with another male that he would, otherwise, have with a woman.

The expression in Leviticus 18 and 20 is further clarified by Genesis 49:4, where Jacob addresses Reuben, his eldest son, regarding his incest with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine, (literally): "... for you went up (onto) the beds (plural of *miškab*) of your father." The real problem was not the location of this act on a bed, i.e., a place of lying down belonging to Jacob, but the fact

Leviticus 18:3, the Israelites are not to behave like the Egyptians or inhabitants of Canaan, indicating that God does not approve of the ways in which these peoples violate His principles of morality. Divine disapproval of Gentile practices becomes explicit in verses 24, 25, 27, and 28, where the Lord says that He is driving the inhabitants of Canaan from the land (cf. 20:22, 23) because they have defiled it by doing the abominations prohibited earlier in the chapter, which include homosexual activity (18:22). So, God holds both Israelites and Gentiles accountable, as

3. Its purpose is to avoid defilement of the holy sphere centered at the sanctuary (Lev. 7:20, 21; 15:31; Num. 5:1–4).
4. It has a ritual remedy, such as ablutions and sacrifice (e.g., Lev. 14; 15).

The defilements in Leviticus 18 belong to another category: moral impurity that results from seriously sinful action. This cannot contaminate another person by physical contact; instead it defiles both the sinner and the land, and cannot be remedied by ritual means.¹² Such moral defilements are generated by sexual offenses (ch. 18), idolatry (18:21; cf. v. 24), and murder (Num. 35:31–34), which violate divine moral principles (cf. Exod. 20:3–6, 13, 14) and are forbidden both to Israelites and foreigners dwelling among them (Lev. 18:2, 26; Num. 35:15).

The contexts of the laws against homosexual practice in Leviticus 18 and 20 reinforce the idea that their application is permanent. Laws in Leviticus 18 concern incest (vv. 6–17), incestuous bigamy (v. 18), sexual relations during menstruation (v. 19), adultery (v. 20), giving children to the god Molech (v. 21), *male homosexual activity* (v. 22), and male and female bestiality (v. 23). Leviticus 20 deals with Molech worship (vv. 1–5), occult (v. 6), cursing one's father or mother (v. 9), adultery (v. 10), incest (vv. 11, 12), *male homosexual activity* (v. 13), incest (v. 14), male and female bestiality (vv. 15, 16), incest (v. 17), sexual relations during menstruation (v. 18), incest (vv. 19–21), "pure" (fit to eat) and "impure" (unfit to eat) meats (v. 25), and occult (v. 27).

Principles of the Decalogue

Principles of several of the Ten Commandments appear in Leviticus 18 and 20: Molech worship and occult practice violate the first (and probably also the second) commandments (Exod. 20:3–6), cursing parents disregards the fifth commandment (v. 12), and adultery breaks the seventh commandment (v. 14). So, at least some

The prohibition of homosexual activity continues throughout the Christian era to the present time.

that Reuben usurped a prerogative regarding Bilhah, i.e., bedding down with her, who exclusively belonged to Jacob. This prerogative, expressed by the (probably abstract) plural of *miškab*, the meaning of which closely corresponds to that of the same word in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, where "the lyings down [also plural of *miškab*] of a woman" are legitimate for a man to experience with the right woman, but never with another man.⁸

A universal prohibition?

The meaning of the biblical laws regarding homoerotic activity is clear, but to what group(s) of people do they apply? The legislation in Leviticus 18 and 20 is primarily addressed to the Israelites but also applies to the foreigners living among them (18:2, 26; 20:2). According to the narrative framework of Leviticus, the Lord gave these laws before they entered the Promised Land, and he did not restrict their applicability to that land.⁹ In

they should understand basic principles of sexual morality from natural law (cf. Rom. 1:18–32; 1 Cor. 5:1).¹⁰

Ceremonial or moral, temporary or permanent?

The fact that Leviticus 18 refers to illicit sexual activities defiling (root *tm'*) those who engage in them and also their land (vv. 20, 23–25, 27, 28, 30) does not mean that the prohibitions are ceremonial laws that regulate physical ritual impurity.¹¹ A ritual/ceremonial impurity is recognizable by the facts that:

1. It is generated by a physical substance or condition, which explains why it can be transferred by physical contact in many cases.
2. Incurring it does not constitute a sin, i.e., a violation of a divine command (e.g., 12:6–8—no forgiveness needed; contrast chapter 4), unless contracting it is prohibited (e.g., 11:43, 44; Num. 6:6, 7).

of the laws in these chapters express or apply permanent principles.¹³

However, this alone does not prove that all other laws in these chapters are permanent. Compare Leviticus 19, which reiterates some of the Ten Commandments (e.g., vv. 3, 4, 11, 12, 30) but also contains some ritual laws that cannot remain applicable because they depend on the function of the sanctuary/temple on earth (e.g., vv. 5–8, 20–22), which has been gone since A.D. 70. Nevertheless, Leviticus 18 and 20 do not contain any ceremonial laws that require the sanctuary/temple.¹⁴

The laws concerning sexuality in Leviticus 18 delineate boundaries that safeguard people's moral purity (vv. 4, 5, 24–30) in ways that go beyond the exemplary prohibition of adultery in the seventh commandment (Exod. 20:14). They are also based on the principle of sexuality expressed in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (ESV). Leviticus 20 adds the overall motivation of gaining holiness from the Lord that emulates His holy character (vv. 7, 8, 26). The laws in this chapter are all about personal holiness in relation to God. Therefore, their principles are moral and permanent, although Leviticus 20 adds some civil penalties for enforcement under the theocracy (vv. 2, 9–16, 27).¹⁵

Clearly, biblical laws against incest, bigamy, and bestiality in Leviticus are moral in nature. However, Christians generally do not understand that the laws against deliberate sexual relations during menstruation (18:19; 20:18) are also moral,¹⁶ which explains why not sexually approaching a woman during her period appears in Ezekiel 18:6 among a list of moral virtues.¹⁷ The fact that the prohibitions against sex during menstruation constitute a moral requirement removes the force of the argument that Christians do not observe it because it is ceremonial, and therefore, the laws against homosexual activity a few verses away are no longer in force, either. The fact is, Christians should avoid sex during menstruation.

Their violation of this requirement through ignorant and inconsistent oversight does not justify breaking the prohibition of homosexual activity.¹⁸

New Testament echoes

We have found that the laws against homosexual activity in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 appear in contexts that exclusively consist of moral laws that guide God's people in morally pure and holy living, which indicates that these laws are permanent. The New Testament affirms this ongoing applicability of the holiness laws of Leviticus. The Jerusalem council, recorded in Acts 15, established lifestyle requirements for Gentile Christians as follows: "that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality" (v. 29 ESV; cf. v. 20). The list in this verse summarizes the groups of prohibitions in Leviticus 17 and 18,¹⁹ which were applicable to Gentiles living among the Israelites (17:8, 10, 12, 13, 15; 18:26). In Acts 15:20, 29, the Greek word *porneia*, for "sexual immorality" in general, fits the range of sexual offenses prohibited in Leviticus 18.²⁰ Therefore, the prohibition of homosexual activity continues throughout the Christian era to the present time.

(Part 3 will appear in the January 2016 issue.) ❖

word in the plural (*to'ebot*) characterizes all of the offenses prohibited earlier in the chapter (vv. 26, 27, 29, 30), the only individual case labeled as an abomination (*to'ebah*) is male homosexual activity (v. 22). Also, only this kind of activity is called an abomination in Leviticus 20 (v. 13).

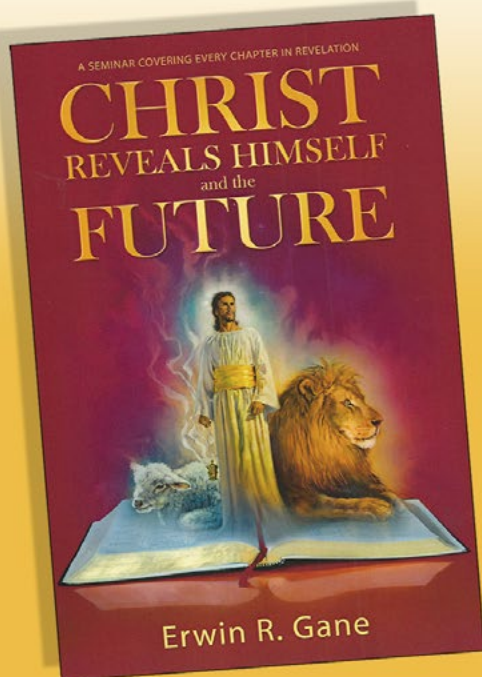
- 2 Those who execute them are blameless because the sexual partners bear their own bloodguilt, i.e., responsibility for their own deaths.
- 3 Cf. Donald Wold, "The Meaning of the Biblical Penalty *Kareth*" (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1978), 251–55; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 457–60; Baruch Schwartz, "The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. David P. Wright, David N. Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 13.
- 4 Here Hebrew *'et* is apparently the direct object marker, but alternatively, it could be understood as the preposition "with," in which case the translation would be "lie with a male."
- 5 Cf. Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 149–50.
- 6 On the rendering "penis" for *šēket*, see Harry Orlinsky, "The Hebrew Root *ŠKB*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63 (1944): 40. The published English versions do not actually translate this word.
- 7 "Lying down" renders the singular of *miškab*, literally, "bed" or place of lying down.
- 8 Against the interpretation of Jacob Milgrom, who interprets the plural of *miškab* as an idiom for only illicit heterosexual unions and therefore limits the prohibitions in Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 to incestuous homosexual activity (*Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 3A [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 1569, 1786; citing David Stewart), see Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 326–28. In Leviticus 18, verse 22 is separated from the incest laws (vv. 6–18). If verse 22 were implicitly limited to incest, one would have to argue the same regarding the intervening laws concerning sex during menstruation (v. 19), adultery (v. 20), and Molech worship (v. 21). This would not make sense because incestuous sex during menstruation and incestuous adultery are already ruled out by the earlier incest laws, and all adultery and Molech worship are already categorically forbidden by the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:3–6, 14). Recently Bruce Wells has argued that "the lyings down of a woman" in Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 literally means "on the beds of a wife" and refers to homosexual activity by a married man that violates the rights of his wife ("The Grammar and Meaning of the Leviticus Texts on Same-Sex Relations Reconsidered," paper presented on November 24, 2014, at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, CA, USA). However, if *'ishah*, "woman," were restricted to the wife of the man addressed in 18:22 and referred to in 20:13, we would expect some indication that she belongs to him, such as in 18:20. The word *'ishah* by itself simply means any "woman," as in 18:19. Therefore, the prohibition addresses all men, not only married men.

1 The Hebrew word *to'ebah*, translated as "abomination" in these passages, can refer to a wide variety of evils that are abhorrent to the Lord. On this Hebrew term and its semantic range, see H. D. Preuss, "*tō'ebā*; *t'b*," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry; transl. David E. Green [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006], 15:591–604). Preuss summarizes: "Within the OT, then, *tō'ebā* refers to something in the human realm that is ethically abhorrent, either as an idea or as an action; above all it is irreconcilable with Yahweh, contrary to his character and His will as an expression of that character, an ethical and cultic taboo. To call something *tō'ebā* is to characterize it as chaotic and alien, and therefore dangerous, within the cosmic and social order. . . . Because the noun (as well as the verb) enjoys such a wide range of usage in the OT, it is difficult to arrive at a single root significance of everything characterized as *tō'ebā*. Sapiential and legal material stand side by side with cultic material in the great majority of instances" (602). In Leviticus 18, where the same

- 9 Contrast 14:34; 19:23; 23:10; 25:2, regarding laws that begin to function when the Israelites are installed in Canaan.
- 10 Cf. James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, *The Same Sex Controversy: Defending and Clarifying the Bible's Message About Homosexuality* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 66.
- 11 Roy E. Gane, "Same-sex Love in the 'Body of Christ?'" in *Christianity and Homosexuality* (ed. David Ferguson, Fritz Guy, and David Larson; [Roseville, CA: Adventist Forum, 2008]), part 4, 66, 67 in response to John R. Jones, "'In Christ There Is Neither . . .': Toward the Unity of the Body of Christ," in *Christianity and Homosexuality*, part 4s, 5.
- 12 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1326; Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21–31; Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 139–53. It is true that an emission of semen generated a minor physical ritual impurity (Lev. 15:16–18), but this was separate from the moral question of whether it was permitted to incur the impurity in a given situation.
- 13 God originally gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites (Exod. 19; 20; cf. Deut. 5). However, according to the New Testament, they have ongoing application for Christians, whether they are Jewish or Gentile and live inside or outside the land of Israel (Rom. 7:7, 12; 13:9; James 2:11; cf. Matt. 19:18, 19).
- 14 Even the basic distinctions between "pure" (fit to eat) and "impure" (unfit to eat) meats, of which Leviticus 20 provides a reminder (v. 25; cf. 11:1–23, 29, 30, 40–45), are not ceremonial because an impure animal cannot be made pure by ritual remedies, and there is no ritual remedy for a person who violates a categorical injunction against eating an impure animal (contrast vv. 24–28, 31–40, which provide for ritual purification from contact with various kinds of animal carcasses by touch or carrying or by eating a pure animal that has died of itself). The purpose of these distinctions is to maintain the purity of the people, independent from the sanctuary, in harmony with their personal holiness in relation to God (11:43–45; cf. Dan. 1:8—far from the destroyed temple; Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 206–9, 215).
- 15 On moral law outside the Ten Commandments and permanent moral/ethical principles in civil laws, see Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 307–8. Notice that when Jesus was asked to identify the greatest commandment in the torah, He did not refer to one of the Ten Commandments but cited Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, permanent moral laws given through Moses that sum up the overarching moral responsibilities of love for God and other human beings (Matt. 22:36–40).
- 16 Just as they generally do not understand that it is a moral requirement (based on respect for life, the principle behind Exodus 20:13—"You shall not murder," ESV), even for Gentile Christians as a test of fellowship, to abstain from eating the meat of an animal from which the blood was not drained out at the time of slaughter (Acts 15:20, 29; cf. Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10–12).
- 17 It is true that in Leviticus 15:24 there is a ritual remedy for a man who has sex with a woman during her period, but either this refers to an accidental/inadvertent case or the concern here is only with the nature of the physical ritual impurity, irrespective of any penalty for incurring it (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 940–41).
- 18 Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 324–26, responding to William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 168–70.
- 19 Leviticus 17:3–9—well-being offerings, of which the offerer eats, sacrificed to goat-demons; 17:10–14—eating blood in improperly slaughtered meat; chapter 18—sexual immorality in general.
- 20 For example, in the New Testament, *porneia* includes incest (1 Cor. 5:1). The New Testament agrees with Leviticus 18 and 20 in explicitly condemning incest (1 Cor. 5:1) and male homosexual activity (Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10).

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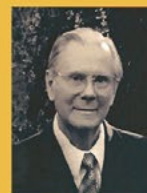
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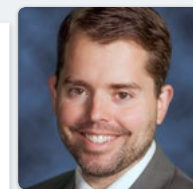
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Jan Hus: *A man on a mission*

On July 6, 1415, in Konstanz, Germany, the cathedral was filled to capacity. The air was heavy as Jacob Balardi Arrigoni, bishop of Lodi, preached from the text “that the body of sin be destroyed” (Rom. 6:6). Cardinals, replete with miters, sat in a semicircle around a man in chains, his body emaciated from hunger after having spent a year in prison. The Holy Roman emperor, Sigismund, occupied the regal throne. In the nave, a variety of sacerdotal garments were laid out on a table.

For the man in chains, a decision awaited him: recant or go to the stake.

Beyond the cathedral was the stake waiting to be lit.

Early beginnings

Jan Hus was born in 1370 in a peasant home in southern Bohemia (today a part of the Czech Republic).¹ His father dying while Jan was still a child, he was brought up by his mother, who instilled in him piety and influenced him to enter the priesthood. As a student he once used the last bit of his money to procure an indulgence, a certificate assuring the forgiveness of sins.

For the most part, his early life was unexceptional with the exception, perhaps, of his hunger for education. Hus obtained a master’s degree in 1396 from the University of Prague and became much better known when, in 1402, he was appointed preacher of Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, a church founded in 1391 to facilitate preaching in the vernacular.

Two key factors had impacted citizens of Prague. Early Waldensian missionaries had circulated copies of the Scripture in the vernacular, and two early wandering missionaries drew pictures contrasting between the lowly Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey and all the pomp surrounding a papal retinue.² Equally important were copies of writings from an English reformer. “Wyclif, Wyclif,” noted Hus in one such early manuscript, “you will turn many heads.”³ Hus balanced his preaching with a distinguished academic career, but life for the citizens in Prague was soon polarized.

Schism

Debates over Wyclif were overshadowed by the Papal Schism (1378–1417) as rival popes anathematized each other. Although Hus never took a direct role in the conflict, two men close to him did play an active role, which, in turn, impacted Hus.

The first was King Václav IV (Wenceslaus), who was a weak and unpopular ruler with a foul temper, surrounded by incompetent advisers, and a drunkard, twice imprisoned.⁴ His reign (1378–1419) spiraled gradually downward with the exception of his second wife, Žofie, who gave her husband, on the occasion of their wedding, a wagon full of conjurers and juggling fools. Queen Žofie chose Hus as her confessor, attended his sermons at Bethlehem Chapel, and used her influence to further reform and protect Hus.

The second person to influence Hus was Zbyněk, who in 1402 at the age of

25, outbid other contenders to obtain the archbishopric of Prague for 2,800 gulden. However, as a pious military man, he still lacked theological training and was therefore inept at church administration. The writings of Wyclif were declared heretical before he took office. As the Papal Schism dragged on, concern about heresy in Bohemia grew as a major concern of the papacy.

Václav, for his part, hoped that if he supported the right papal contender that he could regain the title of Holy Roman emperor, a title lost in 1400. In 1409, he shifted his support from the Roman pope, Gregory XII, to the newly elected Pisan pope, Alexander V. The task of Zbyněk was simple: eliminate heresy and help Václav regain his title, but after the king changed his papal allegiance, Zbyněk refused to recognize Alexander V.

Hus was a powerful and charismatic preacher. As the power struggle played out, he condemned papal corruption. In 1405, he denounced supposed appearances of Christ’s blood during Communion as one of a series of elaborate hoaxes. Hus ridiculed the power that priests claimed for themselves. He was not afraid to thunder against abuses. “These priests deserve hanging in hell,” he warned, because they were “fornicators, parasites, money misers, and fat swine. They are drunks whose bellies growl with great drinking and are gluttons whose stomachs are overfilled until their double chins hang down.” Of course simony (the selling and buying of ecclesiastic privileges) was the worst heresy, he argued, and

a sin against the Holy Spirit.⁵ In the process, Hus turned to the Bible as the benchmark for all aspects of Christian doctrine and lifestyle.

Hus used the term “The Lord’s fat ones” to denounce simony and the practice of buying spiritual offices. This unequivocal denunciation put him at odds with his own bishop, Zbyněk, who was guilty of buying the archbishopric. Hus was also at odds with many of his fellow clergy who collected fees before administering the sacraments. Some clergy even purchased multiple church positions without ever serving the people. Worst of all, the Scriptures were eclipsed through church tradition.

Hus confronted the archbishop: “How is it that fornicating and otherwise criminal priests walk about freely . . . while humble priests . . . are jailed as heretics and suffer exile for the very proclamation of the gospel?”⁶

Such a direct confrontation turned Zbyněk to be his sworn enemy. Zbyněk often sent spies to listen to Hus’s sermons. In one instance, Hus accosted one such spy from the pulpit: “Hey, you in the hood, make a note of this, you sneak, and carry it over there,” he told the infiltrator as he pointed toward the archiepiscopal residence.⁷ Hus was afterward cited before a hearing but successfully defended himself with popular support from the queen and the public.

Zbyněk now complained to Pope Alexander V, who issued a papal bull calling for an investigation of heresy and demanding that preaching of Scripture in private chapels immediately stop. Hus spoke publicly against the bull, which prompted even more hostility from Zbyněk. In return, on July 16, 1410, more than 200 works of Wyclif were set ablaze.

“I call it a poor business,” responded Hus. “Such bonfires never yet removed a sin from the hearts of men. Fire does not consume truth. It is always the mark of a little mind that it vents its anger on inanimate objects. The books which have been burned are a loss to the whole people.”⁸

The king and archbishop upped the ante, which culminated in a writ

of excommunication against Hus in February 1411. In the end, Zbyněk was forced to back off and clear Hus of all charges. In the process that was supposed to vindicate Hus, the archbishop strategically moved the final public declaration to the city of Bologna. The king, fearing a trap, forbade Hus from going. “If anyone wants to accuse Hus of any charge, let them do it here in our kingdom. . . . [I]t does not seem right to give up this useful preacher to the discrimination of his enemies.”⁹ It appears likely that Queen Žofie prompted Václav’s protective maneuver.

Indulgences

Politics in Italy spilled over into a new push for indulgences. In 1412, Pope John XXIII (one of the three popes who emerged during the Papal Schism) proclaimed a crusade against the king of Naples, who had taken over Rome. In order to fund this new venture, the pope began a widespread sale of indulgences. Revenues raised in Bohemia would be split with the king, so even Václav stood to profit from the venture. Prague quickly became a center of indulgences.

Hus once again was outspoken, using Scripture to condemn these indulgences. He was incredulous that a holy war was planned in order to secure the power of the papacy. Now Hus was summoned to appear before the newly elected archbishop of Prague, Albík. “Even if the fire to burn my body were placed before my eyes,” he stated defiantly, “I would not obey.”¹⁰ The king ordered Hus to submit to ecclesiastical authority.

Until now Hus had tried to reform the church from within. Now everything had changed. “In a word, the papal institution is full of poison, antichrist himself, the man of sin, the leader of the army of the Devil, a limb of Lucifer, the head vicar of the fiend, a simple idiot who might be a damned devil in hell, and more horrible idol than a painted log.”¹¹

Protests turned ugly in Prague. The preaching of Hus electrified the people. Three protesters were beheaded,

becoming the first Hussite martyrs. The whole business was an embarrassment to King Václav, who denounced Hus as a troublemaker. Even Queen Žofie was unable to quench the king’s wrath. The conditions for reconciliation were simple: Hus must agree that the pope is the head of the church and must be obeyed. Hus refused to compromise and was excommunicated yet a fourth time. Prague was placed under interdict (no church ordinances or services could take place), and on October 15, 1412, Hus went into a voluntary exile. “I am a fugitive,” he noted to a friend.¹²

The Council

In late 1414, Pope John XXIII convened a council in Constance with two purposes: to end the Papal Schism and to eradicate heresy. Hus accepted an invitation to attend the council. On October 11, 1414, he drafted his will and departed, riding on his horse Rabštýn. Friends warned him that this was a trap, but Emperor Sigismund, Václav’s half-brother, promised him safe conduct. Along the way a herald announced that there was a dangerous man chained to a wagon who could read minds. The publicity created opportunities for Hus to share his faith. At each inn he stayed in, he left behind a printed copy of the Ten Commandments.¹³

When Hus first arrived in Constance, the site of the council, in one of his earliest surviving letters he noted the high cost of food.¹⁴ This may have at least partially reflected his concern for money because he borrowed funds to pay for the trip. During this early period his letters to his friends are even somewhat playful. He liked to make jokes about his name “Hus” (which means “goose”), noting that “the goose is not yet cooked and is not afraid of being cooked.”¹⁵ Within a week he was arrested.

Now as Hus sat in a dark and putrid Dominican prison, he grew sick. In some of his letters, he requested warm clothes and food. Hus was beginning to starve and would have died from disease had not a papal physician relocated him to better quarters. As

he recovered, he requested a Bible several times from his friends. His heart longed to study the Scriptures. Just as painful, for Hus, was the fact that he was deprived of Communion.¹⁶ Hus recognized just how grave his situation was, warning friends not to open his letters until they were certain of his death.¹⁷

Hus prayed to God to give him strength to remain faithful to Christ

developed a distinctive ecclesiology away from Rome and paved the way for the Protestant Reformation.²⁰

Once Hus made this distinction between the Roman Church and Christ, it was not very difficult to see that mortals, including popes and councils, can err. Hus championed biblical authority. Scripture should and must reign supreme over all human authority. “For this truth [of faith], on account

“dress rehearsal” for later Protestant reformers, especially Martin Luther, who frequently referenced Hus.²³

The cooked goose

As the Council of Constance continued its proceedings, Hus tried to initially refute charges and defend himself, but he was routinely shouted down by conciliar fathers who denounced him as arrogant or stubborn. One such person,

For Hus, the Scriptures were the source of all truth about Jesus Christ. And as a man on a mission, he exalted Jesus Christ who suffered for him as his true model.



and Scripture, and despite whatever judgment the council might determine, he regularly observed that all humans must answer before the divine judgment of God.¹⁸ As the council proceeded, one can see one of Hus’s most profound theological contributions that laid the groundwork for the Protestant Reformation a century later: he argued that it was Christ, not the pope, who stood as the true head of the church.¹⁹ A thorough study of the Scriptures finally led him to condemn the church he initially hoped to reform. He acknowledged that not every believer is by default a member of the Catholic Church. Instead, a person must be “of the church” or a genuine member of the church of Christ, even if one was not a part of the Church of Rome. Hus matured in his understanding of the church. He thus

of its certitude, a man ought to risk his life. And in this way a man is not bound to believe the sayings of the saints that are far from Scripture; nor should he believe papal bulls except insofar as what they say is founded on Scripture simply.”²¹

Together, Hus’s view of the church combined with his understanding about the supreme authority of Scripture represented a scathing rebuke of the Roman Church and its hierarchy. The life of Hus demonstrates the gradual unfolding of a man who discovered his mission. He believed that all authority should rest on the Bible alone. In this sense “Hus was not an original theologian.”²² Instead, his skill lay in taking the ideas of Wyclif as a radical rejection of a flawed power system that had developed within the church. In this way, Hus served almost as a

a Polish bishop, shouted “Do not permit him to recant; even if he does recant, he will not keep to it.”²⁴

The final session arrived on July 6. Thirty charges were presented against the accused heretic. Some were simply outrageous—one even insinuated that Hus believed that he was the fourth member of the Godhead. Hus, of course, rejected such outlandish charges, but he was unable to defend himself. At the end, Pierre d’Ailly, the presiding cardinal, gave Hus one last opportunity. Hus responded by asking them to prove his errors from the Bible. The bishops dismissed him for being “obstinate in heresy.”²⁵ All the way to the end Hus stuck to his bedrock belief in the primacy of Scripture.

Hus was now ordered to be silent. He dropped to his knees on the stone floor. His books were condemned to be

burned. Hus prayed out loud to Christ to forgive his judges and accusers. One last time the council offered: “Recant or die.”

The Bishop of Lodi next gave his sermon about destroying the body of sin, followed by seven bishops who placed priestly vestments upon Hus. He was defrocked. In turn each bishop tore off the vestments from his body saying “O cursed Judas . . . we take from you the cup of redemption.” They finally concluded with the words “we commit your soul to the Devil.” Crowned with a paper miter with the inscription, “This is a heresiarch,” he was then led through the streets of Constance to the place of death. Hus was bound to the stake with a sooty chain and wood piled to his chin.


Hus uttered his last words: “God is my witness that . . . the principal intention of my preaching and of all my other acts or writings was solely that I might turn men from sin. And in that the truth of the Gospel that I wrote, taught, and preached in accordance with the sayings and expositions of the holy doctors, I am willing gladly to die today.” As the flames and smoke rose, his voice could be heard in song: “Jesus, son of the living God, have mercy on me.”²⁶ At last the goose was cooked.

A mission to uphold the Scripture

All throughout Hus’s life, Hus developed a theology of suffering. He was fiercely loyal to the church, which is quite ironic since it was the church that condemned him to death. “He bound his conscience to truth and refused to deviate from the pathway of truth, regardless of cost or consequence, without regard for personal safety or ultimate destination.”²⁷ For Hus, the Scriptures were the source of all truth about Jesus Christ. And as a man on a mission, he exalted Jesus Christ who suffered for him as his true model. In fact, it was but a small thing and a privilege to suffer for Christ. “Do not fear to die for Christ if you wish to live with Christ,” he admonished one priest.²⁸ As

a man on a mission, this meant that he would stand for truth, no matter the consequences.

In the final days and weeks leading up to his death, Hus was plagued with a series of dreams. In some of them, he was haunted by dark and foreboding thoughts. In one such dream he saw a group of painters come and destroy the walls of his beloved Bethlehem Chapel where there were painted biblical scenes. As the vandals destroyed the artwork, he saw another group of painters who repainted the scenes in even more vivid colors.²⁹ He believed all the way to the end that if it were God’s will, He could spare his life just as he had done for many other individuals in salvation history. Yet, he also knew that perhaps God had a purpose in his laying down his life. During his execution he was reported to say: “You are now going to burn a goose, but in a century you will have a swan which you can neither roast nor boil.”³⁰

Hus spawned a movement. He rejected any doctrine or practice not found in the Bible. Similarly, he denounced the abuse of power within the church. His stubborn insistence about the primacy of Scripture caused one papal visitor to label him the most dangerous heretic since Christ came to this earth.³¹ Hus placed the authority of the Bible above the church. Thus, perhaps the greatest tribute to this man on a mission was the translation of the Bible into Czech, the Kralice Bible, which is still used today. 

“Seek the truth,
hear the truth,
learn the truth,
love the truth,
speak the truth,
hold the truth and
defend the truth
until death.”

—Jan Hus

Quoted in Ladislav Holý, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Transformation of Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 40.

Today (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 172.

5 *The Letters of John Hus*, tr. Matthew Spinka (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 5, 6.

6 Jan Hus to Archbishop Zbyněk, July 6, 1408, in *The Letters of John Hus*, 22.

7 Quoted by Fudge, “To Build a Fire.”

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *The Letters of John Hus*, 92.

13 *Ibid.*, 126, 132.

14 *Ibid.*, 130.

15 Quoted by Fudge, “To Build a Fire.”

16 See *The Letters of John Hus*, 135, 153–55.

17 *Ibid.*, 121.

18 *Ibid.*, 148.

19 Cf. *The Letters of John Hus*, 96–101. For an extended treatment of Hus’s ecclesiology, see Matthew Spinka, *John Hus’ Concept of the Church* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).

20 Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 576–77.

21 John Hus, *De Ecclesia*, tr. David S. Schaff (New York: Scribner’s, 1915), cited by Allison, *Historical Theology*, 84.

22 Hill, *The History of Christian Thought*, 175.

23 *Ibid.*, 176.

24 Quoted by Fudge, “To Build a Fire.”

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 Fudge, *The Memory and Motivation of Jan Hus*, 247.

28 *The Letters of John Hus*, 170.

29 *Ibid.*, 149.

30 Hill, *The History of Christian Thought*, 176.

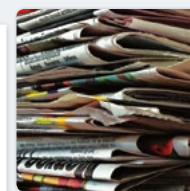
31 *The Letters of John Hus*, 161.

1 Some of the basic biographical information is constructed from Thomas A. Fudge, *The Memory and Motivation of Jan Hus, Medieval Priest and Martyr* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2013); *The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

2 See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911). White based her account of Hus upon the nineteenth-century historians J. H. Merle d’Aubigné and J. A. Wylie.

3 Thomas A. Fudge, “To Build a Fire,” *Christian History* 68, no. 4 (2000): 10–18.

4 Jonathan Hill, *The History of Christian Thought: The Fascinating Story of the Great Christian Thinkers and How They Helped Shape the World as We Know It*



► Research finds few pastors give up on ministry

Nashville, Tennessee, United States—Though pastors are stressed about money and overwhelming ministry demands, only one percent abandon the pulpit each year in North America, LifeWay Research finds.

LifeWay Research surveyed 1,500 pastors of evangelical and black protestant churches and found an estimated 13 percent of senior pastors in 2005 had left the pastorate ten years later for reasons other than death or retirement.

Pastors say the role can be tough:

- 84 percent say they are on call 24 hours a day.
- 80 percent expect conflict in their church.
- 54 percent find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming.
- 53 percent are often concerned about their family's financial security.
- 48 percent often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle.

- 21 percent say their church has unrealistic expectations of them.

"This is a brutal job," said **Scott McConnell**, LifeWay Research vice president. "The problem isn't that pastors are quitting. The problem is that pastors have a challenging work environment. Churches ought to be concerned, and they ought to be doing what they can."

The survey, commissioned by the North American Mission Board and Richard Dockins, an occupational medicine physician in Houston concerned about pastoral attrition, also examined why pastors leave the ministry and what can be done to support pastors.


Looking back at the leadership of their church ten years earlier, today's pastors report relative stability. Forty-four percent say they were the pastor of their current church ten years ago, and 12 percent say the pastor from 2005 now leads another church. Ten percent

of pastors from 2005 have retired, and 3 percent have died.

Small segments have left the pastorate, current pastors say. Two percent shifted to non-ministry jobs, and 5 percent stayed in ministry but switched to non-pastoral roles. Combined, those two groups account for known losses of less than 1 percent per year.

In some cases, current pastors did not know who led the church ten years earlier (16 percent) or were not sure of the previous pastor's whereabouts (3 percent). Assuming those cases follow the same pattern as the known instances, McConnell estimates a total of 29,000 evangelical pastors have left the pastorate over the past decade, an average of fewer than 250 a month.

Current pastors say a change in calling is the top reason their predecessors left the pastorate, accounting for 37 percent of departures. [Lisa Cannon Green, *Facts & Trends*]



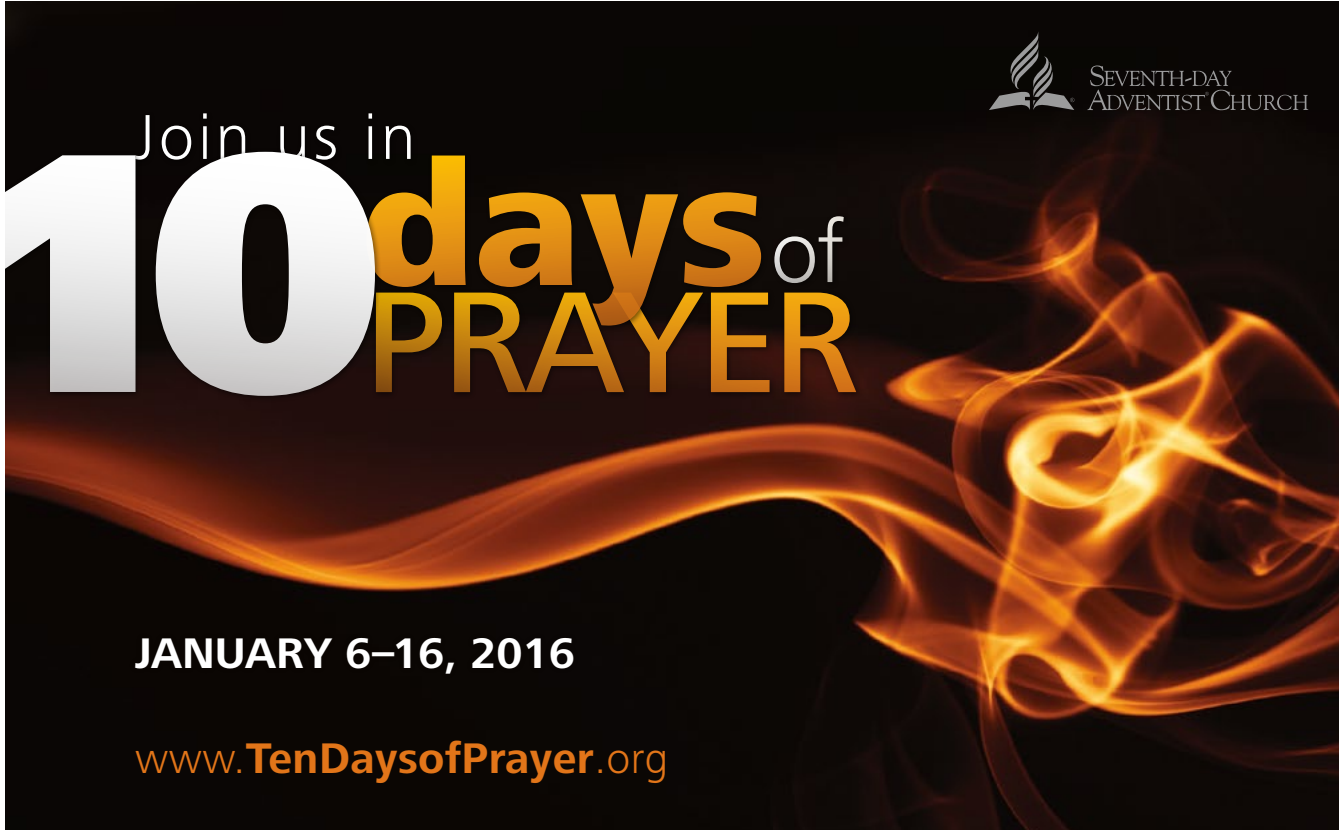
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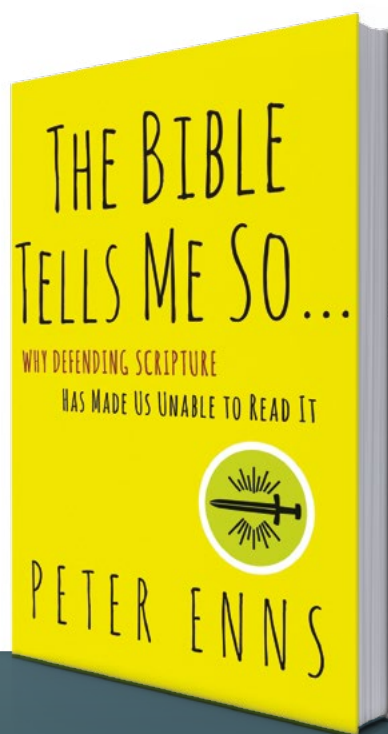
The Bible Tells Me So . . . Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable To Read It

by Peter Enns, New York: HarperCollins, 2014.

The *Bible Tells Me So* is the latest book by Peter Enns, who is professor of biblical studies at Eastern University, St. Davids, Pennsylvania. The book has seven chapters, which are subdivided into short subsections, many of which have provocative headings such as “When the Bible Doesn’t Behave,” “Jesus Messes with the Bible,” and “Biblical Writers Get Cranky.” Because the book is written in such a captivating, lively, and interesting way, I had difficulty putting the book down even though I don’t agree with many of the things it says.

In chapter one, “I’ll Take Door Number Three,” Enns recounts his spiritual journey from a teacher in a conservative seminary to a well-known and respected “liberal” evangelical scholar. During his doctoral studies at Harvard University, he came to the real-

a true believer.” Rather, the Bible is a messy, troubling, and ancient book.



for a fairy tale than historical reports. So he had to make a choice—door one: ignore what he had learned; door two: push back against it; or door three: start thinking differently about the Bible. He chose door number three, which eventually cost him his job at Westminster Theological Seminary.

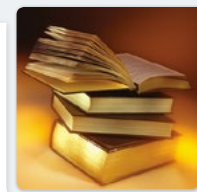
In chapter two, “God Did *What?!?*” the author deals with the issue of genocide. To appeal to the God of the Bible, to condemn genocide today when God commanded the extermination of the Canaanites so that He could give their land to the Israelites becomes very hard, Enns says. His solution to the gory story: “God never told the Israelites to kill the Canaanites. The Israelites believed that God told them to kill the Canaanites” (54). Anyway, archaeologists have shown, he claims, that there was no Exodus and no extermination of the Canaanites.

In The Bible Tells Me So, Enns wants to expose Christian’s fear-based contradictory beliefs and show a new way forward. Unfortunately, this new way forward considers the Bible an ancient book that “carries the thoughts and meditations of ancient pilgrims” and that “according to God’s purpose, has guided, comforted, and informed Christians” (234), but is not the inspired Word of God.

ization that the Bible is not a heavenly instruction manual with the message “Follow its directions and out pops

Adam and Eve, the parting of the Red Sea, and fire coming down from the sky, Enns came to regard more like scripts

In the third chapter, titled “God Likes Stories,” Enns discusses the Bible as history. For him, the writers



of the Bible talk about the past as storytellers, not as historians. In the Old Testament, the books of Chronicles tell a different story from that found in the books of Samuel and Kings. For example, the author of Samuel and Kings does not hesitate to recount the personal foibles and sins of David. Chronicles presents a sanitized picture of David; with none of his failings mentioned. Storytellers shape history to get their point across, Enns believes. In the New Testament, he focuses on the differences in the Gospels—the Magi following a star, angels announcing the birth to shepherds, Herod killing babies. Most scholars believe that Matthew created some of these scenes to shape his story. None of the Gospel writers were eyewitnesses, Enns believes.


In chapter four, “Why Doesn’t God Make Up His Mind?” Enns addresses some of the seeming contradictions in the Bible. “Jesus is Bigger Than the Bible” is chapter five, in which the author claims that Jesus would get a big fat “F” in Bible because of the way He quotes and interprets the Bible, but this fits right in with the creative approach the Jews used at the time of Jesus.

“No One Saw This Coming,” chapter six, refers, among other things, to Jesus being crucified, His resurrection, and the Gentiles now being included in the chosen people. The last chapter, “The Bible, Just as It Is,” summarizes the topics in the book.

In *The Bible Tells Me So*, Enns wants to expose Christian’s fear-based contradictory beliefs and show a new

way forward. Unfortunately, this new way forward considers the Bible an ancient book that “carries the thoughts and meditations of ancient pilgrims” and that “according to God’s purpose, has guided, comforted, and informed Christians” (234), but is not the inspired Word of God. It contains ancient stories, poems and myths, and does not always behave as we think it should.

While the book makes interesting reading, because of the author’s liberal theology, this volume will not strengthen anyone’s faith and trust in the Bible.

—Reviewed by Gerhard Pfandl, PhD, associate director (part-time), Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. 

Pastor’s resource for domestic violence

Love Shouldn’t Hurt,” a resource for pastors about abuse, was redesigned for the series of **enditnow** brochures published by General Conference Women’s Ministries. This downloadable brochure provides information, definitions, and suggested resources to support pastors in being aware of and helping to stop abuse. Download this resource at <http://alturl.com/ae5q8>.



Fred Hardinge, DrPH, RD, is associate director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Choose the best available and ask God for His blessing

My wife and I received an urgent call from an elderly church friend asking whether we would come and visit her as soon as possible. That evening, as she greeted us at the door, we could see worry and concern written all over her face. With tension in her voice and tears in her eyes she informed us that earlier that day her doctor had informed her that a small lump in one breast was cancerous.

Her very next words were directed at me, “Do you think I have this cancer because once in a while I enjoy a small serving of ice cream?”

We had known this dear saint for many, many years. She had eaten many meals in our home, and we in hers. She was a lifetime vegetarian and had sought to live and eat healthfully her entire life. Now in her mid-seventies, she was wracked with guilt as she faced a very early and treatable diagnosis of breast cancer.

How was I to respond to this urgent question? She expected an answer from me as a friend and as a nutrition professional. Should I dismiss it as nonsense or add to her fears by agreeing her cancer was caused by her occasional consumption of ice cream?

My response was this: “The chances of this being caused by the ice cream you have eaten are very, very small. We will probably never understand exactly why you have this diagnosis, but you can look to the Great Physician for guidance and healing.” (She had successful surgery, no recurrence, and lived a fulfilled life until her mid 90s.)

Most diseases are the result of a long series of mutations in genes that are vital in supporting the integrity of thousands of other genes. Disease results in the complex interactions of our lifestyle choices, diet,

physical activity, environment, even our thoughts and attitudes. It is impossible to single out one isolated element to blame for disease.

Can we get sick because we disregard the principles of health? Absolutely! Millions suffer today because of their choices or the choices of their parents. This knowledge should motivate us to make the best choices we can through the power and grace of Jesus Christ.


Yet, sometimes a passion for living healthfully combined with misunderstandings of the cause of disease can lead to three very unhealthy responses:

1. **Unfounded guilt:** This was well illustrated by our elderly friend’s experience when diagnosed with breast cancer. She needed assurance, acceptance, and Christ’s love.
2. **Blame and judgment:** When a man born blind encountered Jesus, the disciples asked Him, “ ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ” (John 9:2, NKJV). They knew nothing of germ theory, lifestyle, or genomics, but they wanted to answer the question “why” so they could put a finger on the cause. Jesus refused to play their game. Even today many of Christ’s disciples are the same. When someone in the church gets sick, we question whether it was their dietary pattern, sedentary living, overwork, or lack of sleep. However, when sickness strikes, we should point them to the Great Physician and His love and healing power.
3. **Obsession:** There are some people who, in their desire to eat right, develop an unhealthy obsession with eating healthy food. This is an eating disorder increasingly referred to as *orthorexia nervosa*.¹

These individuals, referred to as orthorexics, have an idealistic and spiritual obsession that focuses on eating only “pure” food, and are constantly struggling with feelings of being polluted by what they eat.

Consumption of unhealthy foods is far more prevalent than obsession with good food. Yet, balance is very important in life. Making careful, wholesome choices is vital to maintaining our health. As a Christian, I am so grateful we do not need to worry when we choose the best available and ask God for His blessing: “Some are continually anxious lest their food, however simple and healthful, may hurt them. To these let me say, *Do not think that your food will injure you; do not think about it at all. Eat according to your best judgment; and when you have asked the Lord to bless the food for the strengthening of your body, believe that He hears your prayer, and be at rest.*”²

We know anorexics often become malnourished and benefit from professional help. Likewise, orthorexics may also benefit from knowledgeable counsel. All of us can place our trust in this thought: “Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. *Many imagine that every slight exposure will cause illness, and the evil effect is produced because it is expected. Many die from disease the cause of which is wholly imaginary.*”³

Don’t worry. Choose wisely and trust God. 

¹ “Definition of Orthorexia nervosa,” MedicineNet .com, www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=19891.

² Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 321, emphasis supplied.

³ Ibid., 241, emphasis supplied.

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Ministerial Student Writing Contest

Ministry,

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

Submission requirements

1. Writers must choose a category from the list below for their submission.
 - a. Biblical studies
 - b. Historical studies
 - c. Theological studies (including ethics)
 - d. Applied religion (preaching, leadership, counseling, evangelism, etc.)
 - e. World missions
2. All submissions must follow the Writer's Guidelines as to length, endnotes, style, and other features of the manuscript. Please carefully read the guidelines found at www.ministrymagazine.org.
3. Submit your manuscript in MS Word to www.MinistryMagazine.org/swc. Please include the following information at the top of the manuscript: your name, address, email address, telephone number, category for which you are submitting (see above), religious affiliation, name of college/university/seminary you are attending, and title of your manuscript.
4. *Ministry* will accept only one submission per writer.

Submission deadline

All submissions must be received no later than **JUNE 30, 2016**.

Prizes

GRAND PRIZE	\$750
FIRST PRIZE	\$500
SECOND PRIZE (five possible)	\$400
THIRD PRIZE (five possible)	\$300

The evaluation panel will determine if all prizes will be awarded. The decisions of this panel are final.

Publication

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

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