

Ministry

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Getting something out of worship

I was saddened by Ralph Wood's article, "The Fallacy of 'Getting Something Out of Worship'" (February, 1998). Worship is not about hearing a great sermon, not about getting something out of it, but it's about turning our hearts toward God and together worshipping Him. It's not about getting, but rather giving.

Wood seems to be misinformed about the whole reason for contemporary worship, which is to bring people into a better understanding of what worship really is. Personally, I applaud the contemporary churches for trying to throw off the dead formalism of the past. True, some have simply come up with another form, rather than honest worship, but at least they are trying. —Roger Walter, pastor, Lebanon and Sweet Home Churches, Oregon.

- Can we grasp what Ralph Wood is saying? Worship is not an event, it is the life.

"I was glad when they said to me let us go into the house of the Lord." This gladness is the response of worship.

"For me to live is Christ. . ." This conviction and living is the response of worship.

"The love of Christ constrains us." This is the response of worship.

People who are empty inside cannot worship. They want a performance to interest them, to excite them, to make them feel good. What is needed is the "joy of the Lord" within. Then we are able to worship God in spirit and in truth. —David Manzano, Rockwood, Tennessee.

- I agree with the title of the article, but I think we can give to our worship a much wider spectrum than the author allows. The author implies that worship is worship only when its participants have been "nurtured in traditional hymnody

and preaching" and that worship needs "hymns of dignity." Since when does worship require being nurtured in traditional hymnody? When did Jesus ever preach a traditional sermon? If storytelling is such a bad form of preaching, why did Jesus do so much of it?

As I read about the "trite repetitions of so-called praise music," I wondered if the author had ever listened to the "trite repetitions" in Handel's *Messiah*. Isn't "Holy, Holy, Holy" repetitious? Why is repetition bad when it comes in music we don't like, but it is acceptable in music we do like?—Ron Hessel, pastor, Payette and Weiser SDA Churches, Idaho.

- Let me understand Wood's lament about the wedding garment and "dressing down"—if I "dress up for church," I'll be ready for the wedding. Wrong! To consider the parable of the wedding garment as emphasizing the physical rather than the spiritual is simply not correct. We have only one standard to raise up—Jesus Christ and Him crucified! If we lift Him and His righteousness, the world will be drawn to Him.

I attend church to get something—a better relationship with Christ. No apology should be needed or expected. Praise God for His desire to be my best friend!—Terry Burns, Loomis, California.

- Wood's article mystifies me. God is not an egomaniac, addicted to our continual reminders of what a Great Guy He is. Any doubt about this should be settled by a look at the humble God Immanuel of the gospels. My worship isn't to benefit God but to acknowledge that more than anything else in my life, I want to be like Him, to align with His goodness, to internalize His selfless integrity, His winsome and awesome commitment to sustainable connection. God yearns for a lasting intertwining of willing souls and minds. He's not

interested in ruling from a pedestal; He just wants to be friends with you and me (John 15:15). My worship is an overt statement that I want to be friends with Him.—Ken Cox, Angwin, California.

- Reading a little church music history will reveal that at each musical change and innovation, the new was "of the devil" and not fit for proper worship. This does not validate every new form of expression but should caution us not to be too hasty in stifling a new form in worship.

We are wholistic beings. Worship is a total experience. The intellectual and affective are both important, and neither should be dismissed lightly but held in creative tension.

The stirring of my heart resonates with a contemporary, spiritual song in love and devotion to God and motivates me to service. This is not a "trite ditty" but much like the one who sings fervently a grand old hymn by heart with eyes misting a little. It speaks to his experience. By heart. There, I think I have it.

We need to keep growing in relationship with Jesus and give some words and a tune to what happens. God and I have gone through things together. Music is like the soundtrack of my life. When someone tries to dismiss my music, they dismiss me and my experience. In time, what you now tolerate may rub off a little. Music is an integral part of worship. During the millennium, all of us will have to enroll in Worship 101, and yet, the universe will strain their ears to hear our new song (Rev. 5:9).—Leroy G. Corkum, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

- The article said what I have been thinking throughout my ten years of ministry. Dismaying to me is that I've observed many of the "pulpit princes" of my denomination falling into this "story-

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If you're receiving Ministry bimonthly and haven't paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 Ministry has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. We believe, however, that the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share our aspirations and faith in a way that will provide inspiration and help to you as clergy. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulder, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you can't use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Requests should be on church letterhead and addressed to the editorial office.



Recently a friend asked me which issues had stirred the most controversy in *Ministry* since I became editor some two and a half years ago. This was a

question that needed little reflection on my part. By far the two issues that have stirred up the most debate have been the ordination of women and alternative worship styles, or more precisely, music in worship.

Since the Utrecht decision against women's ordination, we have purposely not published any articles dealing explicitly with the question of women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Certain articles have cited the issue of women's ordination as an example in their treatment of other critical issues (see for example the article on church unity by Walter Douglas, "Unity in Diversity in Christ" in the August 1997 *Ministry*).

When it comes to the question of worship styles and music, we have of course been more direct. It is interesting to see how, after our September 1996 issue dealing with music in worship, we received a flood of letters (see *Letters*, January 1997), most of which were negative toward the more contemporary worship emphasis we presented in that issue. Then again after publishing the single feature article by Ralph Wood last February, "The Fallacy of 'Getting Something Out of Worship'" which advocated a more conservative form of worship and music, we have received another influx of correspondence (see page 3). There is much we could say about the letters and about our differences, but I'd like to look at some underlying matters which present themselves as we assess our positions and differences in the arena of worship.

There must be readers with good memories who have asked, "How could *Ministry* publish both the more

Ministry's two most controversial issues

W I L L E V A

contemporary worship emphasis of September '96 and the traditional worship emphasis of Wood's February article? Is this ecclesiastical schizophrenia or more likely, political expediency bathed in a mushy attempt to embrace contradictory biases?" I hope an answer to that question will present itself below.

As I look at the Church and its worship and especially as I think of the variety of local congregations which make up the Seventh-day Adventist Church—coming literally from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people—I ask myself, Where is the point of contact and constructive togetherness in it all? Due to massive revolutions in technology, communications, and travel, there are new constituencies forming constantly. These people groups (such as the by now proverbial boomers and busters identified in some first world countries) take on very specific identities along with closely defined tastes and convictions when it comes to matters such as worship and worship music. A pervasive post-modernist orientation further complicates the matter and confuses the issues of right and wrong, which begin to surface in our discussions of these things. Again, what if anything may we consult in order to find some concerted direction as we search out ways of worshiping and of easing our differences?

As I think about this I see the tremendous need to get back to the absolute basics of Christian worship. In short, in so many congregations and

corporate church situations, whether we travel the more traditional or the more contemporary track, the word *worship* may truly be said to have become an oxymoron. In other words, in these situations the actual worship of God is all but forgotten in the desire to be politically correct within the prevailing climate of our particular congregation (*contemporary or traditional*). These horizontal concerns dominate our worship theology and planning, until we speak of a "worship experience" almost exclusive of the matter of actually worshipping God. Worship tastes and customs, important as they most certainly are, rather than the worship of God Himself, have become our dominant concerns. The question of who likes what or who will be attracted by what—crucial questions—outweigh the questions of who God is, what He is like, and how He may receive our sacrifices of praise.

I do hope I would be among the last to abandon the crucial matter of the subjective, experiential or horizontal aspects of worship, allowing them to be lost in some futile cerebral "objective" ideal. But it does seem almost self evident that we have gone a long way in the opposite direction. That is, we have sacrificed the fabulous, objective realities of the personality, characteristics, and definitive persona of God on the altar of our own parochial concerns, whether they be cultural, social, or generational. The kicker is that this tends to be true whether we are more traditional or more contemporary in our worship alignment. Hence our rather heavy disdain for one another's preferences. Hence our prides and prejudices, our quarrels and fights.

The October 6 ('97) cover of *Christianity Today* is a winner. A young woman looks out from the cover with an incredulous, surprised, even serendipitous look on her face. Her pose seems quite unselfconscious. Above her head is the title of that month's issue of the magazine: "Missing God at Church?"

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OLD TESTAMENT DEMONOLOGY

Much has been written on demonology in the context of the New Testament, where the presence of demons is clearly taught; the Old Testament witness, however, isn't as explicit.



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Nevertheless, the topic is touched upon in the Old Testament, and it does reveal enough to help pastors understand the nature of what they're up against if, indeed, they find themselves confronted with a bona fide case of demon possession.

To begin, though the word *demon* is etymologically related to the Greek term *daimónion*, they do not mean the same thing. The Greek term designated a deity, specifically good or evil lesser deities.¹ *Demon*, in contrast, commonly designates an evil supernatural, autonomous power openly antagonistic against God and His people.

Hebrew terms

The Hebrew term *shedim* (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37) is usually translated "demons." The LXX renders it as *daimoniois*. The modern translation is based on the Akkadian cognate *shedu*, which designates both evil and good spirits or demons.² The biblical passages describe the heathen gods as inferior and evil supernatural powers because they required human sacrifices.

Another Hebrew term for demons is *seirim*, from a root meaning "to be hairy." The noun means "hairy one" but could also designate a "(hairy) goat" and a "demon."³ Some have interpreted it to mean a goatlike demon (a satyr), even if the attempt to define the appearance of the demon from etymology isn't sound. In the ancient Near East, deities and demons were represented under the symbol of animals in order to illustrate the attributes of those spiritual beings. Goats usually inhabited the wilderness, and demons in the Bible and in the ancient Near East were associated with the wilderness as a symbol of infertility.⁴

Ancient Near Easterners believed that demons dwelt in the underworld. In Egypt, there are references to "bloodthirsty demons,"⁵ a possible reference to the *seirim*, to whom bloody sacrifices were offered. The realm of the dead was also the realm of the demonic, which probably explains why the Old Testament condemns communication with the dead (Deut. 18:10, 11), an activity considered to be an attempt to contact the impure and demonic. The wisdom books

implicitly state that the dead do not know anything about the realm of the living and therefore they have no secret knowledge to impart (Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:4-6, 10). Interestingly, the spirits consulted by the necromancer are called *'elohim* ("gods, divine beings"; 1 Sam. 28:13; Isa. 8:19), but they can be recognized as demonic powers because of their association with the dead. These spirits possessed the medium and apparently spoke through him or her (Lev. 20:27).

It is generally recognized that the noun *'azazel*, used in Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26, designates a demon. This refers to a personal being, because it's in parallelism with the name of the Lord (16:8). The importance of this figure and the ritual associated with it is significant in Old Testament demonology, and most scholars date the ritual to an early phase of Israelite history.

The term *lilit*, used only in Isaiah 34:14, is commonly understood to refer to a demon (LXX, *daimónion*).⁶ The noun seems to belong to the word group for "night, darkness" (Heb. *layla*). But Akkadian uses the same root for a name of a demon (*lilitu*), a female demon connected in some way with sexual relationships.⁷ Most English translations render it as "night creatures," suggesting that the reference to a demon is uncertain. In the context, mention is made of several other animals, some of whom have been considered demons. Here again the term *seirim* is rendered "demons" (Lev. 17:7), but because it could also designate a goat, the meaning is uncertain (cf. Isa. 13:24).

Sometimes the biblical writer personifies "plague" (*reshep*) and "pestilence" (*deber*) and describes them as accompanying the Lord as his instruments of judgment (Hab. 3:5; Deut. 32:24). *Reshep* was the name of a West Semitic god of the underworld, considered dangerous as well as benevolent, who was in charge of battles and diseases.⁸ Because *deber* in ancient Near Eastern literature does not refer to a deity or a demon, it could be argued that in the Bible both terms are used as personifications of destructive powers only. However, in the ancient Near East demons inflicted diseases on people and caused great pain,⁹ a concept perhaps implicit in Psalm 91:5, 6.¹⁰ The Psalm states that those who fear the Lord will be protected from those evil pow-

ers ("the arrow that flies by day," "the pestilence that stalks in the darkness," "the plague that destroys at midday"). It could be that these powers are represented in verse 13 by the symbols of a lion and a snake.

The Old Testament contains several narratives in which spiritual beings are described as performing a negative function at the service of God. The first one is an "evil spirit" (*rúah ra'á*) sent by God to create antagonism "between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem" (Judges 9:23; the LXX reads, *pneuma ponerón*; cf. Mark 1:23; 7:25; Acts 5:16). It was under the control of God and His instrument of judgment. It could be argued that this "spirit" is not personified but is rather a psychological or emotional condition that disrupts social interaction. But the phrase "evil spirit/wind" (Akk. *sharu lemnu*) in the ancient Near East was employed to refer to demonic powers that produced all kinds of diseases.¹¹

After the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he was tormented by an "evil spirit from the Lord" (1 Sam. 16:14). Music relieved him (16:23) temporarily. Under the strong influence of this spirit Saul attempted to kill David (18:10-12; 19:9), yet this evil power was under the control of God and not a totally independent power.

Micaiah had a vision in which he saw the heavenly council in session discussing the final fate of King Ahab (1 Kings 22:19-23; 2 Chron. 18:20-23). During the discussion "a spirit" offered his service to entice Ahab by being "a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets" of Baal. The Lord said to him, "You will succeed in enticing him. . . . Go and do it" (1 Kings 22:22). It is difficult to decide whether this is a benevolent spirit acting in a malevolent way, as was the case with some spiritual beings in the ancient Near East, or an essentially evil spirit whom the Lord uses to accomplish His purpose. That it seems to be a member of the heavenly council would support the first option; however, a comparison with the incident of Job leads to a different conclusion.

"Satan" and God's archenemy

It is usually argued that Satan as the archenemy of God is unknown in the Old Testament.¹² The noun *satan* means "adversary, opponent" and is used for human and celestial beings. The first

celestial being called *satan* was the angel of the Lord (Num. 22:22, 32), hardly a demonic figure. Therefore the noun cannot be used to determine the nature of the celestial being. The first time it is used as a proper name is in 1 Chronicles 21:1, to describe a being who incited David to take a census. Interestingly, in 2 Samuel 24:1 this same function is ascribed to God. This is understandable because, as we have seen, evil powers are used by God to accomplish His own purposes. When those powers become a threat to His people, He protects them and limits their activities.

In Zechariah 3:1, 2 *satan* is an accuser of the servants of God. The Angel of the Lord, the Lord and Satan are together. What is at stake is God's right to forgive His people. This evil power cannot tolerate God's forgiving grace and seeks to hinder sinners from enjoying fellowship with God.

But possibly the most significant use of the noun *satan* is recorded in the book of Job, where he is described as the greatest enemy of God (1:7; 2:2). Like the "lying spirit" in the vision of Micaiah, he is a member of the heavenly council and is under the control of the Lord, unable to act in total independence from Him. He is certainly the accuser of Job before the heavenly assembly and the instigator of disease and disaster. In the dialogue with God, *satan* is in fact attacking God's system of government.¹³ He is arguing that God buys human service, and he nurtures selfishness by blessing and protecting human beings. God's way of ruling the universe is not controlled by disinterested love, he argues, but rather by the principle of "I give in order to receive."

This is unquestionably an attack on God's rule of love and grace. Here the true nature of the demonic in the Old Testament is revealed. This demonic being came to be known as Satan.

Although the Old Testament does not say much about this figure, it indicated that it was God's enemy, not His equal. Hints about his origin are recorded in Isaiah 14:12-19 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 when, in the description of the rise and fall of the kings of Babylon and Tyre, the prophets use the imagery of God's primeval fight with this demonic being. This cherub, who was very close to God, attempted in an act of rebellion to be like God and was expelled

from God's presence.¹⁴ Apparently, he continued to have limited access to heaven.¹⁵ Distorted traces of this primeval conflict may have been preserved in the ancient Near Eastern mythologies that depict a cosmic battle among the gods.

Then there's the narrative about the serpent and the woman (Gen. 3). The serpent is described as "more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3:1). The text implies that it was one of God's creatures. As the narrative progresses, it becomes obvious that behind it is an antagonistic power, one at war with God. It contradicts God's statements, ascribes to God evil intent, and leads the woman into rebellion. Because snakes "are commonly associated with selected deities and demons and with magic and incantations in the ancient Near East,"¹⁶ it's pretty clear that, under the symbol of the serpent, Genesis 3 depicts a demonic power.¹⁷ This evil being does not belong to the animal kingdom; it can talk and reason. Thus, in that respect, it is closer to the level of humans. Yet it is more than human in that it alleges to have a

knowledge not available to humans, and it's here that the demonic element reveals itself.¹⁸

This archenemy of God is known in the Hebrew cultus as a demonic being, Azazel. When the ritual of the scapegoat is placed within its ancient Near Eastern context, it becomes clear that this is an elimination rite through which sin/impurity was returned to its source and originator.¹⁹ The ritual teaches that Israel believed there was a demonic being directly responsible for whatever disrupted a proper relationship with God. It is true that God assumed responsibility for the sin/impurity of the repentant sinner, but He was not its originator. During the Day of Atonement the true culprit was identified: the demonic being, Azazel. Here again the Lord reveals Himself as the One who has power to destroy the works and to overcome the authority of evil powers (cf. 1 John 3:8).

Conclusions and implications

The Old Testament testifies to the existence of a demonic being in conflict with God and His people. This archenemy

of God is found throughout Old Testament narratives, hymns, and prophetic speeches.

Next, the biblical evidence suggest that this evil power resulted from the self-corruption of a celestial being. Although this being was created perfect, in a mysterious way sin was found in him. The use of the plural in some passages to refer to evil powers suggests that more than one celestial being was corrupted and in conflict with God.

These beings are associated with idolatry and identified with heathen gods, which implies that behind the power of these gods was the power of these evil forces. Spiritual creatures were still reaching out to become god.

Pastors confronting manifestations of demonic powers must remember, first, that these powers cannot act in complete independence from God. He can use them. But He also is able to restrain these powers by protecting His people from them and by liberating them from their oppression. Those who have been victims of demonic powers should be led to find refuge in the

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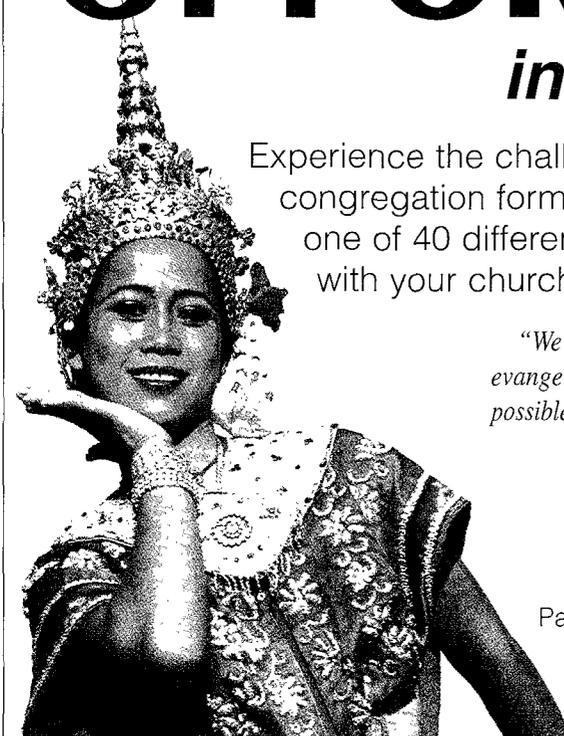
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SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Spiritual warfare is not an everyday term for many; therefore, it is open to misunderstanding. This term sounds archaic and quaint to some; to others it conjures up images from science fiction.

Lloyd Rediger, personal counselor, author, speaker, and consultant who specializes in clergy leadership issues, lives in Roseville, Minnesota.

Practical folks are likely to say that a term loaded with so much confusion and ancient baggage has little value.

The discomfiture associated with this term should no longer be a deterrent. We may regard the theological disarray associated with the concept of spiritual warfare as a necessary challenge to our best efforts. Spiritual leaders must demythologize the term, for it is central to what we do.

Rationale

Perhaps we are too sophisticated now to need or even consider the idea of spiritual warfare. Or, perhaps it is simply no longer helpful in an era when, at least in first world countries, our spiritual metaphors come from science, health, and business. As spiritual leaders, are we limited to the concepts of other disciplines, or do we have a unique perspective to offer? And if we have a singular perspective, is it helpful? Is *spiritual warfare* an instructive metaphor? I ask you to bring your own best theological thinking to this subject, for I am not writing an apologetic here, but rather a reminder.

Spiritual warfare bears enormous implications as a metaphor and perspective on pastoral ministry and the mission of the church. If we take it seriously, this transforms

our present emphasis on comfort and marketing to one of urgency, deadly danger, and high-stakes strategy. It is important to think carefully and prayerfully as we consider the spiritual warfare theme and recognize that it can no longer be dismissed as a relic of times gone by.

What is the justification for considering the concept of spiritual warfare? The answer emerges from contemporary realities. Given the increasing prevalence of violence, abuse, greed, lust, and apathy, the spiritual warfare theme seems appropriate. Given the reality that the world we assumed would grow better and better, is being terrorized through fomenting ill-will and vengeance, with no reliable relief in sight, the spiritual warfare theme seems appropriate. And given that all the scientific and technological discoveries that promise so much good are often subverted to destructive purposes, the spiritual warfare theme seems appropriate.

Of course, *spiritual warfare* is not the only metaphor the Bible uses to describe the struggle between good and evil. There are the agricultural model (good fruit, bad fruit); light and darkness as spiritual opposites; illness and health as spiritual consequences; competition as good and evil

G. LLOYD REDIGER

compete, and the two kingdoms of Christ and Satan. Each of these provides insights for understanding our spiritual-mystical conditions.

Yet, the dynamic concept of spiritual warfare yields a continuous reminder that there is a universal struggle between good and evil, which necessarily involves the earth and human beings. The conflict takes place around us and within us. We can choose our allegiance, but we do not determine the universal outcome. The victory of God is ensured, but important battles continue to be fought. And, most significant for our present involvement, good and evil and their contending take new and contemporary forms, just as military weaponry and strategy continue to change. So our contemporary involvement in this warfare takes place in families and institutions, and within us as we make daily choices.

Contemporary spiritual warfare

When we accept the spiritual warfare concept as a way of understanding the mission of the church, its interpersonal interactions, and our personal spiritual experiences, we must translate this concept into contemporary experience. As we do this, we must not limit ourselves to ancient superstitions or even to the realities of the "spirit world." In many situations today it is more useful to understand evil in its contemporary incarnations. For just as Jesus incarnated God, and we as disciples try to incarnate righteousness, so unrepentant sinners and institutions incarnate evil and sin.

Institutional evil in our day is typically incarnated (embodied, revealed) as racism, sexism, economic injustice, and such. Individual evil tends to be incarnated in persons who engage in and condone abuse, violence, greed, tyranny, and so forth. It is disheartening to see the enormous incarnations and influences of evil in our world, our communities, and within ourselves. It seems these battles should have been won by now. Human awareness and social morality should have freed us from the tyranny of evil, and we should have matured mentally and spiritually to a state of higher righteousness than we observe in others and ourselves. So the warfare continues—ready or not. And when we cease our vigilance or become tolerant of evil, it wins the battles again.

We dare not ignore the spiritual warfare perspective. When we ignore the spiritual dynamics of evil we also tend to ignore the power of God, which is our best resource for fighting evil. Then we are mystified as evil prevails over our best human tactics.

An example of spiritual warfare in the church

An example of how faithful believers encounter and defeat evil in our churches may be instructive. The generic example is the military tactic we call *terrorism*, which is now a tactic of choice among both the

In many situations today it is more useful to understand evil in its contemporary incarnations. For just as Jesus incarnated God, and we as disciples try to incarnate righteousness, so unrepentant sinners and institutions incarnate evil and sin.

oppressed and the evil persons who do the oppressing. As we know, when victims and survivors of injustice and abuse decide to fight for justice, they can choose violent or nonviolent means. Both the secular courts and Christian morality tend to judge violent responses as illegal or sinful, perhaps even evil. (Note: *Sin* here refers to occasional or inadvertent violations of God's purposes, while *evil* refers to the spiritual kingdom that opposes God and with which unrepentant persons ally themselves.) There are, however, groups and individuals who use terrorism in mistaken or

intentional defiance of law, morality, and civility, not only to redress perceived wrongs but to intimidate for self-aggrandizement.

In the church, terrorists may be called "clergy killers." Clergy killers are people who intentionally target pastors for serious injury or destruction. We must distinguish them from "normal" persons who disagree with the pastor, inadvertently injure her or him, have an "attitude" problem, or oppose some pastoral project or issue. Clergy killers are destructive to both the pastor and the congregation. They tend to be determined and deceitful. Spiritual leaders become symbols and scapegoats for the internal pain and confusion they feel. They foment from unusual, reactive, and pernicious motivations. They are subtle and artful in the application of their tactics. Because of this they are often supported or go unnoticed for what they are in fact. In the context of our discussion they are evil and should be recognized as such, so that we can deal with them more effectively. Clergy killers mimic their infamous counterparts outside the church. Just as the dramatic increase and boldness of terrorists worldwide have caught governments, armies, and individuals unprepared to cope with them effectively, so clergy killers in organized religion have caught spiritual leaders and parishioners off-guard.

Though the military-warfare analogy is uncomfortable for many and seems to violate legitimate crusades for peace, it can be instructive for helping us understand the wake-up call international terrorism is giving to governments, and the spiritual terrorists we are calling clergy killers are giving the church. Both are saying something is wrong, and that the struggle between good and evil is the context. Ignoring or underestimating the warfare simply hands victory to the enemy.

Examples in the media

Not all spiritual warfare is dramatic, traumatic abuse and violence. Much of it now is subtle, such as is seen in ideological contests, economic power struggles, and manipulative advertising. However, the stakes are high and long-term consequences may be deadly.

Media communication is another example. The enemy is not easy to identify.

In fact, sometimes the enemy and victim are we who use and consume media indiscriminately. When we look at media it doesn't look like an army, and it doesn't seem to be trying to harm us. But some of the values promoted through TV, radio, the "Net", and print media can literally shape our lives for good or ill, whether we are aware of this or not.

Since the development of written and spoken language about 3,500 year ago, humankind has been learning the skills of communicating ideas, needs, and feelings. Much human behavior is a result of such ideation, and behavior is a consequence we must all live with. Therefore, mind manipulation or control is a hot contest for those who would influence behavior. Human ideation is composed of beliefs and perceived consequences of behavior, and we can choose which will govern our behavior. Each of us devise our lifestyles by choosing one or the other, or both.

Media are a phenomenon of our communication and information age. What we experience in the media doesn't just happen. Behind the scenes there is always purpose—good, nefarious, and relatively neutral. It is obvious, then, that media control is a likely setting for spiritual warfare—who will control media, and thereby human behavior. But for what purpose? Values are a byproduct of such control. Will our values be formulated by beliefs or consequences? This is a significant and complicated battlefield of spiritual warfare.

We should remember that the media and their communications may be good, bad, or a mixture. We have all enjoyed their benefits. Now we must learn to help manage this complicated and enormously influential gift of public communication, for there are high stakes and eternal consequences in such management. That is why it can be called spiritual warfare.

The church and our nation need their best input for this awesome task of managing media in a democracy. As with other democratic institutions, each citizen and parishioner shares the responsibility to hold media accountable, and to help them be their best. It follows, of course, that sincere and disciplined believers monitor other social institutions as well. Spiritual leaders have a complicated responsibility to

help lead the way in sorting out good from evil when it is not obvious which is which. Democracy needs us to do this without violating basic rights.

Parameters of spiritual warfare

By now we are recognizing that the spiritual warfare perspective raises questions important for the wise consideration of such a profound phenomenon. I encourage readers to think with me lest we become self-serving. I believe God's Holy Spirit is leading us into extraordinary insights and changes for a new era of understanding spirituality, much like the changes recorded in the book of Acts, or in the Reformation. This means we must be willing to think new thoughts. That requires our disciplined faithfulness to the God who said, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9). In spiritual warfare terms we are fighting new battles, with new weapons and strategies, while the enemy does the same.

Personal and social questions about spiritual warfare arise as we wonder why we have to suffer the consequences of God and Satan in conflict, or why our world is so contaminated with pain and struggle, or why my heart and mind, my family, my church can become such raging battlefields. Who is really the enemy, and what really is right and wrong, or are these outmoded terms? What is a realistic yet necessary role for clergy in contemporary spiritual warfare?

For answers, we will keep coming back to the mysteries of God, creation, and human history. We will recognize the harsh realities of warfare—casualties, collateral damage, and human vulnerabilities. And our faith will be anchored in the understanding that when we ally ourselves with God, we share God's victory (Rom. 8:31). Even in war, however, there are periods of peace, and times for love and enjoyment of life. Yet, constant vigilance is the price for such shalom.

The whole idea of warfare in the realm of the Spirit is mysterious. For several generations, since psychology and science became our adjunct "bibles," sin and evil came to be regarded as nothing more than mental illness and personality disorders, or

normal human failures. All are to be remedied, of course, by psychotherapy, medication, or scientific research—the same mistake theology made and makes when it purports to define spiritual mysteries exactly. Curiously enough, it is psychiatrists who are pointing us back to traditional concepts such as sin, evil, salvation, healing, hope, and caring: Victor Frankl, Paul Tournier, Eric Fromm, Karl Menninger, Gerald May, Scott Peck, Herbert Benson, Larry Dossey, Dale Matthews, and others. While we are sometimes hesitant to discuss sin-evil-spiritual-warfare healing, they do so with confidence. There's a message in that for all of us.

The authors just listed speak about spirituality in insightful ways. The following books have been helpful to me in exploring the spiritual warfare motif specifically, and may prove useful to you as well.

Naming the Powers, Walter Wink (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984).

Unmasking the Powers, Walter Wink (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

Engaging the Powers, Walter Wink (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

Good & Evil, Edward Farley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

Power Encounters, David Powlison (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).

The People of the Lie, M. Scott Peck (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1983).

The Death of Satan, Andrew Delbanco (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995).

A History of God, Karen Armstrong (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

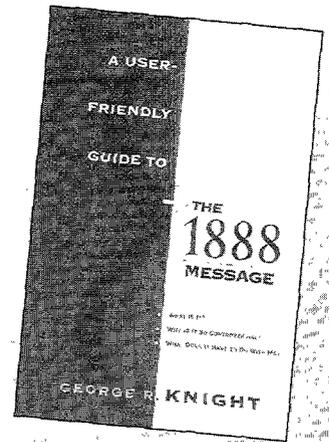
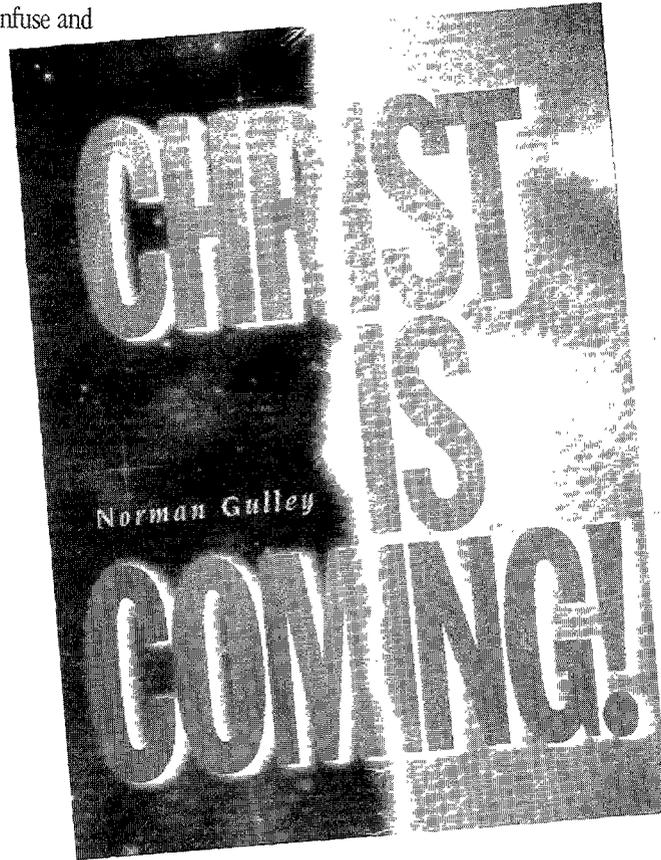
There seems to be more excitement in the church about exploring spiritual issues again, for our whole society is expressing deep spiritual yearnings. God and evil are central factors, so is spiritual warfare. Spiritual leaders of the ultra-conservative persuasion have owned the spiritual warfare discussion for years. Perhaps it is time for all of us to share responsibility for exploring this useful metaphor, and putting it in its realistic place with the other Bible metaphors. ■

* Source: *Leadership* magazine, Winter 1996.

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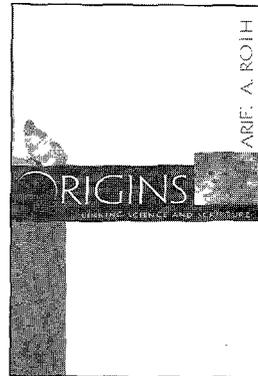
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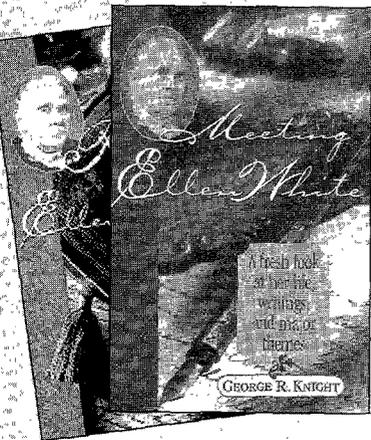
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LIFE PRACTICUM 101

Schools can teach us much that is worthwhile, but there are some experiences that are beyond the scope of academia. One of these is the experience of one's first day as an intern pastor.



Bonita J. Shields is an associate pastor of the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland.

I liken being a ministerial intern to being a college freshman: both are filled with an uncertain false confidence and the misconception that one is prepared for what lies ahead.

As I carried my box of office paraphernalia to work with me that hot day in July 1995, I was filled with excitement. This was a dream come true. I had worked long and hard for this day: tests, exams, term papers, practicums . . . I was ready! Yet, as I sat in my office unpacking my "stuff," a feeling of fear gripped me. "This is it. If I bungle my work there's no more being able to use the excuse, 'I'm only a student.'" With the moment of "arrival" came the realization that large expectations now lay right ahead and with them, the stark question, "Am I going to make it?"

I did overcome the overwhelming feeling of fear that day, but with it, the naivete that I was prepared for this work left me also. My professors trained me well. I learned much in the classroom setting. We participated in preaching and evangelism practicums, student chaplaincy training, discussions on which part of Paul's letters were prologues and which were the body. We even learned what Moses really meant by commanding the Israelites not to boil a goat in its mother's milk. But there's one class no school is equipped to teach: Life Practicum 101.

No one can prepare pastors for the

day church members address them as "Pastor." The first time it happened, I was inclined to ask, "Who? Me?" It reminded me of when I got married and people called me "Mrs." "I'm too young for that! Mrs. Shields is Roy's mother!"

No one can prepare a pastor for the nominating committee. I thought the pastor called church members and they all said, "I'm so glad you called. I would love to help you!" Instead, I began to wonder if the telephone on my ear was a permanent growth, a grotesque piece of anatomy on the side of my head necessary to ministry.

I became convinced, too, that committees are no-win situations. You're absent, and the committee assigns you work. You show up, and they make you chairperson. Then you have to follow What's-His-Name's Rules of Order: motion, second, addendum to the motion. . . I've always gotten good results with Bonita's Rules of Order: "Does anyone have a problem with this? OK, let's move on!"

The experience that really set my Life Practicum in motion, however, began at the bedside of a dying woman.

A visit with Minnis

Steve, my fellow pastor, was out of town my first week-and-a-half in ministry, so I made some of his usual visits during that period. Minnis was one of those visits. Her Alzheimer's had progressed to the point

BONITA J. SHIELDS

where she couldn't communicate with anyone. So, during my visits, much of the time was spent talking with her daughter, Gloria, who told me about Minnis's life and family. I felt as if I really knew Minnis, though we could never really speak together.

During one of our visits, Gloria told me her mother loved to read Scripture and especially loved the Psalms. So, before I left that day, I read several psalms to her. Incredibly, as I read to her, she riveted her body and attention on me and listened intently until I had spoken the last word. As soon as I finished, she pulled me toward her and hugged me tightly.

One evening as I was driving home, I drove past the nursing home. I had not planned to visit Minnis that day, but I felt compelled to visit. As I entered her room, I came face-to-face with Minnis's family: Gloria, her two brothers, and their spouses. Steve was there also. Minnis was nearing death. I sat amidst the family, not knowing what to say. What do you say to someone whose mother is dying? I didn't remember anything in my classes that dealt with this.

So, I just sat and watched. And listened.

A little while later I said my goodbyes to the family and left. As I walked down the corridor of the nursing home, I realized I had not said Goodbye to Minnis. Not that she would know anything. But I would. I went back to her room, kissed her on the cheek, and left. Minnis died ten minutes later.

The memorial service was held a few days later. As the family and friends were arriving, I asked Steve, a pastor with a wealth of experience, "Do you have any words of wisdom for an intern at a memorial service?" His answer was direct. "No. They're all different." Again, I just sat and watched. And listened. Life Practicum 101 continues . . .

Facing the reality of death

My husband Roy and I went for a weekend visit to my parents' home. Mom needed some rest from taking care of Dad, so I decided to stay on for the week to help her. Dad was dying of cancer.

A crash awakened me that Monday

morning on September 25, 1995. I ran into my parents' bedroom to hear Mom asking, "Daddy, why didn't you call me to help you?" Daddy had fallen from the bed and landed against the night stand. I went over to help Mom lift him back onto the bed and suddenly comprehended the expression "dead weight." Daddy weighed only 145 pounds. He shouldn't be that difficult to pull up. Then the full force of the moment hit me: Daddy was dead. I sat on the floor, placed his head on my shoulder, and put my arms around him to hold up his lifeless body until the hospice nurse arrived.

After Daddy's body had been taken away and it was just Mom, my brother, and me in the house, I wept from the depths of my soul with groans of anguish that I had never before experienced or even knew I was capable of feeling. So this is what it feels like to lose someone you love.

Schools can teach us many worthwhile things, but there are some experiences in life that are beyond the scope of academia.

Life Practicum 101 continues . . . ■

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THE ESSENCE OF GOOD PREACHING

The ultimate practical measure of good preaching is what the preacher and the listener take away from the sermon. By precept and example, good preachers give voice to Scripture and to beliefs linking the past to the present and the future of the listener.



William Loveless, Ed.D., is senior pastor of the Loma Linda University Church, Loma Linda, California.

This prophetic touch requires knowledge of the subject matter and the courage, wisdom, and judgment to express convictions about the biblical values as they impinge on the life of the person in the pew.

Yet good preaching involves more than the technique of dispensing information. If the preacher learns nothing new and personally challenging from his sermon, and the parishioners learn nothing new and challenging when they worship, what has been accomplished?

Two concerns about good preaching should, therefore, remain paramount: Who listens? and What happens to them when they do? Facts alone do not change behavior. Preaching is more than mere information. Good preaching should be measured, not by what the pastor does in the pulpit, but by the long-term response of the listener.

Models of preaching style

Various models of preaching style and the characteristics of "good," "popular,"

"effective" preachers have been the subject of study for some time.

The spellbinder model reveals a common stereotype that good preachers are charismatic spellbinders who arouse listeners. Such a motivating influence is, of course, very helpful insofar as it generates enthusiasm for worthwhile subject matter as long as it is not just an ego trip for the preacher.

"Preacher as artist" model. The artist model is a wordsmith who usually reads, often well, from a manuscript. Being proclaimed an artist, however, does not free preachers from observing the more stringent criteria of what happens to the listener. Some preachers are likely to say, "I did a good job preaching today; anything my listeners learned is up to them."

"The muscles of the mind" model. The goal of the classic theory of preaching is to exercise the muscle of the mind by simply loading on the listener a vast array of intellectually oriented facts either to be repeated in some form (e.g., as a Bible study lesson for someone else), or memorized as

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PK Contest Guidelines

Note: Follow instructions. Entries which do not follow the guidelines will not be considered.

Contest Theme: "The Way of the Cross Leads Home"

1. Only PKs (preacher's kids) born *during or after* 1983 qualify. Contestant's parent(s) must be full-time Adventist ministry employee(s), such as a pastor, chaplain, departmental director, Bible instructor, administrator, or Bible teacher in a secondary or higher educational institution.
2. Every entry must use the theme, "The Way of the Cross Leads Home."
3. Entry deadline is April 1, 1999. Entries received after that date will not be considered. Ship to: PK Contest, GC Ministerial Association, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA.
4. For judging purposes, your name *must not* appear on your entry. Instead include a separate paper with your name, birth date, address, parent's name, division and union, and telephone number, if available.
5. PKs must create the entry without parental or other help, and must submit original entries, not copies.
6. Pack all entries carefully for shipping. Damaged entries cannot be considered.
7. All entries become property of the General Conference and will be displayed at the Toronto World Ministers Council. No entries can be returned.
8. Only one entry allowed per category per contestant.

Contest Categories
Each entry must follow the contest's spiritual theme,
"The Way of the Cross Leads Home!"

Art (for *Ministry* magazine cover)

- Art must be in color and original work of the PK.
- Size minimum 8 x 10.5 inches (20 x 27 cm), maximum 11 x 16 inches (28 x 41 cm).
- Allow room in artwork for the *Ministry* magazine title logo. See magazine cover.

Cartoon

- The cartoon must be a single line drawing or a series of no more than four related line drawings which tell a story. (Ink on 4 x 5 inch (10 x 13 cm) card. No pencil drawings.)
- Mount each drawing on 8.5 x 11 inch (26.6 x 28 cm) card stock paper.

Banners & Flags

- Must follow theme by script or representation.
- Make from handmade or commercial cloth.
- Use paint, thread, fabric, stain, and similar materials.
- Minimum size one yard (about one meter) long and wide and maximum 3 yards (3 meters) long or wide including border.

Recitation/Memorization

- Choose one passage: Isaiah 52:9-53:12; Luke 23:33-24:9; Romans 5:1-21.
- Use any recognized version of Scripture in the language of your choice.
- Recitation from memory, without prompting. Your entry will be judged on memorization of the passage and your ability to hold the listener's attention.
- Submit on audio cassette.

Article

- In the article, respond to one or two of these questions: How does the fact that Jesus left heaven,

became a human, and died like a criminal make a difference in your life? How does it affect your thinking, actions, and goals?

What does Jesus' sacrifice tell you about God, who He is, what He's like?

How does Jesus' life and death help you understand sin? How does this help you relate to other people, especially those who disagree with you?

How does Jesus' life and death here give you hope and guide you "home"?

- Don't use many quotations from any source. Use one or more personal stories to illustrate your ideas.
- Length between 750 and 1,000 words.
- Type or hand-print with double-spacing.
- Use the title, "The Way of the Cross Leads Home: What It Means to Me."
- You may talk about your ideas with friends, family, teachers, or pastors. They may give suggestions, correct grammar or spelling, but not write, revise, or rewrite.
- Tell your story. Not someone else's and not one from the Bible.

Stitchery

- Except for ideas, the entire entry must be your work.
- Types of stitchery eligible: crochet, embroidery, crewel embroidery, quilting, knitting, applique and needlepoint.
- Size minimum 4 x 4 inches (10 x 10 cm) maximum 2 x 4 feet (61 x 122 cm).
- Materials must be native to your country.
- Your entry will be judged on originality, use of materials, how it captures the theme, and neatness.

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a hedge against some crisis in the future.

The "pious Pete" model. When you talk to Pete at the picnic, he is warm and personable. What a shock to hear him in the pulpit, where he assumes an unctuous, stained-glass, other-worldly tone, and you would like to say, "Pete, please be yourself. Don't try to sound like you think a minister should sound."

"Man of experience" model. The man of experience seems to want you to know he's been there and done just about everything. Name-dropping is common and, if he stays more than two years, the congregation gets to hear his assortment of stories more than once.

"I was a teenage werewolf" model. The "werewolf" is the former rock musician, gang member, drug user, sex addict, rebellious, long-haired youth with a nose ring and a fried egg over his left ear, now turned preacher. He can't seem to separate himself from his seamy, eccentric, or sordid past. He is famous for his conversion story, which often overshadows his treatment of the gospel story.

New questions, new paradigm

Today the questions have changed for the leader and the preacher. We study followers. Who follows leaders and *why do they?* Again, a valid appraisal of preaching must be anchored in what happens to the individual listener, because in essence, preaching is the interaction between two persons, the preacher and the listener, regardless of the size of the crowd.

Fortunately, the accumulated wisdom about good preaching, going back many centuries (starting with John Chrysostom), confirms that certain things preachers do make a significant difference in their long-term impact on listeners: (1) good preachers select and organize worthwhile sermon material; (2) they lead listeners to encode and integrate this material into their personal lives; (3) they ensure respect for the mode of the study of the Bible, history, and other disciplines cognate to the sermon material; (4) they sustain intellectual curiosity by stimulating critical thinking; and (5) they promote faith and learning as the twin values most needed by the serious listener.

The moment of homiletic truth occurs when a listener or preacher grasps the

meaning of an important idea and makes a personal connection; all else in preaching is a means to the end of such insight and carry-over understanding. The substantive information in the sermon must have carry-over value—something worth knowing in its own right or believing because it leads to further learning and strengthening of faith. Neither the preacher nor the listener can anticipate in any detail the times or occasions when such retrieval of insight or information will occur. However, meaningful information must be there in order for it to be utilized. For example, understanding God's gracious response to Abraham's intercession (Genesis 18) will give a listener-partitioner particular confidence to address the Lord in a moment of need or as a consistent way of life.

Much has been made of the need to memorize Scripture. To be sure, memorizing meaningful material and repeating meaningful information can be helpful. Rote memory, on the other hand, has little carry-over value in itself. If a "memory verse" is to provide long-term help, it must identify with a life experience or resonate with a felt need. The Bible passages that have meant the most to me are those that have challenged or nurtured my personal journey.

Along with this, a person's system of internalized values serves as a binder for the retention of facts, concepts, and procedures. Motivation or the personal need to know is the energy that drives us to see the importance of biblical information and spiritual insight.

From abstract to concrete

The most powerful intellectual force in preaching is the ability to derive and apply abstract ideas. In Plato's *Republic*, philosophers were kings because they were the ones most capable of freeing themselves from the constraining environment of the sensory world. Most of what we as preachers deal with in our spiritual lives is embedded in abstract concepts: conversion, new birth, forgiveness, Holy Spirit, acceptance, Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and church community, to name just a few. Preachers must take these abstract ideas and gently help listeners turn them into concrete realities that can change their lives. Billy

Graham does this effectively in his altar calls.

In the end, the essence of good preaching has a lot more to do with integrity and personhood than with preaching style and techniques. Any preacher is more than the techniques to which he or she subscribes. Every preacher has a style which, in reality, is a consistent display of the character and values of the preacher. Many facets contribute to the preacher's identity: everything from affection for parents, to allegiance to the Ford Motor Company; from a dislike of dogs, to the impact of the media on his or her life (by the age of 18, the average American teenager has spent 11,000 hours in the classroom; 22,000 hours watching TV; finished 13,000 school lessons; and watched 750,000 commercials). All these and untold other variables affect who we are and, inevitably, what goes into our sermons and how those sermons are received.

Finally, when the congregation perceives that its preacher enjoys their company, enjoys the Lord's company and to a degree understands and enjoys his or her own company, that preacher is on the way toward the essence of good preaching and to being a change agent in the lives of those who listen. ■

This article is the second in a series of three.



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THE GOSPEL AND THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

I was once an admirer of the New Age movement. Soon after the fall of communism, the search for truth and meaning sent me to the Greek-Orthodox Church, to Eastern mysticism, and then to many branches of the New Age movement.



Cezar Luchian is the former editor of the Romanian Signs of the Times and is currently a postgraduate student at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee.

I was so fascinated with the New Age that I went from campus to campus in Romania, holding seminars on the supposed hope to be found in this movement. But, personally, I was far from satisfied. Then I found Jesus. Joy filled my being. As I reflect on the grip New Age had on me and the many obstacles, failures, and sorrows that hindered my acceptance of the gospel, I am grateful for the blessings that inevitably accompanied my acceptance of Jesus.

A historical overview

Today *New Age* is a common term in religious vocabulary. Since the 70s, the movement began to gain public recognition as hundreds of oriental gurus, western philosophers, scientists, movie stars, writers, and politicians turned to New Age to find spiritual fulfillment. These men and women proclaimed the dawn of a new era in history, an era in which all humanity will ultimately reach its final stage of spiritual enlightenment through a worldwide conversion to a syncretistic, mystical, and humanistic religion.

All this is not entirely new. Recent roots of the movement can be traced to the resurgence of spiritualism in the second half of the nineteenth century, when, under the influence of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky,

Annie Bessant, George Steiner, and Alice Bailey, the mystical philosophy of India and medieval occultism were reconciled and advocated as the only alternative to what they concluded was a defunct Christianity. But it was not until almost a century later that this anciently conceived “new age” movement finally reached its zenith after a long and obscure adolescence spent in the shadow of two world wars.

The zenith came in the wake of the counterculture of the 60s. The rejection of traditional moral values, the denunciation of a materialistic society, the rethinking of many western patterns of thought, the “LSD era” along with the explosion of psychedelic art, and the Vietnam crisis were among the most important factors¹ that contributed to the launching of this “other gospel.”

This “gospel” essentially told the world that ultimate and everlasting happiness is dependent on the mystical expansion of an *inner sacred potential* which is hidden in every human being. When this *potential* is properly developed, the individual will find his or her *identity* in the *divine* principle that governs this universe, and, by so doing, will again be a part of the initial cosmic order.

Until the arrival of this quasi gospel, Christians saw their main opponents to be

CEZAR LUCHIAN

the ongoing secularization of postmodern western society, anti-Christian political and philosophical ideologies, and the growing fundamentalism of traditional religions. But this is no longer so. Christians now have a new front: a new pervasive religion that transcends all religious, social, cultural, or political boundaries, and that has no sourcebook, no earthly leader, and no physical headquarters. This new religion is an apparently chaotic network of thousands of organizations, groups and clubs, proclaiming the coming of a *New Age*. Because many New Age philosophers feel free to include the Bible and the teachings of Jesus, the movement is perhaps the most subtle and powerful destroyer of the uniqueness of Christian faith. Indeed some Christian authors have called it "the spiritual version of AIDS."²

In the light of all this, it was only normal that anti-New Age apologetics began to develop in the Christian community, with evangelicals leading the battle. Constance Cumbeys' *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*³ was largely responsible for coining the name *New Age*. This book and others that followed⁴ created a sensationalistic phobia regarding a secret worldwide conspiracy that would eventually establish a unique world government and impose on every human being the claims of a Satanic religion. Cumbeys' detailed comparison between the New Age movement, Adolf Hitler's Third Reich, several original prophetic insights presented with hundreds of references gave credibility to her book. Although in recent years the book has been critically reevaluated by many conservative Bible scholars,⁵ many Christians still live under the fear that there is some hidden evil in the movement.

The Bible and the New Age movement

Having said this, we need to turn to what the Bible says about the New Age movement. Without any doubt, the movement is a threat to the Christian faith (consider Col. 2:8, 18-23); it partially fulfills the Bible prediction of an end-time resurgence of false religions and false messiahs (Matt. 24:5, 23-26; etc.); its intellectual and spiritual presuppositions prepare the minds of many with basic philosophies that could eventually lead them to accept the "last day" deceptions (Rev. 13:13, 14; 16:14; 2 Thess. 2:9-12). The worldwide impact of

the movement prevents the work of the gospel as other pseudogospels have done in the past (Gal. 1:6-8; 2 John 7-11; etc.).⁶

Facing these challenges, we do need to "hold firmly to the trustworthy message of the Bible as it has been taught . . . and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9; see also 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:1; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13; etc.).

But how do we do this? How do we counter the work of the New Age movement and reach out to those who are in its grasp? Organizations, such as the *Spiritual Counterfeit Project* and *Christian Research Institute*, are probably the leading Christian counter New Age groups. Also, several books published in the last decade provide a balanced analysis of this movement, as well as a solid biblical defense of the Christian faith.⁷

However, anyone who reads a Christian apologetic against the New Age or attends a seminar on the topic will realize that the main goal of this type of outreach appears to be a warning of the deceitfulness of the New Age teaching and practice and the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the only viable alternative. But Christians have little to gain from this approach.

Ellen White's counsel in this respect is extremely valuable: "It is not best to dwell upon the spiritualistic sentiments, the strange, misleading theories, which have for years been coming in among us. . . . If you try to handle these subjects, you will be led to repeat the sophistries of Satan, and thus you will help Satan to present his false theories to the people. Resolve never, never to repeat error, but always to teach the truth."⁸

While warning people is indeed an important part of our work, it is only a small part. We need not only to warn but to guide people to the channel of God's grace. The ultimate goal is not simply to expose error, but to lead people to Jesus Himself.

Two basic characteristics

The first premise of any outreach philosophy is that while the gospel is the same for all human beings, not all can be reached in the same way. The specific characteristics of each group, their cultural and social background, religious interest, educational and economic level, etc., demand that a specific method be employed in each group. Hence, it is vital to have a knowledge of the main psychosocial characteristics of those

who get involved in the New Age.

Paul gives us a fascinating analogy which shows that the human soul in every age possesses the same basic needs, fears, desires, and hopes. The apostle wrote: "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:22, 23).

Paul employed a common preconceived Jewish distinction to illustrate the preeminence of the gospel and the universality of the Christian message (see verses 24-26). The way in which he characterized the Jews and the Greeks appears to be analogous when it comes to the New Age mind. In today's world Paul's distinction points to two different types of personalities in which the New Age net catches a lot of its fish.

The *first* one is the "Jewish-minded" group: people dissatisfied with the kind of life they live. They are eager to escape the banality of surrounding mindsets. They want to discover a new world and test the supernatural. They are ready to engage in all sorts of unusual experiences to obtain free access to a *new dimension of the universe*. They "demand miraculous signs" to make their lives meaningful. They attempt to resolve their social maladjustments and self-esteem problems by seeking refuge in a world supposedly inaccessible to the average individual. And since a healthy body is perceived to be the best vehicle for any supernatural adventure, they prove to be extremely health conscious.

The *second* group are "Gentile-minded." They are dissatisfied with anything traditional ideology or Western religion has tried to offer in the past two centuries. People in this group are more intellectually oriented. They are in search of a philosophy that will answer all questions and give a coherent explanation for humanity's bloody destiny. They look "for wisdom," and they pretend to have found it in the syncretistic philosophy of the New Age—a combination of the ancient Hindu and Buddhist philosophies, a few Western ideas taken from Darwin, Maslow, or modern physics. Many are also politically active, ecologically conscious, and vigorous promoters of pacifism. In short: They are a lot more socially involved than their "Jewish" cousins.

All told, however, the typical New Ager

is more or less a combination of both the “Jew” and the “Greek” in our analogy. Intellectual and physical needs are mixed with curiosity and fascination to the point that no one is able to give a clear answer as to what it might have been that convinced a person to start their New Age adventure.

Having said this, we now turn to our main concern: What are some basic principles and strategies for reaching New Agers with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Three general principles

1. *Reveal the character of Christ in your life.* New Agers are as much in need of the revelation of God’s character as anybody else. Coldness, harsh words, icy looks, or an air of academic superiority will always close doors and confirm their preconceived ideas regarding Christians’ bigotry and exclusivism. In order to be effective in reaching others with the gospel of Christ, we first need to be thoroughly convinced that “the strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”⁹ What New Agers really need is not so much somebody telling them the truth but somebody consistently living the truth. “Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. . . . It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful.”¹⁰

2. *Respect them by avoiding confrontation, either private or public.* Constant attacks in our outreach materials or public lectures will only harden hearts instead of softening them. Our goal should be to establish relationships. The only way in which people realize their true needs is a “one to one” meeting with Christ at Calvary. Arguments over how erroneous people’s beliefs are is the worst way of starting the journey to the cross.

This aspect cannot be over-stressed: In reaching New Agers, there is no place for any ideological debates. Threats, accusations, or criticism will only reinforce them in their belief and make them less and less receptive to the influence of the Spirit. Long theological debates will only help them find new arguments and lead the discussion to a philosophical “no man’s land.”

“The Lord wants His people to follow other methods than that of condemning

wrong, even though the condemnation is just. He wants us to do something more than to hurl at our adversaries charges that only drive them farther from the truth. The work which Christ came to do in our world was not to erect barriers, and constantly thrust upon the people the fact that they were wrong. He who expects to enlighten a deceived people must come near to them and labor for them in love. He must become a center of holy influence. . . . In the advocacy of truth the bitterest opponents should be treated with respect and deference.”¹¹

3. *Isolate them.* Although at times they may work, public seminars targeting this group are not generally the best way to reach them. Such seminars cannot be limited to New Agers. Besides, due to the strong influences under which New Agers move, we may seldom expect mass conversions from their ranks. Consequently, the best approach is that of friendship evangelism. Reach them one by one, through personal effort and prayer.

Four-step building strategy

With these three general principles before us, we now turn to some practical methods to be used in reaching New Agers. They are no different from well-known principles of friendship evangelism but are adapted to the specific interests and needs of those in the New Age movement.

1. *Build true friendships through a life of service.* Reach out and help whenever an occasion arises. In spite of the ongoing theological debate around the “good deeds” issue, unselfish service remains the best way of disarming prejudice, winning confidence, and making someone “an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master” (2 Tim. 2:21; cf. Matt. 5:16; Titus 2:14; 3:8; James 1:27; etc.). Although most New Agers try to present themselves as completely detached from this world, they still need to hear kind words, see smiling faces, and get the help of friendly hands.

2. *Build bridges of common interest.* No other topic can serve as an entering wedge for reaching New Agers better than that of health. It is in this area that New Agers and Christians—particularly Seventh-day Adventists—have many things in common. When the gospel is thoroughly understood, there will always be an interest in the proper

maintenance of the “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:12-20). Since New Agers are interested in health, we can share with them our insights in matters of nutrition, stress management, and physical fitness. We do not sacrifice any principle, or violate our conscience, when we manifest a genuine interest in their way of approaching vegetarianism or various sorts of natural treatments. We may not endorse everything they believe about health and spirituality, but we can use health as an excellent bridge for building confidence and arousing curiosity about the Bible as something more than just an interesting book.

One good way of building bridges is giving them something to read. Recognizing that most of the time we will be dealing with college-educated people accustomed to reading and thinking, the books we offer should be well-chosen. The “solid food” of Bible prophecy will work as no other in motivating them to accept the Bible as an inspired book and the Christian perspective on human history as valid. Books such as *God Cares*, *What the Bible Says About the End Time*, and *Chariots of Salvation*¹² make fine reading for them.

3. *Build a genuine Christian testimony.* When the time comes—and only then—give your personal, short, and powerful testimony of what Christ means to you. If you try to show them how great Christianity is by quoting Augustine or even Max Lucado, you are on the wrong track. Never talk about the Christian experience in vague, philosophical terms. New Agers are interested in having real experiences and an experiential knowledge of God. Prayers answered, old habits conquered, and daily miracles will make our relationship with Christ tangible for a New Age mind. The simple story of our own “walk with God” will do more than a documented exposition about the Trinity, the uniqueness of biblical salvation, or the fate of the lost.

4. *“Pray continually”* (1 Thess. 5:17). Paul’s advice finds an excellent application in the work of reaching those who have submitted their will to someone else. Ultimately, neither our personal effort nor our power will make much difference. It is only by God’s Spirit that the work of salvation is to be accomplished. We may be sure that the “powers of darkness” will not be pleased with our

uninvited visit. If we want to have success in this fight, we must not argue but pray.

Even if New Ager will not accept our first invitation to join "the kingdom of God," we should remain friends with them. The process of conversion for a New Ager is often a long and painful one. They must change not just beliefs but an entire conception about the universe and its God. Waiting patiently the light may break for them sooner than we expect. ■

*Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture passages in this article are from the New International Version.

¹ See Douglas Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), 37.

² Philip H Lochhaas, *How to Respond to . . . The New Age Movement* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 5.

³ Constance Cumbe, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* (Shreveport, La: Huntington House, 1983).

⁴ For example, see Texe Marrs, *Dark Secrets of the New Age* (1987), *Mystery Mark of the New Age* (1988), *Ravaged by the New Age* (1989).

⁵ See Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course in the New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 193

⁶ See Norman R Guley, "The New Age Movement and Eschatology: Exploring its World-View Shift, Global Consciousness, and Role in End Events," *Adventist Perspectives* 5 (1991): 24.

⁷ See Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989); Douglas Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986); Karen Hoyt (ed), *The New Age Rage* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1987); Walter Martin, *The New Age Cult* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989); Ron Rhodes, *The Counterfeit Christ of the New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

⁸ Ellen G White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1973), 623.

⁹ ———, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, Id: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1942), 470.

¹⁰ ———, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, Id: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1942), 135.

¹¹ ———, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970), 305, 306.

¹² C. Merwyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, 2 vols. (Nampa, Id.: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1985); John Paulien, *What the Bible Says About the End Time*, (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1994); Hans K. La Rondelle, *Chariots of Salvation: The Biblical Drama of Armageddon* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1987).

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LETTER TO A SON

Dear Mark: I guess I've always known you would enter the ministry. It seemed to be something you were naturally drawn toward. I tried hard not to influence you in taking this kind of step because you needed to know that it was something the Lord was calling you to, not something your father wanted.

David Bell is a pseudonym.

Just after you were born, as Mom and I brought you home from the hospital, we stopped beside the road and "gave" you to the Lord and asked Him to lead in your life. I believe He has done that. But, let me add, I would have been just as happy if He had led you down a different path.

As you take this step from seminary to parish, you've been on my mind. It's early Sabbath morning and I thought I would share some of those thoughts. Maybe they will be helpful.

It's important to remember that God has led you to decide for ministry—it's important to remember the call. Few of us have a dramatic Damascus Road calling, but those who are called know they are. There will be times in your ministry when you will wonder if it is worthwhile continuing, when you will doubt if God has really led you. That's when you will need to remember there was a time when God claimed you as His man.

One of the temptations that will befall you is to attempt to be like someone you admire in ministry. Don't! Be the person you are. Sure, learn from others (never stop learning). Try things others are trying. Listen to words of wisdom from those who have been down the road a little farther—and pray for the gift of discerning what is wisdom. Allow God to change you as He

sees fit. But don't try to be someone else, for that not only denies your individuality (and how long can anyone work in someone else's armor?) but in a sense it denies the fact that God called *you* to ministry.

You are the outsider coming into your congregation's church. Give the people time to get to know you. Encourage them to talk about their church and its history. While you will have your agenda as you go into your first parish, take time to learn from the people their dreams for their church. Try to be excited by their dreams and help them fulfill them. That's an important part of ministry. Only as you begin to know your parishioners can you begin to minister to them.

You have been called to perform a spiritual role. If I could start again, I would spend more time in prayer and Bible/devotional reading—in connecting with the Source of spiritual power. I've known the fear of pastoring churches where a substantial number of parishioners were professionals, some of them academics. That's where I learned that while I was also considered a professional, my role was not to compete with them in learning or skill, but to provide spiritual leadership. And that's true of any church you will pastor.

Understand that you are an *Adventist* pastor. That means that your church will

DAVID BELL

expect you to endorse and support publicly and privately certain doctrines and lifestyle practices. While you won't be expected to know the 27 fundamental beliefs by memory, and while you may wish that some had been worded differently or with a different emphasis, there is an expectation that you support them.

Preach the Word! Your congregation can get good pop psychology or sociology or a good yarn anywhere at the flick of a switch or by browsing a magazine. On Sabbath mornings they're thirsting for something different—the Word of God. It's OK to use those other things to illustrate the Word (and what wouldn't we preachers give for the right illustration) to help bring the message into contemporary understanding. But these should only illustrate the Word, not replace it.

To fulfill your responsibilities, you will work long hours. But don't be a clock watcher. Remember that you will be asking many people to volunteer their time after their 38 or 40 hours of work a week. You must be willing to do the same. But don't try to do everything yourself. In fact, one of your roles is to encourage others to minister. Help the church members fulfill their potential and spiritual gifts.

The demands of ministry can be wearing. That's why it's important to maintain a balance in your life or you will quickly burn out. You need time for relaxation, for exercise, for you and Joanne. Some of those things you can make a part of your ministry (Tuesday night basketball with the church team could be part of your exercise program, for instance).

Love Joanne and show it privately and publicly. There will be demands on both of you that will put pressure on your relationship. You will need special time together—put it in your diary. Remember that she is your first priority (and when children come, they also come before the church). Some will consider your home open to them at any time, and tragedies and others' needs will not keep to convenient times. That's added pressure. And remember, even as Joanne develops in her own profession, she's automatically involved in ministry in your church, and that puts more pressure on her.

Show love privately? Joanne needs to

know that she is special to you as your life becomes busy helping other people. Publicly? Teenagers (particularly from broken homes) need to see that there can be a positive relationship between a man and a woman. Whether you like it or not, you both will model lifestyle to others. Besides this, your congregation needs to know you are in love and there is no way they can use one of you against the other, if they ever wanted to.

Don't be afraid to experiment—or to fail. While I believe the highest calling a person can have within the Adventist Church is to serve as a church pastor, there are so many different approaches to ministry you can become involved in. Try evangelism. Try working with youth. Try working with the aged. Try revamping Sabbath School.

Then, a few years down the track, work to become an expert in something. It may be a book of the Bible, it may be counselling, or youth ministry, or even church finances (or writing those books you tell me you

want to write). Pastoral ministry offers such a broad scope of work and you will soon become a Jack-of-all-trades, but for your own personal fulfillment, I believe you will need to develop a specialization related to ministry.

Ministry is the most exciting of callings. You see close up God at work in people's lives. You are an instrument of His. And, because you are the pastor, people will come to you for help. What a challenge! Ministry can also be the most frustrating of callings when you see people turn away from God, or when nothing seems to be happening. You will discover those challenges soon enough.

What began as a brief letter has grown into an epistle to Mark (I'll add chapters and verses later). I hope you enjoy your ministry as much as I have and do. Mom and I will continue to pray for you and Joanne as you enter this new phase of your life.

With love,
Dad

P. S. Check out 2 Timothy!

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DELIVERANCE MINISTRY IN A SOPHISTICATED WORLD

Driving home with five high-powered rifles in my car, I had plenty to think about. At his request I had accompanied a colleague to a Bible study where a young married couple were in a unique crisis.



Peter Harper is a pastor in Wagoja, New South Wales, Australia.

Concluding the study I asked my friend to pray. As he ended his prayer, I added, "In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke the spirit of fear in Nigel" (not his real name). There was a loud shriek, and I opened my eyes to see Nigel flat on his back on the floor.

It is amazing what people will cover up. For a long time Nigel had been pestered by voices in his head, telling him he had to shoot his wife. He would come home from work and tell her, "I've got to do it, I have to kill you." He had kept those five rifles in a closet in their bedroom. We did not gain full victory over the demons in this fine young man that night, but we did take the rifles away with us. Two nights later, with the assistance of another colleague, Nigel found release.

Prayer empowers

I asked this colleague to arrange prayer groups on a daily basis over the next

few weeks to support Nigel during his time of recovery. He told us that the next day the voices were no longer *in* his head, but he could hear them outside, taunting and threatening him. Over the next several days they died away completely. I kept those rifles in our home for four months, until I felt I could trust Nigel with them. Today, many years later, Nigel and his wife continue to be faithful church members.

Not all such ministry is so dramatic. I think of a young Adventist man who had convinced himself that he was demon-possessed. We worked with him for two hours, and he had very convincing manifestations, before we decided it was his way of gaining attention from his friends. Another young man had his girlfriend ask us for help and pretended to have a problem just to see if he could trick us.

That is one of the challenges which comes with involvement in this kind of ministry. An almost superstitious notoriety

V . P E T E R H A R P E R

comes to the one doing it, even in the eyes of seasoned Christians who should know better. For this reason I avoid using words like "exorcism" and "possessed" as much as possible because they carry with them such an emotive mystique. I have never asked for this ministry, and I certainly never go looking for it. However, if it presents itself to me, I do not turn from it.

A normal part of ministry

Reading passages like Matthew 10:7, 8, and Mark 3:14, 15, one may well see casting out demons as a normal part of gospel ministry. It is a ministry based entirely upon the victory Christ gained on the cross. In terms of forgiveness granted, guilt banished, and righteousness applied, it may be said that every sinner who accepts Christ and is born again is "delivered" (see Col. 1:13, 14).

In all branches of ministry, diagnosis is the first essential. Therefore, the first question we should ask is: Does this problem have an emotional, physiological, or mental cause, or is there something

more? Unless there are obvious criteria which cannot be ignored, the best answer is "wait and see." If the person receives help from a source which seems appropriate to the need, but the result is negative, or the problem keeps recurring, there comes a time when investigation from a spiritual perspective becomes appropriate. A respected Adventist psychiatrist once told me this was precisely his experience with a particular patient, who, it turned out, was demonized. He had not believed in demonism until this experience.

Weapons of warfare

What are our "weapons of warfare" (2 Cor. 10:4)? The Word of God, the blood of Christ, acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, His victory on the cross, His resurrection, prayer and intercession, repentance and confession, appropriate restitution. With the ministry of the Holy Spirit pervading all the above, Christians are well qualified to exercise the authority delegated to them by the Lord (Luke 10:19). Along with this, it must be

understood that there is a strictly legal aspect to deliverance from evil spirits. The redemption which Christ gained for us must be accepted, claimed, and applied, or the spirits will hold their ground.

Note the following important points about this ministry.

1. The Bible and prayer are primary weapons which will discomfort the evil spirits. See Rev.12:10, 11; Luke 10:19; Eph. 1:7; Ps. 35, 51, 107:20; 1 John 1:9; Matt. 28:18, and many more.

2. I find it important to have the counselee repeat prayers of confession and renunciation after me. In doing this they are clearly declaring their choice to the powers of darkness to have Christ rule their lives. On the basis of faith in Him, those powers have no alternative but to retreat.

3. The means of demonic entry and the grounds upon which they stand need to be defined. Séances or Ouija boards are obvious sources, but persistent and indulged hatred, bitterness, lying, unforgiveness, blasphemy, filthiness, just to name some, are

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equally effective in bringing bondage into a person's life (note Mark 7:20-23). Other means of entry are involvement in heathen worship, hypnotism, occult practices, and similar mind control techniques.

4. Oppression by evil powers may be generationally transferred, that is, passed from generation to generation within families. If that is not credible to you, then think of the trail of violence and child sex abuse passed down the line of families. Often the generation factor is the missing link in finding the source of a problem. Confession and renunciation are effective in breaking this chain of inheritance (see Ex. 20:5 and Lam. 5:7).

5. It is not wise to enter into conversation with demons. If allowed, they will prattle on by the hour through the counselee, or they may choose to hide and play dumb. Either way the Christian has the authority to deal with them.

6. Evil spirits seldom operate alone and are most commonly found in groups. In serious cases they tend to come out one by one, showing their character by physical manifestations in the person. In a matter of minutes I have seen a person demonstrate characteristics of extreme pride, self-pity, anger, over-confidence, hatred, bullying, as each spirit was exiting. Sometimes, however, they will just "pack their bags and go." But there needs to be a double check as this can be a ruse on their part.

7. We should never work alone. This is of necessity a team ministry with one leading and one or two others providing support in prayer, observation, and encouragement.

8. It is of great benefit to have someone with the gift of discerning spirits. While not infallible, if humbly exercised it can save a great amount of time and energy. This ministry is highly demanding.

9. There is no need for shouting, excitement, or demonstrative strutting about. It can be done quietly, virtually no different from a normal counseling session or Bible study. But if time drags on, it is quite in order to have a break with a refreshing drink and a light snack.

10. We need to be sensitive to the feelings of the person in need. They will probably be unraveling some very private material from their past. This may be quite

traumatic for them, bringing tears and feelings of shame. They should be constantly reassured that they are doing well. They should be respected, assured of the great love of God for them, and reminded that their pain will soon be just a memory.

11. To dispel darkness, bring in the light. "The entrance of Your words gives light" (Ps. 119:130, NKJV; see also 2 Cor. 4:1-7).

12. Because there are demons which use the name of Jesus, when I am involved in this work I always clearly identify our Lord by titles such as the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus and Jesus of Nazareth.

A wholistic ministry

Deliverance ministry deals with the whole person and for this reason it should not be approached lightly or with brash confidence. Wherever there is the slightest indication to do so, it is wise to have a Christian doctor involved.

People may question why this ministry seems to be such a tedious and time-consuming affair. It certainly did not seem to be like that with Christ and His apostles. But consider the following:

1. This is not the place to ask why, but Christ and the apostles had a degree of power and discerning which is rarely seen today (see Luke 13:16, 8:44-46, 6:17-19; Matt. 14:34-36; John 4:17, 18, 9:3; Acts 5:3, 13:9, 10, 14:9, 19:11, 12).

2. This means that time will be spent discovering from the counselee the vital elements of their past that impact upon their present condition (see Mark 9:17-29).

3. Counselees are often ignorant of the need to be fully self-revealing, or not convinced it is imperative. Thus the grounds upon which the spirits gained access to the life are often only exposed after patient investigation. Sometimes the very points which are important for us to know are hidden from the mind of the person in need, and memory is only prompted by probing.

4. Because the demons were granted certain rights of access to the life, either by the person, or by their forbears, demons will resist and contest efforts to dislodge them until those rights have been negated. I recall a young man who was terrifyingly demonized and was not a Christian. For a

long time the spirits physically prevented him from accepting Christ, even though he had a strong desire to do so.

5. Inexperience can be costly in terms of time and effort. For my part, I am grateful I have served an "apprenticeship" in this ministry with a senior man who had experience. It does seem there is a certain fear and even dread of this subject, coupled with strong uncertainties about it. I am still very much a learner and I do not wish to give the impression of any great expertise. I have simply shared what I have learned "at the coal face," and through careful reading. I emphasize the word "careful," for we need to be discriminating in the ministries we accept. ■

Ministry's two most controversial issues

continued from p. 4

That's a penetrating question and it applies as much to me as it does to traditionalists or those of a more contemporary outlook.

Whether we consider ourselves or one another to be too dead or too alive in worship, I believe the starting point is not who wants what, or even who is more attracted by what. Important as those concerns are, the bedrock question is, who is God and how may we please Him whom we adore and seek to serve. Simply, How do we actually worship *Him* authentically? To do this is not a simplistic task that takes place with some effortless flourish. It takes thought and study and sweat and prayer and application and a primeval creativity that is inspired by the One whom we purpose to worship.

I am ever moved and disciplined by the colossal meaning behind what seems to me to be the heart of what Jesus said about worship as He spoke to the woman at Jacob's well: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit [subjective] and truth [objective], for such the Father seeks to worship him" (John 4:23, RSV). ■

Inspiration

Messenger of the Lord

Herbert E. Douglass

Messenger of the Lord is the first comprehensive study of Ellen White's prophetic ministry to appear since the mid-1950s. Since then, criticism has been leveled against her and her work in a number of areas,

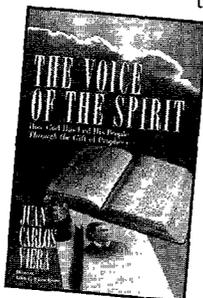


and much has been learned regarding revelation/inspiration and how it operated in the work and life of Ellen White.

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Old Testament demonology

continued from p. 7

Lord through prayer and commitment to Him. Second, with hardly no evidence of exorcism in the Old Testament, one can conclude that a ministry based on or revolving around the practice of exorcism lacks biblical foundation. Third, in places where offerings are given to the spirit of the dead, the pastor should point to our Creator and Redeemer as the only spiritual power to whom we must submit. Any other spiritual force claiming our allegiance or service is of demonic origin.

Finally, as we minister to our parishioners, preachers should stress that God wants us to think more about His sovereign power to save than about the destructive power of evil forces. These may well be the subliminal message communicated through the little emphasis that the Old Testament places on the demonic. There is security for us in our covenant relationship with the Lord, and because of that even when evil touches us we can advisably say "God touched me."

Believers are under the constant care of the Lord even as they "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4). Concerning our Saviour it is said, "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit . . . to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. 4:1). His encounter with the enemy was planned and controlled by the Lord. In short, perhaps the clearest message from the Old Testament in this context is that we are not cosmic chips functioning as targets for the unrestrained assault of the demonic but rather children of a loving God who at His time will extinguish those forces from His universe. ■

¹ Werner Foerster, "Daimon," *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, vol. 2, Gerhard Kittel, ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), 2, 3.

² Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 199.

³ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 3:1341.

⁴ See S. Talmon, "Midbar," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, edited by G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H. J. Fabry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 8:114-115.

⁵ B. Kedar-Kopfstein, "Dam," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 2:238.

⁶ Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 529.

⁷ M. Hutter, "Lilith," *Dictionary of Deities*, cols. 973-976.

⁸ See P. Kella, "Reshep," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1995), cols. 1324-1326.

⁹ Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *God, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas, 1992), 67.

¹⁰ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 455.

¹¹ See R. C. Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*, vol. 1 (London: Luzac, 1904), xlvi-xlvii; and P. K. McCarter, "Evil Spirit of God," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*, col. 602.

¹² Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 5, 6.

¹³ E.g., David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20* (Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1989), 18-27.

¹⁴ See Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997), 157-162.

¹⁵ See Angel M. Rodríguez, "Bible Questions Answered: Cosmic Conflict," *Adventist Review*, 8 May 1997, 28.

¹⁶ R. S. Handel, "Serpent," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, col. 1405.

¹⁷ See Boyd, *God at War*, 154-157.

¹⁸ Handel describes the serpent as "crossing or blurring the boundaries between the categories of animal, human, and divine" concluding that he is in fact a trickster (Handel, 1410).

¹⁹ See, for instance, John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1992), 238.



Are we free to pick and choose what inspired counsel we will follow and what we will ignore?

For over one hundred fifty years, Adventists have affirmed the gift of prophecy given to our church through the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White. However, it seems that we “believe” in her counsels more firmly if they fit our preconceived notions, and we tend to “disregard” her counsels if they inconvenience our own plans or procedures.

While this may be true in other areas, at this moment I am speaking specifically to her admonition concerning remunerating pastoral wives who participate with their husbands in team ministry.

The inspired counsel

What is the counsel from Ellen White? “God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives, who devote themselves just as interestedly to the work as laborers together with God, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, notwithstanding that they might not ask. As the devoted minister and his wife engage in the work, they should be paid wages proportionate to the wages of two distinct workers, that they may have means to use as they shall see fit in the cause of God. The Lord has put His spirit on them both. If the husband should die, and leave his wife, she is fitted to continue her work in the cause of God, and receive wages for the labor she performs” (*Manuscript Releases*, 5:323, 324).

Why was this counsel given? Ellen White recognized the value of team ministry both to the pastoral couple’s marriage and to their ministry—the enhanced impact that comes from a woman ministering alongside her spouse. White also spoke out against the injustice of expectations to serve without appropriate remuneration for service.

Selective disobedience

JAMES A. CRESS

However, notice what she did not say. Ellen White does not demand that all pastoral wives engage in team ministry with their spouses. Rather, she says that those who do should be paid for the work they do.

It seems permissible to Ellen White that a pastor’s wife might wish to engage in another line of work or to train for a different profession. However, she clearly understood the expectations that local churches, as well as the denomination, place on pastors’ wives and instructed that those who are willing to engage in team ministry should be paid accordingly.

Expectations for a pastor’s wife

What expectations are there for pastoral wives? Only the naive would assume that there are no expectations for a pastor’s wife. In fact, one of the greatest areas of stress for many pastoral families is the high level of expectations placed on the pastoral family, particularly upon the wife and children.

Such expectations include, but are not limited to, being an example to the believers, a winsome influence to unbelievers, a source of help to those seeking counsel, a model parent with exemplary children, a listening ear to complaining members, a receiver and deliverer of messages, a conduit of information, a life lived in public view, a willingness to provide hospitality, music, leadership, food, or advice—often at short notice—an ability to cope on a tight budget without complaining, and expectations of attendance at every church function. The list can be extended. So you can imagine my amazement when someone recently asserted that “there are no expectations for a pastor’s wife.”

While this statement was made within the context of the growing trend

for pastoral spouses to seek their own professions and, thus, to have diminished time that they can give to ministry, it was said by an individual who either had never personally experienced the reality of parsonage life or has developed selective amnesia.

An integral involvement

Rightly or wrongly, our churches have traditionally expected the pastor’s wife to be integrally involved in ministry. And although it may not be fair to committed pastoral wives who have their own careers, churches have always thought the “best” pastoral wives worked along with their husbands in ministry. And speaking of expectations, have you ever known of a congregation that was not interested in meeting both the spouse as well as the potential new pastor?

How strongly did Ellen White react to disobedience in this regard? “There are minister’s wives . . . who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive their wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions shall be reversed. The Word says, ‘The laborer is worthy of his hire.’ I will feel it in my duty to create a fund from my tithe money, to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, hunting for souls, fishing for souls” (*Manuscript Releases*, 12:160, 161).

Imagine! The prophet becomes a rebel in the face of corporate disobedience.

How long should it take for all such decisions to be reversed? Should we wait until treasury leaders calculate that we have sufficient funds to obey the Lord?

Taking God at His word

Would you use this principle with new converts regarding the Lord’s commands? As a public evangelist, I have instructed thousands of new believers regarding faithful stewardship, and many have questioned whether or not they can

afford to return tithe and give offerings.

I always encourage them to take God at His Word and to "prove" His promised blessing on the money that remains after their tithe and firstfruit offerings are returned to their Creator.

Can we afford to follow prophetic counsel? A more appropriate question might be to determine the cost we incur by ignoring this admonition.

Could it be that the church organization needs to exercise the same faith that we expect from our membership?

Could it be that when we become obedient in this area, the Holy Spirit will open the windows of heaven?

Could it be that regarding our failure in this area, God deems us as "robbing" Him when we fail to utilize the tithe as He instructs just as we rob Him if we refuse to return His tithe?

You see, Ellen White uses strong words regarding these issues. "This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You are to do your duty to the women . . . whose work testifies that they are essential to carry the truth into families" (*Manuscript Releases*, 5:324, 325).

Action is needed. Right now this is a particularly relevant topic as the new North American Division (NAD) retirement plan moves toward implementation. And it has wider impact than just NAD, because some divisions may follow NAD's lead and because NAD-based employees serve in virtually every division.

As the change is made from the current DB plan (defined-benefit retirement plan) to a proposed DC plan (defined-contribution retirement plan), the spouse allowance, which historically has been part of employee benefits, will be eliminated.

In fact, unless a decided change occurs, the statement of NAD's deputy director for retirement will remain accurate when he said, "The new retirement plan does not recognize pastoral spouses."

Now, things may change. Let us eagerly pray and labor toward this objective. I am encouraged that a committee has recently been established

to study the issue of spouse allowance and the impact of its absence in the proposed new DC retirement plan. However, without due vigilance on the part of all who will vote to implement this concept as well as by those who will be impacted by it, the new plan could be implemented while spouse allowance remains excluded or while the issue is "still being studied."

Shame on us if this happens. In addition to disobeying the counsel of the prophet regarding paying pastoral wives who work in team ministry, we may now take away a benefit that has provided security for pastoral families.

While it is accurate that many pastoral spouses seek their own professions and, thus, by establishing their own retirement plans do not qualify for or need denominational retirement benefits, it is equally accurate that about one-third of pastoral spouses do not seek other employment and thus are totally dependent upon their spouse's retirement plan for their own future security.

Furthermore, I believe that if prophetic guidance was believed and practiced, many more wives would eagerly engage in ministry rather than pursue other avenues of employment.

Numerous pastoral wives state that they seek employment only to provide sufficient income for their family to survive or to pay school tuition costs.

Likewise, just as NAD tithe has grown faster than the rate of inflation for every year in this decade, I believe that if our members understand the jeopardy in which we could place pastoral families, they would respond with even greater generosity to correct the injustice that plagues us.

While much of the proposed DC plan is beneficial to pastors, a careful analysis should be made of the proposal's impact on the security of pastoral families, particularly young families whose educational and health benefits would be jeopardized by an untimely death of the wage earner and also of the impact for those pastoral wives who willingly eschew independent careers in order to participate in team ministry.

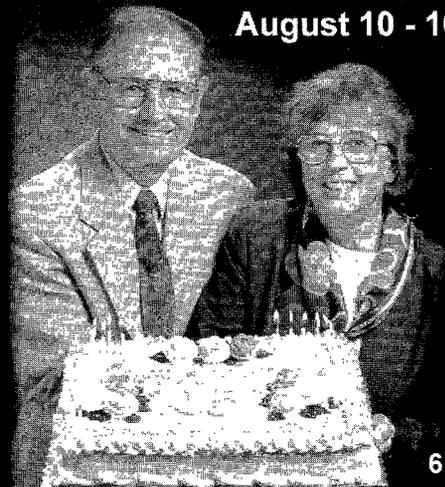
But as the prophet says, "This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it." Humanity's task is to implement what God directs.

More than the future of pastoral wives and families depend upon our obedience. Perhaps the very prosperity of God's people awaits our obedience. ■

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continued from p. 3

telling” trap that Wood says substitutes for biblical and doctrinal proclamation. Such a “sermon” uses this well-worn outline:

1. My sob story (abuse, sick child, demon possession, church problems . . . everybody has one);
2. My faith in crisis (because of my sob story);
3. Three things I have found (since my life-changing sob story):
 - a. I want to be *spiritual* rather than religious;
 - b. I found a text near the end of Romans 8;
 - c. *My Utmost for His Highest* agrees with everything I have said;
4. Song or poem-prayer (performed with a surprisingly strong voice, considering the rest of the presentation was done at the point of tears).

To me, plain good preaching and a simple format cuts through all age, wage, class, race, and gender barriers better than the 20-year-old talk-show philosophy that tries to include everyone except the Father and His Word.—Andrew V. Marttinen, pastor, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.

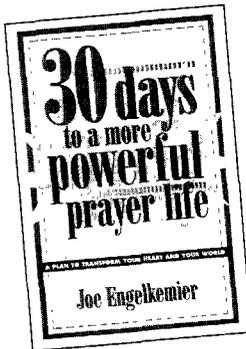
● Wood’s “fallacy” was a sad sample of either/or polemics. He misses the point that what is done in “worship” is the expression of the worshipers’ adoration of God. For some, traditional styles fail as expression—for others, contemporary styles fail. Neither should be classed as wrong; instead, we need to recognize that contemporary worshipers are not the only ones going to church with a shopping cart. My experience has been that it is those who lean toward traditionalism who are those with the largest shopping basket as they experience contemporary expressions.

Wood misunderstands the casual element among contemporary congregants. Many find in more casual approaches to congregating an inviting, more personal approach to “glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together” (Ps. 34:3, NIV). In misunderstanding the more casual, Wood seems to bypass the parabolic purpose of Jesus’ story of the wedding banquet. This parable is not about apparel—it is about the basis of salvation: grace or works. Would Wood post apparel police at the door of the church?—Loyd Henderson, pastor, Galt, California.

Editors’ note: Wood’s article brought an unusually heavy amount of mail, including some unusually lengthy letters. Space restrictions and repetitive comments led to editing and shortening of the letters, without affecting their main thrust. Correspondence on this subject is closed. ■

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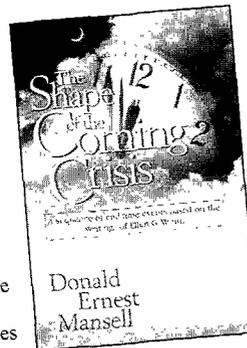
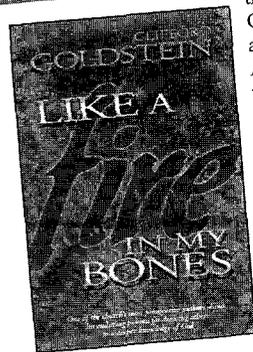


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