

MINISTRY

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HEALTH

Celebrating God's Gift

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SO AM I TO BELIEVE THAT THE RELATIVIZATION IS NOT NECESSARILY CHARACTERISTIC OF POSTMODERNITY?

Pastoring on the postmodern frontline

The Selmanovic article on postmodernism is very helpful, and would have been a great blessing years earlier. There are many still struggling with the concept who need this very clear explanation. I also applaud Selmanovic's innovative way of suggesting how we, who are uncomfortable with the reality of postmodernism, may find ways to reach the minds conditioned by this way of thinking. Surely we can be more effective if we have the requisite flexibility to notice when we are dealing with this kind of world view so that we can adjust the way we approach such persons. However, I would like to make an observation or two that may save some from just as much ineffectiveness by going to the opposite rut in the evangelistic road.

We need first to ask, What percentage of the population where we work are really settled in the postmodern school of thought? I suspect a fairly significant percentage where Pastor Selmanovic labors. But taken on a world scale, the percentage is likely very small. Among the highly educated everywhere, a higher, yet still a relatively small minority fall into that category. There are millions still longing for structure and certainty in their life and belief system. And unless someone has a new methodology that will give us an audience with the postmodern minds, and if we want to keep winning souls to the Savior and the message we believe, we

had better stay current with an approach that actually reaches the majority of earth's inhabitants that have no awareness of the postmodern way of thought.

It is still a fact that most of the churches, in our own communion and in others that are experiencing a significant growth, are using a rational or objective approach. The people they are attracting would be turned off by a postmodern presupposition.

There is another equally serious consideration: How many who have a predisposition to follow the postmodern pattern of thinking would be receptive to what Jesus teaches? Even Jesus was not able to hold the "masses," or the intellectually sophisticated of His day in any significant numbers. Bible Christianity has always appealed to a very small minority. Successful evangelism has always been a process of reaching the right fraction of one percent of any population. Sometimes we can miss the hundred who are really receptive to Jesus, while trying to reach 10,000 who Christ Himself could not have reached.

So I would appeal for a view adding this approach to our repertoire, rather than exchanging one for the other. And certainly, we should do some "pilot projects" using the concept in other venues, before encouraging a switch of methodology to an unproven, even if convincing and attractive, theory.

Again, I could not have appreciated

the article more. We need more ideas that come from real study and creative thought.

—Elden Walter, pastor, Junction City, Oregon.

Editorial note: Thank you for your thoughtful communication and for striking a very important balance.

Samir Selmanovic writes with enlightened understanding on the people who populate the postmodern frontline. Once only did he leave me hesitant. That was when he declared that "postmodernity is not good or bad. It simply is" (page 21). So am I to believe that the relativization is not necessarily characteristic of postmodernity?

—Lael Caesar, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Editorial note: Your concern about this statement is understandable. We would put the statement in the context of the whole thrust of Samir's two articles and say that what he means is that postmodernism is simply a reality that exists in many of our communities, just as modernism has for decades. The point is not to justify it or to condemn it, but to approach the postmodern person with thoughtfulness and care.

In answering your concern more directly, it is important to note the last half of Samir's second article (see the September 2001 Ministry), starting on page 20 under the subheading, Questioning the continued on page 21

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

Celebrating a treasure

Agatha was a ten-year-old girl attending a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school when she went on an all-day class trip. In the heat of the day, the school bus pulled up to a convenience store so the students could buy refreshments. Agatha and a couple of friends bought Colas.

A well-meaning member of the faculty noticed the Cokes and said, "Agatha, I thought you knew better than to drink sugared, caffeinated drinks. You are going to have to live with the decision you've made today for the rest of your life!"

I believe Seventh-day Adventists have been given a great gift in "the health message" or in what's known as "health reform." Unfortunately, these clusters of words, and what they seek to communicate, have become offensive to some, a reaction due partly because of excessive attitudes among Adventists, such as those well-meaning souls represented by Agatha's plainspoken teacher.

The legacy of such an approach, however sincere, has nurtured some powerful negativity among us regarding this precious gift. In many situations an unhealthy reaction to these authoritarian approaches have helped to reduce the legitimate value people might otherwise possess when it comes to a levelheaded, healthful lifestyle.

In contrast, the original, visionary principles of wholeness given to Ellen G. White in the nineteenth century were beneficial and positive. I am forever impressed by a foundational physical insight articulated by Mrs. White: "Disease is an effort of nature to free the system from conditions that result from a violation of the laws of health. . . .

WILL EVA



Nature is to be assisted in her effort to expel impurities and to re-establish right conditions in the system. . . . Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them."¹

It took some time for the revolutionary wisdom of this profound yet simply stated concept to break into my consciousness. "Nature" is the foundational, enigmatic power that governs human wholeness. When nature's balance in the human body is disturbed in one way or another, nature is the energy that immediately steps forward to restore balance. In the same thought context, Mrs. White has said that "the power working through these [natural] agencies is the power of God."²

It is because of this basic outlook that thoughtful people (by no means only Seventh-day Adventists) are increasingly uneasy with the facile, quick-fix, and even thoughtless use of drugs and other less natural interventions. In many cultures, people are increasingly open to a more natural approach to wellness.

It is clearer than ever that the perfectly sensible thing for a humanity with fundamentally fragile health is to

patiently co-operate with nature in its efforts to bring about restoration, balance and wholeness. As helpful as modern health care has become, it could be even more helpful if it operated creatively and responsibly from the bedrock of this philosophy of health.

While we ministers are not health practitioners, we can do a lot of good by positively exemplifying, intelligently teaching, and responsibly encouraging everyone's reasonable interaction with the God-given, natural elements of life.

I believe many of us have moved away from this role because of our own and other's reactions to the negative approach that has dominated and thus discouraged us when it comes to our traditional ways of communicating health-related issues.

This issue of *Ministry* is dedicated to encouraging us back to an enthusiastic, positive, celebrative reinstatement of our role as pastors of the whole person. The positive approach to health in this edition of *Ministry* is not gratuitous; it seeks to be consistent with the nature of our calling and the natural resources God has generously given.

So take a look at the invitation to participate in the celebrative sermon contest described on pages 24 and 25. In cooperation with Dr. Allan Handysides and the General Conference Health Ministries Department, *Ministry* looks forward to publishing some of these sermon entries in upcoming issues (not to mention offering financial reward as an extra incentive!).

Good health! ■

¹ Ellen G. White. *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1905), 127.

² *Ibid.*, 112, 113.

Fill life with celebrations

The life that is lived to bring praise and glory to the Creator of heaven and earth reverberates not with the cacophony of rules and regulations, but with the harmony of hope, joy, and celebration. The motivation for such a life is focused not on the human spirit and its mortal needs, but on the Spirit of God within us—His graciousness, His love, and His compassion. When His Spirit is the focus of the life, purity, health, and exuberance all harmonize with the music of heaven.

This does not mean we can break the rules of health, but that we employ them to bring honor to God and other people. After all, we are preparing for heaven's lifestyle; this means focusing not on ourselves, but on the Giver of life, health, and happiness.

In the creation of this world—and specifically in the creation of humanity—God sought to extend an image of Himself. “Let Us make man in Our image,” He said. Thus we seek to display in our lives ever more God-like characteristics as we near this objective. Our proximity to this ideal comes not from our ability to decipher the biochemical rules of our existence, but as we permit ourselves to be drawn by His Spirit into the orbit of His influence.

The removal of noxious habits, the avoidance of dangerous behaviors, the ingestion of healthy foods will become second nature to us, as we live within the sphere of His influence. Health and its promotion is, therefore, a praise to the grace of Jesus Christ, King of kings. The promotion of clean lives, filled with joyous good health, is very much a part of the

ALLAN HANDYSIDES



restoration of God's plan for our lives. It is the acceptance of Jesus as King of our life, and the praise of His Spirit within that leads us to a ministry of health, and to follow the principles of healthful living ourselves.

I like this analogy: Our lives, our bodies, are like cathedrals. Health principles represent the supporting columns and rules and regulations provide roofing to protect from the storms of life. The stained-glass windows represent the caring relationships that bring in the light, the soft colors of the shining sun.

By themselves, though, cathedrals can be boring places. The most beautiful cathedrals can appear dark and somber. Their stone floors coldly echo the clack of footsteps and their uncomfortable pews appeal to asceticism. Walls, damp with condensation, repel the touch. Old tapestries fade, meticulous carvings become coated with dust.

Some health proponents spend lifetimes working on the physical body of their “cathedrals”: exercising, refining their diet, controlling appetite, watching fat intakes, avoiding toxic substances, carefully calculating rest and activity ratios. But it is possible that the life within their structures remains dark and somber, a

cold and uninviting monument to the builder, the earthly artisan, yet who fancies he is building a cathedral.

While all these activities have an important role to play, when they become an end in themselves, rather than the means to an end, then the cathedral remains empty, cold, and hollow, no matter how long it stands. That which is the end of a healthy body is serving our Lord in the joyful celebration of faith.

If we live merely in pursuit of an internal authenticity, we will live disappointing, finite lives, because we are finite and mortal. In and of ourselves we are “like the grass which withereth,” and as the “chaff which the wind blows away.” No matter how well we care for our bodies, the cathedrals of our lives grow old and eventually return to dust. Thus there must be more to it than merely keeping the body healthy.

The sermon competition

This month we are inviting all the readers of *Ministry* to participate in a competition we are sponsoring. Each of the letters that make up the word “CELEBRATIONS” provide us with 12 health topics. (See pages 24 and 25 for complete competition entry, rules, procedures, and results.) We are looking for the best health-oriented sermons dealing with each of these topics. Each aspect of health should be presented as a recognition of the gracious gift of life our God has given. ■

Allan Handysides, M.B., Ch.B., is director of the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Shepherds or white crows?

Dealing with addictions

Peter Landless



Peter Landless, M.B., B.Ch., CBNC, is an associate director in the General Conference Health Ministries Department and executive director of the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (ICPA).

The voice was laden with a mixture of concern, despair, and anger. "He's started drinking again and is surely going to lose his job; he left home early this morning, and I suspect he is across the border where he knows I will not come looking for him."

It was late Wednesday afternoon, a time to be "free" from the demands of a country family practice. I was not as smart as my colleagues, who had learned that the golf course served as a haven of rest from the relentless invasion of the telephone (in those days, mobile phones were nonexistent and pagers were not available in small towns; golf courses, though, were!).

In a response that was driven by enthusiasm to help, as well as by ignorance of the fact that unless the alcoholic acknowledges his need, intervention is futile, I soon found myself at the border post, being courteously admitted to the neighboring country, which boasted a number of beer halls and sleazy hotels. It was an ideal refuge for the relapsed alcoholic.

Thoughts, emotions, and fear raced through my mind: Where do I find him? What do I say? What if he becomes violent, abusive, or even vomits? The familiar vehicle tags and color of his car set my pulse racing. This was it!

He, after many relapses, ultimately gave up

drinking, stopped smoking for a time (after laryngeal cancer therapy), and waxed and waned in his enthusiasm for spiritual renewal. His curriculum vitae: Sixty previous positions and as many different employing organizations, laryngeal cancer, an alcoholic son, and a daughter who went from one marriage to the next . . . all bore testimony to the ravages of his addiction.

I often wish I could turn back the clock and have the opportunity to deal with situations with maturity instead of ignorant enthusiasm, and to be the healer instead of the facilitator. With salutary hindsight, I realize how inadequately I, and possibly others, have been trained in dealing with addictions.

Daily, the mind is bombarded with the allure of advertising. Despite attempts to regulate alcohol and tobacco advertisements, "nameless" billboards scream the message that it is cool to drink and smoke. Even when health warnings are displayed, they are overwhelmed by the marketing tools. Most sports carry the banner of sponsors whose products may be disruptive and destructive to well-being and health. The corporate conscience is soothed when tobacco companies donate some of their profits to cancer research and other health projects. What a sad paradox!

Statistics

What is happening when it comes to substance abuse and addictions? Are we as informed as we should be? The media, despite their significant role in the vending and propagation of tobacco and alcohol, are replete with frightening statistics.

In Britain, underage smoking is on the increase. Ten percent of pupils ages 11-15 smoke at least one cigarette per week. Twelve percent of all girls of secondary-school age are smokers. Nearly a quarter of secondary-school pupils drink the equivalent of five pints of lager every week.

In the last decade, underage drinking has doubled in the United Kingdom; boys of 15 years who admit to regular alcohol consumption are taking more than seven pints of lager per week; of all 11- to 13-year-olds who had admitted to taking alcohol in the previous week, five percent had consumed over four pints in that period!

The direction these British statistics are taking are somewhat indicative of those to be found in similar societies and nations.

The costs

As alcohol use escalates, it is not surprising that associated crime, not to forget the latest pandemic of HIV, continue unabated in the environment of alcohol abuse. Despite compelling statistics that children are being exposed to drugs at the age of 11, the government of the United Kingdom is planning to "go soft" on cannabis.

Nearly one third of all pupils recently polled in Britain say that they have been offered cannabis. In the wake of the "softer drugs," exposure to heroin and cocaine will surely follow, especially if government programs fail to curb the rising use of recreational drugs.

The statistics for the United Kingdom are reflected in the United States. In September 2001, a study released by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University, revealed that more than 50 percent of teens attend schools where drugs are available.

Educators and parents appear to be blind to the situation. Lack of strong science in the prevention programs as well as the failure to reach the majority of students have been cited as reasons for the failure of preventive efforts.

Statistics emerging from various treatment centers show an increasing demand to rehabilitate heroin addicts, especially in countries where government transitions have occurred or where political instability is present. Heroin availability has not dropped, despite the destruction of the poppy-growing fields in pre-war Afghanistan. The tendency to smoke or snort heroin has led users to regard its use as less dangerous than when administered via injection. This is a dangerously false assumption.

Other addictions

There are other addictions that are also rife in our world. In the United Kingdom, an estimated 30,000 addicts are enslaved to "over-the-counter"

(OTC) medications, taking up to 600 ml of codeine cough syrup on a daily basis. Commercially available OTC analgesics are heavily abused, resulting in ongoing codeine dependency as well as paracetamol-related renal failure in some cases.

Pornography addiction has been fostered by the Internet. An estimated 400 new Web sites open daily from locations such as Thailand and Russia. Pornography addiction often leads to or is a part of sex addiction. Children and adults spend much time surfing the Web and experience both wanted and unwanted exposures to pornography. The latter encounter not uncommonly leads, ultimately, to this very degrading addiction.

Then there is the chocolate addict, the food addict, and—dare we suggest in a journal for clergy?—the workaholic, or work addict! There is also the compulsive gambler, who represents another form of addiction, and this list leaves out many addictions.

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Addictions within the Church . . . among clergy?

With all these varied and ubiquitous addictions afflicting the world at large, there must be a proportionately representative problem within the Church, not excluding ministers and spiritual caregivers.

Are we able to recognize these problems in our church members and admit them when we see them in ourselves? Do we know where to find help? Do we recognize the enormity and potency of the problem? Do we ever preach sermons related to addictions and the dangers of not only hard drugs and habits, but also the problems of the socially acceptable habits of tobacco and alcohol use? Do we warn our flock that the genetics and mechanisms of addiction to any particular practice, habit, or substance are such that one is aware of the propensity to addiction only when already entangled, sometimes inextricably, by that addiction? Do we lend credence to these addictions by overtly or

covertly practicing them ourselves?

Another crucial question is: "Who shepherds the shepherd?" Implicit in the question is the concern that if we clergy recognize an addiction in ourselves, to whom do we go? Doesn't the role of the spiritual caregiver demand completeness and freedom from such problems?

Prevention and cure

We need to recognize that the problems and addictions described in this brief overview are present in the Church and sometimes in its ministers. We need to identify the problems, develop intentional means for treatment and rehabilitation, not only for the flock but the shepherds as well.

Prevention is better than the cure, sure. Yet years of clinical experience have led me to emphatically say that prevention is the cure. The topics need to be addressed from the pulpit as well as in small groups. We need to befriend our young people in the churches, prove our concern and love

for them and, through positive relationships, ensure that prevention of these various addictions is, in fact, the cure.

In a recent article on the pornography addiction, Gary Hopkins and Joyce Hopp make a plea that prayer of intercession be made for those suffering this problem.¹ They call for the provision of specific training for Christian counselors in Christian universities and colleges.

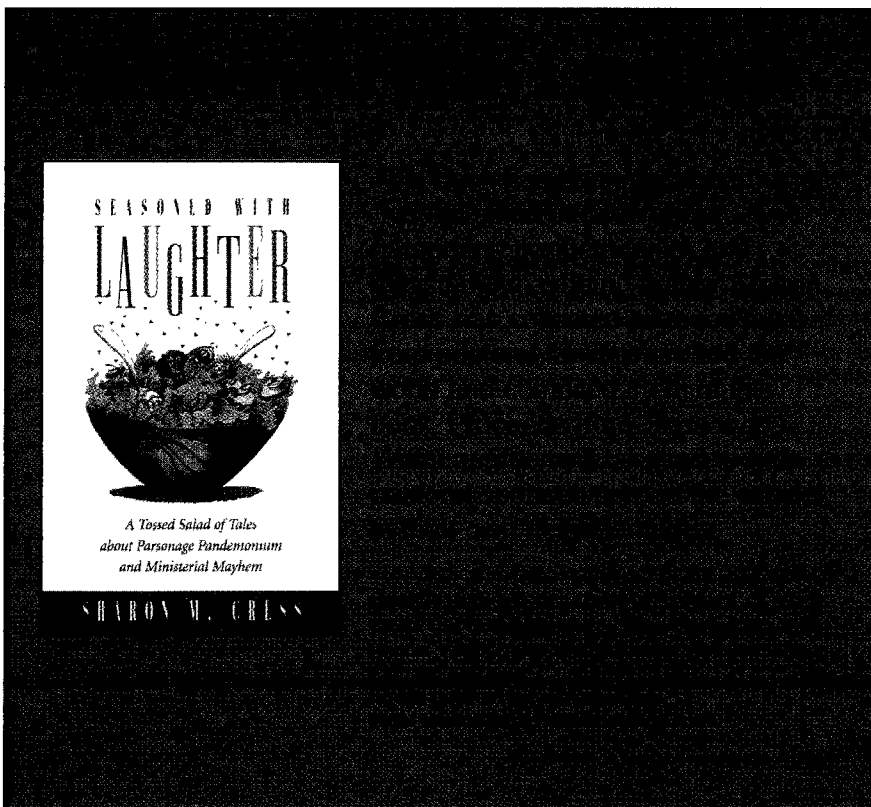
We need to identify the resources to provide members, nonmembers, and even clergy with a hot line they can call to request help, but with anonymity assured. Along with such a program, it is imperative to conduct research in our churches and its institutions, as well as schools and colleges so that the extent of the problem may be better understood.

The clergy, parents, and schools need to join hands in combating these problems. Ignoring them does not make them go away.

We need to pastor the pastors, a thought that's easier said than done. "A physician who treats himself," it has been said, "has a fool for a patient." Indeed, it would be more appropriate to have support groups and caregivers, professionally trained, to care for pastors when victimized by these problems.

Henri Nouwen describes the challenge so well: "But how many are there who can help their fellow men and especially, their fellow priests, in their most individual spiritual needs? Those seem to be as seldom as white crows."²

As long as there is sin, there will be addictions, for as Jesus said, he who sins is a slave to sin. Thus, as long as there are addictions there will be the need to help people fight them. The question is, Will the church be part of the solution or will it continue to add to the problem? ■



1 Gary L. Hopkins and Joyce W. Hopp, "The Pornography Addiction," in *The Adventist Review*.

2 Henri Nouwen, *Making All Things New and Other Classics* (Harper Collins Pub., 2000), 154.

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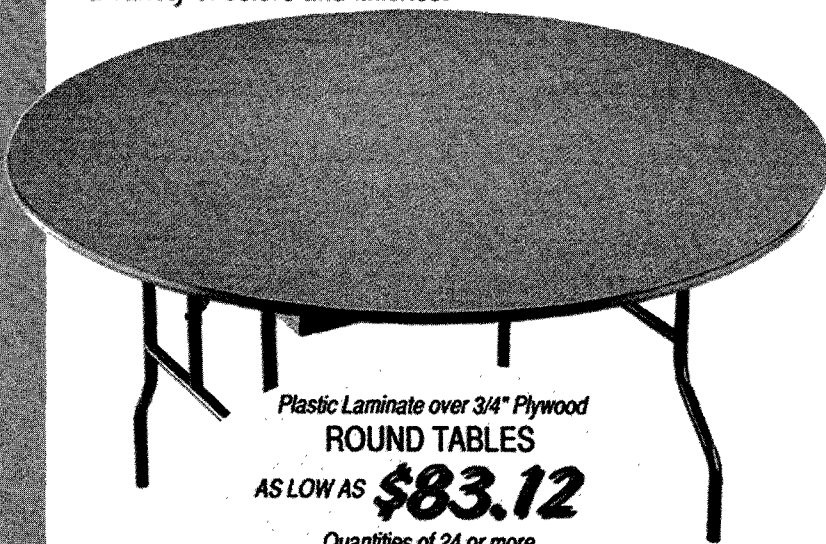
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Celebrating nutrition

Stoy Proctor



Stoy Proctor is an associate director in the Health Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

It's time to celebrate nutrition. To exult in the privilege of having good, healthy, wonderful-tasting food to eat and having the knowledge of what that is! For too long health fanatics have taken away our favorite foods. Consider the pop fads of our day. The high protein gurus have taken our carbohydrates, the hygienists and raw-food eaters have deprived us of our favorite cooked dishes, even beans. The anti-dairy purists have attributed several major diseases to the use of dairy foods and eggs. Pritikin and the no-oilers have moved all fats into the no-fat zone. The health food faddists have not allowed even a little bit of the big white five: white sugar, white flour, white salt, white milk, and white meat.

The only items left in the food chain are fruits and vegetables, and now environmentalists and organic idealists suspect them because of pesticides and genetic engineering. As we try to comprehend the message of the doomsday nutritional soothsayers, we realize these fanatics, collectively speaking, are against all foods! Something is wrong with this approach. If we want to be healthy we must eat good food. Our meals should be enjoyable—even exciting. We should look forward to each one with gusto and celebrate each bite.

Enjoying good food

History records ancient cultures celebrat-

ing their fall harvest. Even today many religious devotees offer foods to their gods. Why can't Christians relish their foods and give glory to God, who provides this great cornucopia of gourmet pleasures?

Modern Generation X manages to celebrate Thanksgiving and other holidays, but why not make each meal a celebratory occasion? Even the six to eight glasses of pure water deserve a toast!

It's time for a search-and-destroy mission, not of our favorite foods, but of the negative words we hear discussed such as: forbid, abstain, avoid, resist, and refuse. It's time for a figurative book burning or a boycott of our favorite book chains or cooking shows.

Let's begin to notice all the negative titles of books and recipes such as: sugar free, sodium free, dairy free, cholesterol free, and fat free. When nutritionists calculate the dietary intake of nutrients it's not the sugar on the strawberries or the oil in the bread that matters most, it is whether a person is consuming adequate catalytic-converting vitamins and essential minerals. And whether they are enjoying the best biochemically rich fruits and vegetables, taking in at least 1,200 milligrams of calcium to build and maintain strong bones.

Good nutritionists are far more interested in essential fatty acids and a good source of proteins or total calories than the many different forms of sodium and sugar derivatives found in our foods.

A new emphasis: variety, color, and adequacy

The new millennial emphasis among national and international nutrition organizations is on variety, color, and adequacy. They are devoting much more space in their recommendations to whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, and fish, than they are to salt, cholesterol, sugar, and trans-fatty acids. The "health enthusiasts," on the other hand, spend so much time on the food to avoid that they have little time to focus on the wholesome foods of choice.

Note the following guidelines from some national and international organizations:

The American Institute of Cancer Research (July 1998): Choose predominately plant-based diets rich in a variety of vegetables, fruits, legumes, and minimally processed starchy foods.

The American Heart Association (2000): (1) Choose most of the foods from plant sources; (2) choose a variety of grain daily, especially whole grain; (3) choose a variety of fruits and vegetables.

The National Academy of Science and the United States Department of Health and Human Services—2000 U.S. Dietary Guidelines: (1) Use plant foods to create the foundation of your meals; (2) choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains—brown rice, bulgur, cracked wheat, graham flour, oatmeal, popcorn whole barley, whole corn, whole oats, whole rye, and millet; (3) choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.

One of the most important nutritional principles emphasized in these recommendations is variety. Not a variety of fast-foods from the chains, but a variety of whole foods available in the market.

Today, in many countries, we are blessed with a great variety of ethnic choices of dishes. Indian cuisine offers us the best use of the biochemical rich herbs and spices. The Chinese know best how to prepare tender-crisp vegetables preserving most of their nutrition. The Italians give us the complex carbs and rich tomato dishes. And what variety and tantalizing tastes we relish from the legumes prepared by Hispanics and Middle-Easterners!

Who can surpass the crunchy taste of the multi-grain earth breads of Europe? And let's not overlook the large varieties of tropical fruit available with our own native berries and stone fruits. Scientific studies confirm the effectiveness of this new diet.

One of the largest scientific studies ever conducted involving a single cohort group, reveals the benefits of the plant-based diet in eating a wide variety of whole foods, including whole grains, plenty of legumes, and generous amount of fruits and vegetables, rather than using beef or poultry.¹

Since most of us have to watch our weight and calories, we must focus on

THE BEST WAFFLE

Place in a blender, 3 cups of water. Add 2 cups of old-fashioned oats loaded with great soluble fiber. Now microwave $\frac{1}{4}$ cup high lysine yellow corn meal in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water. Add to mixture in the blender. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Brazil nuts. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy powder (fortified with calcium and B12). Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt (to bring out the whole grain flavor). Blend these ingredients until smooth and let them set for 3 or 4 minutes.

Pour the batter onto a hot waffle iron. You may need to add a little more water to the batter so that it pours out easily—but not too easily. Sprinkle the top of the waffle with ground flaxseed or pumpkin seeds, high in the omega 3 fatty acids. Bake for 10 or 12 minutes or until the waffle is light golden brown and crisp. When the batter is of proper consistency the waffle will be as light and crisp as a vanilla wafer.

Once baked, spread with mono rich peanut or almond butter, then sprinkle with rich maple syrup or honey, top with your choice of rainbow rich toppings, such as deep blueberries, ruby-red raspberries or strawberries, emerald green kiwi fruit or opal rich mangos, papayas, peaches or apricots. Serve with a cold glass of low-fat dairy milk or fortified soymilk, and a glass of fresh squeezed orange juice.

This meal contains a number of cardio- and cancer-protective phyto-nutrients.

the genuine health foods: the whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy. These five major food groups provide us with the super nutrients our body deserves and needs.

Let's include in our meal plan each day the proper number of servings in each of the major groups. No one food group provides all the nutrients needed.

Begin with those dark breads and cereals made from whole grains. Next focus on the dark greens, and brilliant yellows, the deep orange fruits and vegetables as well as the ruby reds.

Remember the darker the color of the variety, the higher the phyto-nutrient values. Fill each plate with the tantalizing colors of the rainbow.

Then there's still one more important food group left: the pure white food, the low-fat dairy, eggs, or if you prefer, the fully-fortified soy beverages. This "Rainbow Diet" is the ultimate of great diets.

Five criteria for good food

To get the most out of this celebration, follow these five criteria for good food:

Food must look good. It must appeal to our eyes and our minds before we

have the desire to eat and enjoy it.

Food must smell good; we are "turned off" by rancid, sour smells. In addition, they may be harmful.

Food must feel good in the hands and in the mouth. This increases real gustatory pleasure.

Food must taste good. God gave us those wonderful taste buds to enjoy food.

Food must be good (nutritious) for our bodies and for optimum function.

If your food or your recipes do not meet these five criteria, throw them out. There was a time in my professional life when I spent more time on the negatives. Once I gave a demonstration for my Master's class in nutrition, showing the perfect waffle. The perfect waffle (see sidebar) did not have any flour, salt, milk, baking powder, honey, sugar, eggs, oil, or fats. By the time I finished explaining the list of noningredients, I didn't have time left to promote the nutritious ingredients or the delightful taste! The fact is, this healthy meal will provide all the energy and nutrition you need for at least half a day. ■

¹ *Vegetarian Nutrition Health Letter*, November/December 1998.

Preaching with freedom (part 2)

An eight-step process for preaching without notes

Walter Mueller



Walter Mueller, D.Min., is interim pastor of the William and Mary Hart Presbyterian Church in Leggett, North Carolina.

The well-known words of former U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt apply to many situations, including that of standing in the pulpit and preaching without notes: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

The truth is that fear and fear alone is the only substantive thing that stands in our way. Fear of forgetting, fear of not being able to make our point, and fear of embarrassment immobilize us and render us unable to experience the freedom and effectiveness that comes to the one who dares to stand before a congregation unhampered by a manuscript.

The first time I preached without notes

Strangely enough it was a form of fear that enabled me to understand that I could preach without notes. Let me share the story with you.

For seven years I had pastored a small church. Then at the age of 27 I was asked to candidate for the pulpit of a rather impressive church. I arrived at the church early and did what I always did—went to what I thought was the pulpit, opened the Bible to the Scripture passage for the morning and placed my manuscript on the page following that passage.

The service began. At a designated time the soloist went to sing from the "pulpit" at which I had left my notes. Only then did I

realize that this church had a split chancel with two identical pulpits, one with a Bible and the other without. The one with the Bible was the lectern while the one without was the pulpit. I had placed my manuscript on the lectern, not the pulpit.

Fear struck. I realized I had three options. I could go over to the lectern, retrieve my notes and then move to the pulpit to preach. Unfortunately, such a journey would reveal my ignorance to the congregation! On the other hand, I could preach from the lectern and in so doing also show these sophisticated, cultured people that I wasn't the one they wanted to be their minister.

The only other option was to preach at the proper pulpit without notes. This is the option I chose. Fear drove me to do what fear had prevented me from doing until that morning. The congregation decided to hire me.

I wish I was able to say that I learned that morning that I had nothing to fear but fear itself. I didn't. I went right back to preaching with a manuscript. It wasn't until some years later, at the urging of two very wise preachers, that I decided to go into the pulpit without manuscript or notes. I experienced such freedom in my preaching that morning that I decided never again to use notes.

The only thing a minister needs to preach without manuscript or notes is the courage to try. I would like to share how I prepare my sermons to preach unencumbered by the restraint of notes. I must give the warning that at first the process is time consuming and difficult. However, it does get easier and the results are far more than gratifying.

My eight steps in preaching without notes

Step 1. Recognize that every good sermon has but one and only one major point. When you have chosen your text decide what it is in that text you wish to emphasize. You may want to write a theme sentence expressing what it is you want to accomplish with your sermon.

Recently I completed a series of sermons on the apostles, beginning with James, the son of Alphaeus. He is one of the Twelve about whom the New Testament tells virtually nothing. My theme sentence could have been phrased in this way: "In this sermon I wish to inform the congregation that, like most of us, James, the Son of Alphaeus, though a member

of the select group of Jesus' followers known as apostles, remains unknown to us but that this does not in any way diminish his value in the eyes of God."

Step 2. Develop an outline with the theme sentence at its center. Every sub-point in the outline must contribute to the development of that one major theme. Ordinarily, it is best to get the outline directly from the text. In the case of this sermon on James, there is no text. All we have is his name.

It is the theme sentence that gave me my two-point outline: (1) To be unknown is not to be unimportant; and (2) To be unknown is not to be unprivileged. Note the simplicity of the outline. An outline need not be complicated to be profound. Avoid the temptation to impress your listeners with your knowledge and ability to use unusual words. The purpose of preaching is communication and you will be best able to do this using simple terms. Whether your congregation consists of farmers or Ph.D.s, strive for simplicity.

Step 3. Develop each of the sub-points. Since nothing is known about this apostle I made the point that James was important, not because of anything he said or did but because of his relationship with Jesus.

This was illustrated by referring to other unknown people in the New Testament. The woman who anointed Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee isn't even named but Jesus said that wherever the gospel was preached she would be remembered because of her sacrificial act of love. In the final chapter of Romans Paul refers to a woman whose name was Phoebe. We know nothing about her except that Paul entrusted the delivery of his letter to her. Her importance lies in the fact that she was faithful in performing her task. The world has been transformed by Paul's letter to the Roman Church.

I referred as well to a woman I met in the religion section of a used book store. In our conversation she said

something to me, a seventeen-year-old, that was to affect not only my life, but my entire ministry. I don't know her name, but she supplied an important element in my spiritual development.

Not only was James important, he was also privileged. He heard Jesus preach, saw Him heal and raise the dead. He saw the risen Christ. The depth of his privilege is found in a statement in the book of Revelation that could easily be considered insignificant. John in his vision of heaven saw that the eternal city had twelve foundation stones on which were engraved the names of the twelve apostles. James did not have the personality of a Peter or the fervor of the other James whom Jesus called a Son of Thunder, but he was privileged to have his name included with theirs.

In the conclusion, emphasis was placed on the importance and the privilege of the ordinary Christian. Our names too are written in heaven. It is our relationship with Jesus, not our fame, that is most important.

Step 4. Write out the sermon in full. This is an important part of the process and should not be skipped. Writing the sermon word for word helps to imprint it in the mind.

Step 5. Read through the manuscript six or seven times in preparation for preaching. At each reading, changes and refinements may be made.

Step 6. Take the full manuscript and reduce it to a skeleton outline which highlights the major ideas contained in the sermon. This will take about one hour. The purpose of this step is to further fix the content of the sermon in your mind.

When one follows this process a number of things will happen. First, without consciously trying, you will have memorized the main outline of the sermon. However, you will also have memorized the sub-points in the sermon and even many of the exact words you have written and which you think are important to the

communication of the theme of the message.

Step 7. Preach the sermon. My sermons are usually 25 minutes long. If a listener were to follow my manuscript as I preached the sermon, he or she would see that there is seldom a variation. Finely tuned phrases are still there. Yet, the sermons do not sound memorized. I know this because people have regularly commented to me that my sermons have a conversational tone and that I seem to be speaking just to them.

Speaking without either a manuscript or notes allows me to maintain constant eye contact with the members of the congregation.

Step 8. I have left this step until last, not because it is least important, but because it is most important: Pray!

Throughout this process it is critical for us to remember that the power of preaching is not simply in the words, style, or techniques we choose, but in the God and Savior we seek to glorify through those words. So pray!

One question may still dominate our thinking: "What if I forget something?"

Don't worry. You trust God for eternity, trust Him also for the one-half hour you may be in the pulpit. Along with this be well prepared.

You may also wonder about the amount of time it will take to go through this sermon preparation process. Again, it is time consuming, but it is rewarding. Once you have tried it you will never want to go back to using a manuscript again. And as you use the process, it will take less and less time. ■



The Christian and the postmodernist

The paradox and the challenge

Gary B. Swanson



Gary B. Swanson is editor of the Collegiate Quarterly (CQ), General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Relatively few writers appear to have asked the question, can we see postmodernism in the world around us?" comments Dominic Strinati in his book about popular culture. What he does find is "excessive attention given to the problem of defining the term itself."¹

This observation highlights one of the countless ironies concerning postmodernism: We've gone about the task of defining something without first proving to everyone's satisfaction that it actually exists. In fact, Strinati's assertion is an apt demonstration of the changeable thinking of our times: Far more than ever before, we are comfortable with paradox. Increasingly our lives are explained by self-contradictions, and we're perfectly at ease with this.

We don't have to delve deeply into philosophy to recognize that we are experiencing profound changes in the way we think and act. However we care to label or define these differences, they are unmistakable. Our societies are not operating on the same basic assumptions or coming to the same conclusions they have in the past.

Among the basic shifts that many attribute to postmodernism, especially in the developed Western world, is displaying a distrust of organized religion. For Christians this presents obvious new challenges: How do we introduce God to someone who doesn't

believe in absolutes, doesn't recognize the inspiration of Scripture, and just plain doesn't trust us?

And there are implications even for Christianity's nurturing and discipling of the members of our own family of faith. Postmodernism isn't something going on solely outside our homes and churches. To varying degrees, it has even affected the way Christians think and act. Most of us, because we are influenced by the culture of our times, are simultaneously modern and postmodern.

A wake-up call

Though some aspects of postmodernism are definitely dangerous, there are others that are a breath of fresh air for Christianity. One of the most important of these is the growing recognition among people on the street that, "the solution to the most fundamental problems of human existence is not human achievement."²

Of course, this is something Christianity has been asserting for centuries. The apostle Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 1 of the difficulties that his ministry was facing, concluding that they had been allowed so that he and his companions would learn not to "rely on [themselves] but on God" (verse 9, NIV).

Abraham, Jacob, and Moses—all had to learn the hard way that analytical thinking, logic, cleverness, and even education are never to supersede our dependence on God.

Yet in the last couple of centuries, much of organized Protestantism has embraced certain misapplied principles of the Enlightenment. The temptation has been to emphasize reason, logic, and self-reliance to the exclusion of a real effective faith. Even in church boards, such stirring activities as decision making, debate, and the democratic process can make us forget that we'd often be spending our time better on our knees.

If postmodernism, even with its serious flaws, wakes us up from the delusion that "the progress of the whole world could be spearheaded by the superior, more rational knowledge possessed by the Western intellect,"³ then let's acknowledge truth from wherever it comes.

The pagan sailors who traveled with Jonah recognized God's involvement in their frightful predicament before Jonah did (Jonah 1:5-7). Astrologers from the East, of all places, observed and announced the com-

ing of the Messiah (Matt. 2:1-12).

Though at first it may appear that the worldviews of Christianity and postmodernism are in totally opposing universes, (and again, in many significant ways they definitely are) they do nevertheless have some intriguing commonalities.

It is at these intersections of thought that Christianity has the greatest hope of opening a dialogue that, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, could lead a postmodernist to a face-to-face confrontation with Jesus and what He can do in our lives. It is indeed true that "A church worth its salt in these times . . . seeks to understand the contemporary culture as intimately as it can, and then to enter into a constructive and prophetic engagement with it."⁴

"Spirituality," a promising intersection

Probably the most promising intersection of thought involves society's

growing interest in the human being as a whole person. Any casual survey of today's lifestyle magazines, TV shows, or Internet Web sites confirms that popular thought is increasingly drawn to the idea that human existence is physical, mental, social, and spiritual—and that these are not discrete aspects of life, but are instead, a united whole.

Despite the fact that many people of our time are antireligious, they are far from being antiritual (another of those paradoxes), even though they may mean something considerably different from the traditional Christian use of the word "spiritual."

The word "soul," for example, has gained such popular currency that it appears in countless book and magazine titles in the secular marketplace. This could never have occurred 50 years ago because science couldn't quantify or document the existence of a soul. But today spirituality is such a topic of everyday interest, even for

those who have never stepped into a church except for the occasional wedding or funeral, that the popular press cannot ignore it.

The growing interest in the relationship between the physical and the spiritual offers a challenge to the Church. "Modern thought was built on a fundamentally dualistic understanding of reality as mind and matter, and of human nature as soul and body. . . . This dualism has made its way into Christian thought, with a strong emphasis on 'saving souls' but with little concern for bodies, because we believe that the physical dimension of the person is of no eternal significance."⁵

The mind-body connection: an effective approach

Yet Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry certainly suggests otherwise. It may seem ironic to some in our day that in the short time allowed Him to impact the greatest number of people,

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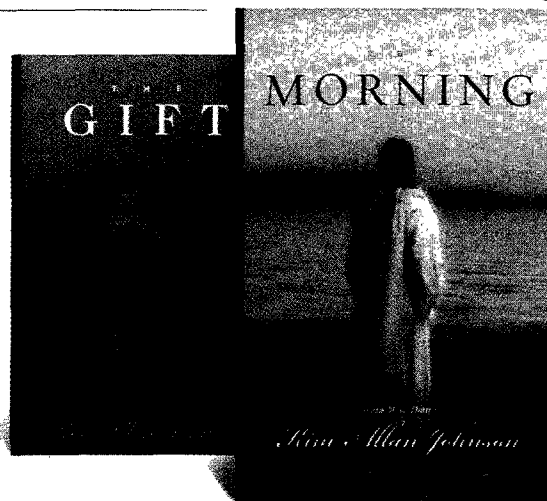
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Jesus expended so much effort on healing as opposed to other forms of what we would traditionally call evangelism. From what we can see of His priorities, they might be arranged something like this: healing, storytelling, asking provocative questions, and preaching-teaching.

In addition to His compassion for the obvious suffering in the world around Him, Jesus' care for the physical needs of others must have come also from His awareness of their worldview. This would have included the assumption that there is relevant connection between the physical and the spiritual. "Scripture seems to picture humans for the most part as unitary beings. Seldom is their spiritual nature addressed independently of or apart from the body."⁶

Today's postmodernist also sees a connection between mind and body. "It is no accident," writes Gordon Graham, "that Internet groups are sometimes referred to as 'communities of the mind,' often with [the]

implication of a higher, freer form of exchange. But in fact I think the reverse of this sort of Cartesianism is true. Pure minds are impoverished persons."⁷ Graham here points up the tension that many are facing between dualist and postdualist. He expresses his preference for the latter worldview.

There is a great deal of misinformation regarding the relationship between the physical and the spiritual aspects of life today.

And herein is the opportunity. The world today is information rich and wisdom poor. Never before has society had access to so much knowledge without knowing how to make sense of it. It's time for the Church to step up and provide some answers. "We need to become Christian meaning-makers. Meaning-makers are people who make sense of life, people who make sense of God, people whose lives ring with clarity in the midst of contemporary ambiguity, people who have integrity, people who reside in today's world revealing with their liv-

ing and their lips that Jesus' death is the source of vital life."⁸

What the church can do

In its efforts to make sense of the tidal wave of data regarding the physical and spiritual aspects of human life, the church can do several things to foster greater understanding and acceptance among its own membership and among its neighbors.

Focus on perceived issues that affect the health of the person in the street. Become knowledgeable about society's everyday tensions and perceived inadequacies. Jesus often conducted His research into the needs of others by asking probing questions (Matt. 16:15; John 1:38). Then, in framing His response to these needs, He did not set out to answer questions that no one was asking. Nor did He nurture an atmosphere of crisis, in which He tried to frighten His hearers into change. Instead He sought to offer solutions to the concerns they were experienc-

ing in their everyday lives.

Today programs and events that deal with fear, anxiety, grief, and family health provide unique opportunities to demonstrate the intimate connection between physical and spiritual health.

Involve participants more actively. To make learning more effective, Jesus used assignments and challenges (Luke 10:1-12). "Anything that might push a listener out of the role of audience member and into being a participant is to our advantage as communicators."⁹

Truth today is no longer totally dependent on propositions and proof; instead, it involves what people experience. And people are exploring experiences as never before. Despite dire predictions that the popular involvement in the Internet would extend "couch-potatoism" to new frontiers, we're seeing astonishing growth in all kinds of new participatory activity (e.g., karaoke, paint ball, historical re-enactment, and volunteer mission trips).

Seek to develop relationships. Trying to help others learn to make wise choices in health and healing isn't merely a matter of increasing the voltage of information till a light bulb suddenly illuminates. This is especially true in today's world. To meet people's needs, Jesus sought to make friends with them, to get to know them better (Luke 19:2-10). More and more, learning is a social activity. Jesus said, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:35, NLT). He didn't say, "Your scientific proofs" or "Your irrefutable arguments," although these have a place in our approach to people.

Utilize the current appreciation for playfulness and whimsy. This may seem an incongruous approach when we're trying to help others learn to cope with what we consider to be life-and-death issues. Yet even Jesus occasionally used humor and a light touch to impact on the worldview of His day (Matt. 19:24). Especially in

the earlier exploration of the spiritual and physical aspects of life, keep it light, develop a sense of humor. This applies more to method than to content, but it can be a natural first step in communicating the joy and celebration of a relationship with Jesus.

Stay attuned to God's leading throughout any planning process. As we become more involved in ministry of any kind, the natural approach is to research problems, develop plans, and outline strategies. The danger is that in concentrating on these things we may neglect to rely on God's leading through these processes. As Jesus faced the impending end of His life on this earth, He prayed, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42, NIV). The best plan is to seek out and surrender to God's leading.

How do we recognize God's leading? How do we know whether our concerns are not merely a pet issue? Certainly we must approach any subject prayerfully, seeking assurance from God that we are pursuing the right path.

Usually one of the most reliable ways to receive God's assurance is to submit our ideas to the body of Christ. Seek the counsel of seasoned, balanced, informed fellow servants of God. This commonsense discern-

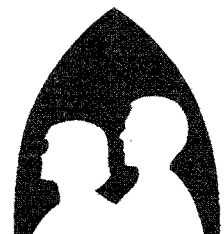
ment, what is called "the community approach to truth,"¹⁰ is another of the more positive approaches of post-modernism.

Even though the human race may be operating on assumptions that are quite different from the recent past, each individual is still a son or daughter of God. Our task is to establish a common ground on which the post-modernist can take the first faltering steps back to the heavenly Father. ■

- 1 Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), 223.
- 2 Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1999), 244.
- 3 Glenn Ward, *Postmodernism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1997), 18.
- 4 Roy Adams, "In a Time of Confusion," *Adventist Review*, Nov. 2000, 20.
- 5 Millard J. Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 96.
- 6 Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 183.
- 7 Gordon Graham, *The Internet: A Philosophical Inquiry* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 145.
- 8 Donald Posterski, *Reinventing Evangelism: New Strategies for Presenting Christ in Today's World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1989), 15, quoted in David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to our Changing World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 202.
- 9 David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 88.
- 10 Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism*, 40.

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Really knowing our children

Gary L. Hopkins



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As children in school, we might have been scolded for chewing gum or passing notes. Today, in many countries, the issues are much more serious; school shootings, teen pregnancy, and crack cocaine, to name a few. Times have changed for our children and so our approaches must also.

As adults we attempt to address the needs of young people through preaching or spiritual conversation. However good, these means are no longer good enough in themselves, because many young people, when they leave home, leave the church also.

In church the children hear about Jesus, but if we want to keep them, they need to see and know Jesus. How can we show Christ to our kids, as opposed to just describing Him? While the essential requisite for such communication between us and our children is for us to actually know Christ ourselves, there are some further things to look at.

School as community

Excellent research suggests some of these. Though conducted in school samples, the research can be applied to church as well. The concept of “school as a community” has made for interesting research. Roberts and colleagues (1995) examined the extent to which students in grade school sensed that their school was a functional community.

In their work, they defined “school as a

community” as a place where students and teachers care about and support each other; where students and teachers actively participate in activities and decisions relating to school; where students and teachers feel a sense of belonging and identification within the school group; and where the students and teachers have common goals and values.¹ The questions used in this study included, among other things: How much “my class is like a family,” “How much “can I talk to teachers in this school about things that are bothering me,” and How often does “the teacher in my class ask the students to help decide what the class should do.”

When students had a high perception of their school as a community, some positive trends were noted: they tended to read more outside of school; enjoyed reading more, enjoyed class more, and liked school more than those who didn’t have that sense of community.

These students tended not to avoid work; were more academically motivated; trusted and respected school more; enjoyed helping others learn more; and had higher educational aspirations and higher educational expectations. Academically, they performed higher on reading and math achievement tests than those who, again, didn’t view their school as community. Regarding their personal attitudes and behaviors they had more concern for others, higher self-esteem, and resolved conflicts more easily and effectively.

When teachers had a high perception of their school as a community, they had higher expectations for student learning; trusted students more; enjoyed teaching more; were more satisfied with teaching, and had higher overall satisfaction with their job.

When the school climate was rated as having a high sense of community, the principal was perceived as more competent and supportive, parents were more supportive, and there were more positive teacher-student relations. Getting involved with young people and creating school as a community even has the added benefit of fostering a moral character in young people.

Caring community encourages moral growth

Battistich, in a presentation at Fresno State University, stated that: “. . . a commitment to care is the basis for morality, and children

learn to become caring by being in caring relationships. Research literature provides considerable support for this thesis.

“Children who grow up to be characterized as ‘morally mature’ have parents who are warm, trusting, and responsive to their needs. Similarly, a few studies that have been conducted have found that students of teachers who are considered warm and supportive are more helpful and cooperative than students of teachers who are either more ‘businesslike,’ task-oriented, harsh or punitive.

“The importance of positive interpersonal relationships to moral socialization is hardly surprising. We have a need to belong to a group, to feel accepted and valued by others. We seek relationships with those who meet this need, and strive to maintain these relationships by complying with the wishes of those who care for us, adopting their beliefs and values, and imitating their behavior. Although their relative importance varies over the course of development, this applies both to relationships with significant adults, such as parents, teachers, and to relationships with peers. Thus, a school environment which is characterized by caring and supportive relationships between teachers and students and also among students should be optimal for promoting prosocial and moral development. This is true because such an environment is one which provides both abundant models of behavior consistent with prosocial and moral attitudes and values, and motivates the student to adopt and internalize these attitudes, values and behaviors.”²

The message in all of this is obvious. We need to strive to actually make our churches places where everyone has a “sense of community,” where people are cared for and relationships are encouraged and nurtured. Then we will keep the children as they move into adulthood.

Getting connected

Another study, conducted by

researchers at the University of Minnesota, examined students’ perception of “connectedness” and its relationship to problem behaviors among young people. Connectedness is very similar to “sense of community.” The basic question asked in this study was: To what extent do young people feel connected to a parent or parents, and to their school? The findings, again, are significant.

“Regardless of the number of parents in the household, whether families were rich or poor, regardless of race and ethnicity, children who reported feeling connected to a parent are protected against many different kinds of risks including emotional distress, suicidal thoughts and attempts; cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use; violent behavior, and early sexual activity.”³

When these same students felt a high sense of connectedness at school, they were involved in fewer violent acts, were protected from cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana use,

delayed first sexual intercourse, and overall, school connectedness was consistently associated with better health and healthier behaviors among students.⁴

All of these benefits occurred because there were people willing to develop relationships with them and create a caring environment for them. Does that sound like authentic Christian love?

Love, social support, and good health

Of course. People who experience love become healthier. The social sciences have extensively explored the value of “social support.” Social support is simply an emotion-based attachment between two or more people. When people have social support or social support networks here is what happens:

- ◆ College students who reported high levels of social support also reported significantly lower levels of stress.⁵

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- ◆ Larger social networks are related to fewer hospitalizations.⁶
- ◆ A caring adult or supportive peer relationship can serve as a buffer to the experience of childhood physical abuse.⁷
- ◆ Low social support is associated with a greater chance of death during the recovery phase following heart attack.⁸
- ◆ When Hispanic female college students believed that their university environment was friendly and supportive, and they perceived social support from friends, they dropped out of college less.⁹
- ◆ Patients with breast cancer and patients with a serious life-threatening skin cancer (melanoma) survive longer when they have social support.¹⁰
- ◆ Chronically ill women with social support (love from others) have less depression.¹¹
- ◆ Social support is associated with improved performance on academic examinations.¹²
- ◆ Social support for abused adolescent mothers predicted higher birth weight babies compared to those with low social support.¹³
- ◆ Lack of social support is associated with problem behaviors (drug and alcohol use, and delinquent acts) among youth. Strong social support attenuates this adverse effect.¹⁴
- ◆ Social support is often less present in the lives of youths at risk of school failure.¹⁵
- ◆ Students who report no or low support have lower attendance, spend less time studying, have fewer prosocial (positive) behaviors, and are less able to overcome school problems. Those with low support from their families engage in less disclosure of their feelings with the adults with whom they live; also, they reported that their adult caretakers show less interest in their school and monitor school activities less.¹⁶
- ◆ Social support is associated with successful vocational outcomes

among individuals who have suffered a brain injury.¹⁷

- ◆ Teenage mothers who have support from family members, friends, and the father of the child promote the ability of young mothers to pursue educational and career goals.¹⁸
- ◆ Teenage mothers who have social support are only slightly less likely to graduate from high school than those who do not become mothers as teens.¹⁹

THE TOWN EMBARKED ON A PLAN TO LEARN THE NAMES OF EVERY YOUNG PERSON IN TOWN. EVERY KID WOULD BE GREETED BY NAME.

A simple, profound strategy

Recently I heard the story of a northwestern town with an alcohol and teen pregnancy problem. Though the city fathers tried everything (such as experts to speak in school assembly, a teen pregnancy prevention program, expensive videos on drug use) teenagers were still drinking heavily and/or getting pregnant. At a town meeting, people scratched their heads and wondered what could be done.

An older rancher, wearing cowboy boots and his feet propped up on a chair said, "I don't know what to do. It seems like when I was a kid, everyone in town knew us, called us by name, and sort of hooked into our lives. People were real back then and these problems weren't very common. Maybe we should get to know these kids."

With that very simple idea the

town embarked on a plan to learn the names of every young person in town. Every kid would be greeted by name. It was simple and it didn't cost a cent.

When old Abe saw a kid at the store he would stop for a second and ask their name. "Hey, I've seen you around but don't know what to call you. What's your name?"

"My name is Mike."

"Nice to know you Mike," Abe responded. "Call me Abe."

After that it seemed simple, "Hi, Mike." "Hi Abe." Nothing to it. One afternoon Abe came out of the hardware store and there stood Mike with a beer can in his hand. Abe said, "Hi, Mike." Mike quickly put the beer can behind his back. He didn't know why, but he felt nervous holding a beer in front of Abe. Something had happened. Just by learning Mike's name, a relationship had started. With that relationship came a little bit of commitment. Mike didn't want to disappoint Abe; he seemed so nice. Abe didn't scold Mike. He simply smiled, as always, and went on with his business.

Several months after the town started on their effort to learn the names of the local kids another town meeting was held. There was an enthusiastic buzz in the room. People couldn't wait to tell their stories, and every person in the room seemed to have one. People told of the relationships that they had developed with youngsters in town that started by just learning their names.

After checking with the local doctors and police they learned that fewer teenage girls had become pregnant and the police reported fewer arrests for alcohol use. Something very subtle, but powerful, had happened.

Are we interested in retaining our young people as lifelong members of our church? Then let's go to our pulpits this weekend and tell our members that every adult is to learn the name of every young person in church. They should greet them by name, smile, and nurture a relation-

ship. That's it. Let's get to know our young people and so create a caring community in our churches and then watch things happen.

Next time you are in the grocery store and you see a youngster from your church, wait to see if they approach you. If they don't, then you don't know them well enough, you aren't smiling enough, or you haven't really connected. When you do, you will know it.

Our young people have *heard* enough about Jesus. This is one way to *show* Him to them. ■

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Letters *continued from page 3*

assumptions, in which the author ably evaluates or points out the weaknesses in the assumptions of the postmodern orientation. Under the next subheading (page 21) he further implies the flaws in post-modernism when he suggests ways of effectively approaching such a culture, based on the needs it inevitably creates (due to its excesses) in the minds of its adherents.

It is not the author's intention to say that there is nothing wrong with post-modernism.

The lonely pastor

I was impressed by the article entitled "The Lonely Pastor" (September 2001), authored by Pastor Larry Yeagley. The article hit the nail on the head. Indeed, many pastors experience "professional loneliness," and some, out of a guilty conscience, remain in the ministry, but concentrate on other activities that are not at the core of ministry.

Pastor Yeagley enumerated several causes of "professional loneliness." I am

suspicious that the list for the causes may be longer than what the author has suggested. Most of the reasons for ministerial loneliness are a matter of choice on the side of the pastor. We, as pastors, tend to choose abnormal situations (either caused by us, church members or conference administration) to the detriment of our health, marriage, and ministry.

I also appreciate the solutions that Pastor Yeagley suggested as an intervention. He put the onus on the pastor as an agent for change. It is true that any meaningful change becomes intrinsic more than extrinsic.

—Tankiso Letseli, pastor, East Rand District, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Ministerial mendacity

A personal response to Ellie Green's article: I was a new teacher in our Adventist school system. I was helping out around the campmeeting grounds when I heard a minister give his report of what he had accomplished. After the meeting, I was near this minister when another minister asked him if the numbers he'd given were real or if they

were "evangelistic numbers." He laughed and said that actually they were evangelistic numbers. For quite some time I really didn't know what he meant. When I did learn his meaning, I was shocked and surprised. To me, this was the same as telling an outright lie!

Through the years, I have taught academy, college, and my last assignment was being principal. I continue to hear ordained ministers say things and then laugh and say, well, that number really was an evangelistic number. Today, I am retired and still hear this same remark and the same laugh.

Isn't it time that in every phase of our work, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, be told?

Thanks for having the courage to print this article in *Ministry*.

—Lyle Hamel, Yucaipa, California.

I appreciated Ellie Green's counsel to keep tall tales out of the pulpit ("Ministerial Mendacity," July 2001). I would also be fascinated to learn her understanding of Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus. ■

—Robert R. Wresch, Guam.

Overcoming panic anxiety

Editorial note: *This is the second in a six-part series entitled "Pastoral Pressure Points" by Dr. Hart. The remaining four will appear in our May, July, September, and November issues.*

At no time in history have so many lived so far from tranquility and so close to the precipice of anxiety. The events of past months, both the terrorist attacks in the U.S.A. and the anthrax scare, have moved the world further away from tranquility and peacefulness. The result is a rather dramatic increase in anxiety disorders, notably panic attacks. It is now the number one mental health problem for women in North America. In men it is second only to substance abuse. Needless to say, panic anxiety is also rampant among Christians.

Anxiety has always been with us. While the terrorist attacks will sooner or later abate, we will still be left with the major cause of panic anxiety, namely the pace of modern life. Mothers and fathers, children and grandchildren, and people from every strata of society are being pushed even further toward the edge of anxiety by the hectic demands of contemporary life.

Many experts are now saying that anxiety has become "epidemic." According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) more than 23 million Americans suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. The more serious of these include panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

No longer are we beset just by worry anxiety, which was the topic of my last article, but by more insidious and damaging forms of anxiety. To quote the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health's Web site on this matter: "They [anxiety victims] suffer from symptoms that are

ARCHIBALD D. HART



chronic, unremitting and usually grow progressively worse if left untreated. Tormented by panic attacks, irrational thoughts and fears, compulsive behaviors or rituals, flashbacks, nightmares, or countless frightening physical symptoms, people with anxiety disorders are heavy utilizers of emergency rooms and other medical services."

No pastor can function effectively in ministering to the needs of people today who is not aware of this dramatic increase in anxiety problems. Pastors need to understand and recognize the symptoms of anxiety disorders in themselves and in the people they serve.

Why the increase in panic anxiety?

Why has there been such a dramatic rise in anxiety, particularly panic attacks, in recent times? In simple terms it is because we are all overstressed and beset by the high expectations placed upon us. Combined with global threats and an unsettled world, we are being pushed to live at a pace beyond human limits.

The human frame finds the environment of uncertainty to be unsettling. We are all too hassled, too hurried, and too stretched for our own good. We were designed for camel travel not to be jetted about at supersonic speeds. This, combined with our failure to take time for rest and recovery produces the

increased stress and anxiety and especially that which gives rise to panic attacks.

Unfortunately, panic anxiety has not bypassed our Christian subculture. In some respects it has impacted us more than anyone. Because we believe God is "in control" we expect to find ourselves relatively free of the anxiety all around us. The fact that we feel just as anxious and fearful only adds more cause for stress and anxiety. Needless to say, such beliefs are unwarranted. Because we are all part of a sinful and shaky world, we share in its uncertainties.

What can make a difference, however, is how we take and apply the resources of our faith to achieve a greater sense of tranquility.

What you should know about panic anxiety

Every human experiences anxiety. Some anxiety is necessary and normal. For instance, if you discover a lump in your breast you should begin to feel anxious. It serves as a wake-up call telling you to take action. It is an alarm of sorts. Such a symptom tells you to go to your doctor to have the lump checked. In this respect anxiety is necessary and helpful.

But there are, of course, other dimensions to stress. For example, prolonged stress has many deleterious effects, but none is more insidious than its depletion of the brain's "natural" tranquilizers. Stress hormones interfere with the balance of chemical messengers in the brain and ordinary anxiety becomes aggravated by a lack of the brain's natural tranquilizing agents.

This is the major cause of panic anxiety; a form of anxiety that has a sudden onset in which you are overcome by a feeling that something terrible is going to happen to you. It is often accompanied by chest pains and a hunger for air.

These sensations may be strong enough to prompt the sufferer to seek emergency care because such symptoms may easily give a person the impression that they are having a heart attack.

Having a panic attack is a most frightening experience that only those who have experienced it can relate to. Fortunately, panic attacks won't kill you, although you certainly may feel your are going to die! Such attacks can be the most terrifying of all the anxiety disorders.

Because of the widespread misunderstanding and the stigma associated with anxiety, many people with severe anxiety problems do not receive proper treatment. They suffer unnecessarily, and their work, family, and social lives are disrupted.

Panic anxiety requires treatment

In my previous article I dealt very specifically with worry anxiety, a form of anxiety that is purely psychological in origin. Panic anxiety, however, is quite different in that it is biologically based and thus requires more than just a psychologically based treatment. If the problem is mainly the depletion of the brain's "natural" tranquilizers, this depletion must be treated.

Treatment may initially require the use of tranquilizers and/or antidepressants, which are provided to prevent further panic attacks while the sufferer makes the necessary lifestyle changes that will ensure long-term tranquility. The final "cure" is not accomplished until there has been a significant reduction in stress levels.

This means that effective treatment needs to include some good stress reduction counseling. While a few cases can be so serious as to warrant some years of medication, most should find a reduction in dependence on tranquilizers over a relatively short time.

Should Christians use tranquilizers?

Because treatment requires the use of a combination of tranquilizers and antidepressants, many Christians balk at

getting any treatment for panic anxiety.

Herein lies the cause for a lot of unnecessary guilt, and pastors need to be understanding of themselves and others, and provide a supportive environment for such treatment. If this is not done intentionally, many will not seek treatment. Untreated panic anxiety can lead to permanent impairment in the more serious cases.

The question of the use of tranquilizers and other mental health drugs is one of the most vexing issues facing many Christians with anxiety problems. Pastors should be prepared to give an answer—and it should be an informed one.

The answer is: It depends on the

high mainly when tranquilizers are misused. A competent doctor will not allow this to happen.

Although artificial tranquilizers are often necessary in anxiety treatment, they play a temporary and minor role overall. Other medications that are not addicting play a more important role in the long term. Furthermore, artificial tranquilizers work only because the brain has its own tranquilizers. So they are not foreign to the brain, which under normal circumstances, is constantly producing them.

Again, this is where stress plays its role. The brain's natural tranquilizers, or "happy hormones" as I call them, are robbed by stress. The greater the stress,

THE QUESTION OF THE USE OF TRANQUILIZERS AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH DRUGS IS ONE OF THE MOST VEXING ISSUES FACING MANY CHRISTIANS WITH ANXIETY PROBLEMS.

type of anxiety. Worry anxiety needs spiritual and psychological help, but seldom a tranquilizer. Reason? There is nothing essentially wrong with the brain's natural tranquilizers. Brain chemistry is essentially normal. Worry anxiety is mainly learned, and it has to be unlearned. So if you or someone in your congregation worries excessively have him or her see a Christian counselor or a pastoral counselor for help.

If, on the other hand, someone suffers from panic attacks he or she will almost certainly need further treatment, and this will inevitably require a period when they need to be on medication of some sort.

A common misconception is that tranquilizers are the main medications used to treat all anxiety disorders. This has contributed to the belief among many Christians that tranquilizers "control" the mind and that they are addictive. For this reason many fail to seek the needed treatment. The fact is that not all anti-anxiety medications are tranquilizers, and the risk of addiction is

the less of these hormones one has. It stands to reason, therefore, that until one can heed the warning call of anxiety and modify the lifestyle so as to reduce the stress levels, artificial tranquilizers may be necessary to achieve a tranquil life.

The consequences of not treating panic attacks

Every once in a while I encounter a person who has suffered from a bout of panic attack and reports that they have mastered the problem themselves without any medication or other treatment. However, it invariably turns out that they did not have a very severe form of panic disorder or that they caught the problem in its very early stages. The fact is that the earlier the intervention, the better.

The truth is that for many, going it alone is not going to be ultimately helpful. For one thing, each successive panic attack only makes the problem worse. A "fear of fear" phenomenon develops in which the fear of further attacks feeds

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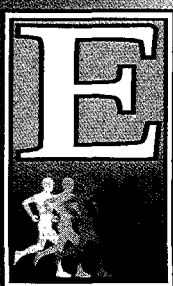
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Celebrations! They mark the high points of our lives—birthdays, graduations, marriage, anniversaries and holidays. But why wait? Fill every day of your life with celebrations that are always available to you.

Have you ever made a list of the gifts you receive daily that deserve to be celebrated? No doubt you would include the people you love most. But what about the good health that empowers you to live and enjoy their company? If lost, you would have a new appreciation of its value. Most people recognize eyesight as a marvelous gift, but what about the ability to breathe in air and digest food? Life depends on millions of unseen chemical and physical interactions that can malfunction. Health and the knowledge of how to maintain it are gifts to be received gratefully. You can only enjoy maximum benefit from these gifts when you acknowledge them with thanks and appropriate them to your life. The acronym **CELEBRATIONS![®]** can help you remember the gifts of health that support vitality, energy, and abundant life and guard against malfunction.

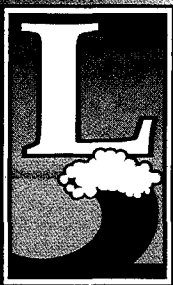


C is for **CHOICES**—*the cradle of your destiny*. You may not always see the end from the beginning, but your choices always determine your destiny. Healthy choices bring positive effects to the individual, family, and community. Unhealthy choices drain vitality from the entire populace. No person is an island. Celebrate your freedom to make healthy choices—it is the tool that opens all the other good gifts of health.



E is for **EXERCISE**—*the elixir of your vitality*. There are many more gifts within this one—such as energy, endurance, flexibility, strength, firm body, glowing complexion, mental health, self-confidence, and enhanced immunity. In addition, exercise decreases risk of anxiety, cancer, depression, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, osteoporosis, stress, and other diseases.

With this stimulating gift of exercise, you will feel more alive and happy while celebrating improved health, productivity, and life expectancy.



L is for **LIQUIDS**—*the lubricant of your functionality*. Every body cell, tissue, and organ needs water to function. Water helps regulate body temperature, transport nutrients and oxygen to the cells, remove waste, soften stools to prevent constipation, moisten tissues, cushion your joints, and keep blood flowing. Pamper yourself with a warm bath for cleanliness, relaxation, and

healing every day. Celebrate with this luxuriant gift of water!



E is for **ENVIRONMENT**—*the empowerment of our society*. Throughout history, civilizations could flourish only where there was a habitable climate, rich soil, and pure water. Let this need for a sound and healthy environment focus your mind on issues that will determine the quality of life for years to come. Without clean air, atmosphere, soil, and water the human race cannot survive. Celebrate the gift of a life-giving environment and do all you can to restore and protect it.



B is for **BELIEF**—*the basis of your spirituality*. All great civilizations have been founded on a belief in God and values leading to an orderly society. Belief in spiritual values is a strong motivator to treat others well and to develop peaceful human relationships. History demonstrates that faithless and amoral societies become so corrupt they cannot survive. Belief is characteristic of science as well as religion.

Belief can give you peace of mind and enable you to reach your full potential through positive choices. Celebrate belief—the gift that sustains!



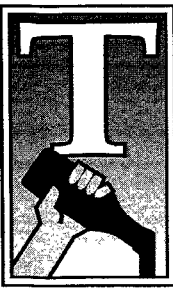
R is for **REST**—*the restorer of your resiliency*. Without rest and relaxation you will soon become ineffective. During the French and Russian Revolutions and World War II, attempts to increase productivity by extending the work week beyond six days failed miserably. These experiments indicate there is a physiological requirement for one day of rest after every six days of work, so take one day off

every week. Rest comes in several different packages—periodic breaks, a restful night's sleep, a weekly day of rest, and an annual vacation. For peak efficiency, mental health, and abundant energy don't skip any of them! Celebrate the refreshing gift of rest.



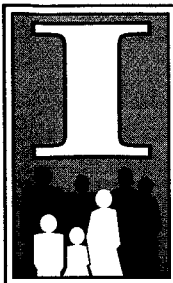
A is for **AIR**—*the activator of your vitality*. For mental and physical activity, the cells in the brain and body must have abundant oxygen. Deep diaphragmatic breathing is the best method of respiration. If you are deprived of oxygen, the brain suffers first. If the deprivation is slight, you will be irritable and less alert. If it is complete for even a few minutes, you will become unconscious and then

die. So, when air quality allows, open your windows or go outside to enjoy energizing early-morning walks. Avoid cigarette smoke and other air pollutants. Receive the invigorating gift of the freshest air in the countryside, at the seashore, or in the mountains. Celebrate life in the fresh air!



T is for **TEMPERANCE**—*the temple of your purity*. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are enticing because they are promoted as fun, stimulating, and a release from stress and pain. But using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in any amount is hazardous because they may lead to addiction and harm. Drugs destroy purity of body by causing disease. Drugs destroy purity of mind when they cause addiction; drugs

destroy purity of soul when intoxication leads to abuse, inappropriate sex, or violent behavior. Drugs destroy purity of body when they cause disease and even death. Celebrate temperance as a safeguard of purity, and toast your drug-free life with nonalcoholic beverages.



I is for **INTEGRITY**—*the incorruptibility of your honesty*. It's easy to rationalize and deny the harm of health-destroying behaviors—even obvious signs of drug-related problems. We need to learn to be honest with ourselves in order to avoid such self-defeating denial. We must also be honest with others to gain their trust and develop good interpersonal relationships.

Those who maintain close relationships live longer and healthier lives. Add more people to your life, and spend more time with family, friends, community, and God to reduce anxiety, depression, and many diseases. Celebrate integrity for its contribution to your mental, physical and spiritual health.



O is for **OPTIMISM**—*the operant of your sanity*. Optimism is the face of faith that brightens the life of others by helping them celebrate the silver lining in dark clouds. The glass is half full in the eyes of the optimist, while the pessimist, under a canopy of despair, perceives the glass is half empty. An optimistic outlook allows us to laugh, and laughter is a powerful medicine. Celebrations encourage joy and

laughter, which promote hope and optimism. Celebrate each day to preserve your sanity and life!



N is for **NUTRITION**—*the nourishment of your body*. Celebrate the cornucopia of nutrient-dense, whole-grain, crusty breads and cereals and phytochemically-rich, colorful fruits and vegetables. Enjoy essential fatty acids in crunchy nuts and seeds, bone-building calcium in a refreshing glass of cold low-fat milk or fortified soymilk, and the fiber-rich legumes, all seasoned with fresh herbs

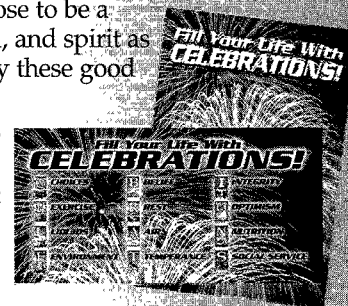
and small amounts of vegetable oils, sugar, and salt. The Vegetarian Food Pyramid can help you reduce your risk of cancer, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, osteoporosis, coronary heart and intestinal disease. At every meal, think festival! Think carnival! Think celebration!



S is for **Social Support and Service**—*the stewardship of your relationships*. A steward is a manager who acknowledges dependence on God and interdependence with others. Research has shown that people who maintain close relationships and who serve others are healthier and happier. Active church members have less disease than nonmembers. Friendships with people and pets alleviate stress and

improve health. Giving and receiving within close relationships is part of good stewardship of health. You do not own your body or the environment, but you can be a good manager and do much to preserve both. Acknowledging your dependence on God while giving and receiving social support is an investment in health that can fill your life and the lives of others with **CELEBRATIONS!**® every day. Choose to be a faithful steward of your body, mind, and spirit as well as the world around you. Enjoy these good things! Be thankful!

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the underlying stress and almost guarantees that the problem will become more serious.

Aside from this, an effect called "kindling" can be set in motion. This refers to the fact that each panic attack makes it easier for the next to be "lit." Hence the fire analogy in the use of the word "kindling." The brain is primed to keep the panic attacks going on.

If treatment is being resisted

What are the consequences to which pastors can point if someone is resisting treatment?

The first is that if the current bout of panic attacks is not aborted as soon as possible the sufferer could easily become more disposed to repeated bouts of panic. It can become episodic. It takes less and less stress to instigate a bout of attacks.

The second is more serious. It can lead to the development of "agoraphobia," a condition where the sufferer is so afraid of having an attack in an unsafe place that he or she refuses to leave

home. People suffering in this way become house-bound.

The term "agoraphobia" means "fear of the market place." Needless to say, this is a most detrimental outcome and it is more difficult to treat than the original panic attacks because it is more psychological in nature.

Specific words for Christians suffering anxiety

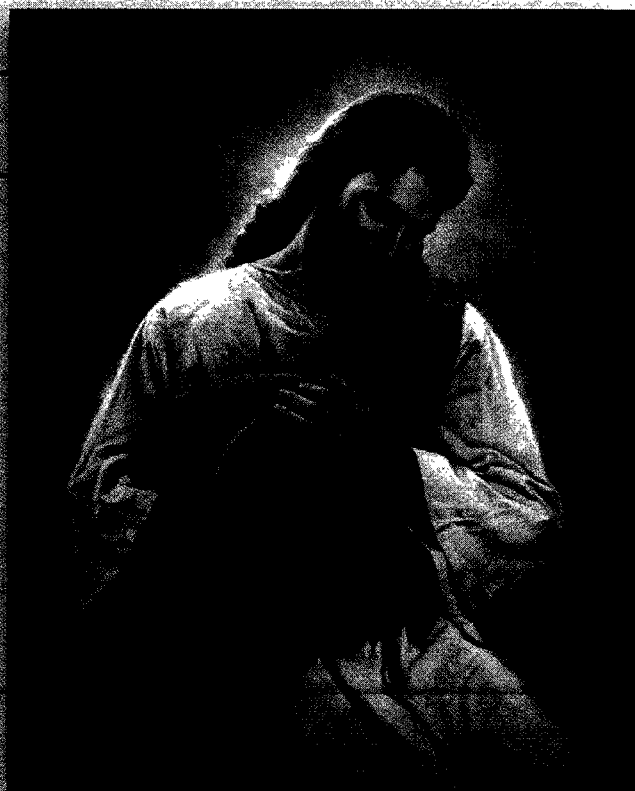
For pastors and the Christians they minister to, my message here is particularly important. We will be seeing more and more signs of anxiety panic disorder. Stress is not going away. The pace and demands of life are not slowing down or decreasing. We are not learning to rest more.

Along with this, many Christians have such a strong anti-medication mindset that they could be doing themselves serious harm by rejecting a short-term trial on an appropriate anti-anxiety medication, or by resisting some good Christian based therapy or counseling. Antidepressants are fre-

quently the preferred medication and they are definitely not addicting!

Finally, as mentioned at the outset, many Christians are probably more prone to develop a high level of stress. We tend to be quite unaware of how pressures we feel trying to live "good" lives can cause anxiety problems. Being good by relying on our own resources is a lost cause. It is not what God wants from or for us. The harder we try in our own strength, the more our life becomes stress-bound. Our life in Christ should be a balanced life—with the natural tranquility God has provided built right into it.

There is no doubt in my mind that God intends us to live calm, serene, peaceful, composed, and good-natured lives—all qualities of tranquility. And this is precisely what Jesus promises us in John 16:33 when He says "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." In these days of high stress and trauma we need to be more intentional than ever about seeking this peace. ■



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Lifting up Jesus

Jesus is under attack. This somber fact has profound and far-reaching implications for believers and unbelievers alike. Jesus has always been under attack, of course. From the day Herod sought to destroy the infant Christ to the day of his judicial murder at the hands of the Roman Pontius Pilate, and on numerous occasions in between when the ruling authorities in his home town of Nazareth sought to kill him, he was under attack. Even before that, before the foundation of the earth, He had been the object of Satanic jealousy and malice.

In more recent times, the attack on Jesus has been more ideologically oriented as historical-critical scholarship began to be applied to the life and work of Jesus. The attack, focused on the reliability of the biblical record purports to "demythologize" the historical understanding of Jesus leaving a Christ barely recognizable. Followers of this process today are numerous, widespread, educated, vocal, and influential.

So, we might ask, What's new? Jesus has always had His enemies. There have always been those who have attempted to explain Him away, undermine His credentials, weaken His influence, counter His teachings, dispense with His redemptive significance, in fact, to destroy Him.

Today Jesus is the object of a renewed offensive, more radical, intense, and in some respects different from the attacks of previous generations. People are now talking openly for the first time, at least in the modern era, of the possibility that the Christian faith might be on its way out. A distinguished scholar expressed the conviction in a recent television documentary that Christianity would be finished by the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

Adventists, of all people, should emphasize Jesus more and more as the

JAMES A. CRESS



author and finisher of Christian faith. Jesus' eternal, perpetual existence, creative power, communicative initiative toward humanity, miraculous birth, exemplary life, compassionate ministry, substitutionary death at Calvary, victorious resurrection and ascension, priestly ministry on our behalf in heavenly places, plus His promised soon return, must be the recurring theme and most prominent feature of all our proclamation if we are to fulfill the mission of lifting up Jesus before the world.

With this in mind, I am eager to introduce *Ministry* readers to *The Essential Jesus*, an outstanding book that affirms Jesus as the heart and substance of authentic Christian faith. The book is being published by Pacific Press and will be available in Adventist Book Centers in May 2002.

The original concept and dream for this book came from William G. Johnsson, *Adventist Review* editor, and Bryan W. Ball, recently-retired administrator. Their production leadership has included a phenomenal group of leading theologians who have united their efforts to lift up Jesus as the centrality of the gospel, the source and only reason for Christian faith and mission.

This thoroughly Scriptural work, with hundreds of biblical references for documentation, examines and explains the essence of who Jesus was and what He came to earth to accomplish.

Note the chapters and authors: "The Influence of Jesus," William G. Johnsson; "The Jesus of History," Nancy J. Vyhmeister; "The Coming of Jesus Anticipated," Laurence A. Turner; "The Birth of Jesus," Bryan W. Ball; "Jesus: Divinity Revealed Through Humility," Norman H. Young; "The Work and Words of Jesus," Steven A. Thompson; "The Death of Jesus," Raoul F. Dederen; "The Risen Jesus," David N. Marshall; "Jesus: the Man for Others," Roy Adams; "Jesus and Ourselves," Andrea T. Luxton; "Jesus: Priest and Coming King," Ivan T. Blazen; "The Victorious Jesus," Jan Paulsen; "Jesus and The Great Commission," Bryan W. Ball.

Although envisioned and developed by Adventist scholars, this book will have broad appeal to all denominations as it authenticates the biblical Jesus in the face of the attacks of liberalism and secularism and reveals the flawed presuppositions of much contemporary scholarship.

While *The Essential Jesus* is based on sound, reliable scholarship—all contributors hold doctoral degrees in biblical, theological, or related disciplines—it is also highly readable, convincing, inspiring, and faith-building. Its readers will discover a ready resource of sermon preparation and personal Bible study benefits beyond its reference book substance. Practical, usable applications will readily assist pastors who prepare and present spiritual food for their congregations.

I envision a series of sermons being developed from each of the chapters. In fact, I encourage presentation of an extended series with the overall theme, *The Essential Jesus*. You might select the first Sabbath of every month as the designated, monthly continuation of this systematic proclamation and reaffirmation of faith and confidence in Jesus. ■

Not yet—the Holy Ghost!

Calvin B. Rock

Our text, John 7:37-39, finds Jesus speaking at the Feast of Tabernacles. On each of the seven days of the feast, the leaders, in commemoration of the 40-year miracle of water provided their foreparents in the wilderness, led the people to the pool of Siloam. There, as many as could, drank and then followed the priests back to the temple with huge vessels of water where, to the clarion sound of trumpets and the joyous singing of hosannas, they poured it out upon the altar of burnt offerings.

John observes in John 7:39 that the water poured forth represents the Holy Spirit who, at that time, had “not been given” (NIV)—indicating that though they had the parchments and the prophets and even the presence of Jesus Himself, still it was “not yet—the Holy Ghost!”

In this enlightening reflection, several critical lessons emerge.

First, we are led to consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the early church. On the surface, “not yet—the Holy Ghost” was a curious, even contradictory thing for John to say. After all, the Holy Spirit is mentioned no less than 89 times in the Old Testament. It was He, who, in the beginning, moved upon the face of the deep, changing chaos to cosmos; it was He who gave Samson strength, who delivered special messages to Joshua, Gideon, and Saul; and it was He of whom

David said, “take not thy holy spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11).

How then could John say, “not yet—the Holy Ghost”? He could do so because while he recognized the wonderful ways in which the Holy Spirit worked before Pentecost, he was eye-witness to the even more dramatic consequences of His presence after that event.

Jesus had often tried to educate His disciples regarding the special role and impact that the Holy Spirit would have upon the church after His departure. He had said, “I will [send] . . . you another Comforter” (John 14:16). The Greek here is *Allos Paraclete*. *Paraclete*, meaning helper or advocate and *Allos* meaning Another just like Himself but who, unshackled by the human limitations that He had voluntarily assumed, would through them, do even greater works. In other words, His Successor would be Another, yet the same; subordinate, yet superior; equal, yet mightier in deeds.

It was a riddle that the disciples could not solve. They never did “get it”! It was only later when He had gone up and the Holy Ghost had come down and they had launched out bathed with power so potent that they could speak in unknown tongues and heal the sick and cast out devils and in a single day convert 3,000 people that they understood.

So that now, John, writing in retrospect, is comparing pre-Pentecostal performance with post-Pentecostal power and saying of former times, “not yet—the Holy Ghost.”

The impact upon the church

Second, we see in these words, not only the impact of the Holy Spirit upon the early church whose leaders mention Him 240 times in the New Testament, but His promised impact upon the remnant church as well.

And what impact is that? Joel states it forcefully: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28, 29).

Ellen White, speaking of the latter rain and the final explosion of Holy Ghost power, states, “The outpouring of the Spirit in the apostolic days was the ‘former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the ‘latter rain’ will be more abundant.”¹ And again, “The work will



Calvin B. Rock, Ph.D., is a recently retired general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

be similar to that of the Day of Pentecost. As the 'former rain' was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the 'latter rain' will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest."² Contrasting this explosive promise with our ordinary performance, we are made to admit—"not yet—the Holy Ghost!"

This candid evaluation does not overlook the progress Seventh-day Adventists have made in comparison with other religious groups. It is possible to say that we have survived well and, in fact, can rightly claim many signal successes in our continued global expansion. The bottom line, however, is that we are still in the wilderness of time; still outside the borders of Canaan; still waiting for the power to complete our task.

It is with proper cause that we continuously sing, "Mercy drops 'round us are falling, but for the showers we plead"; we are, in the light of God's promised power, lukewarm Laodiceans and our record reveals the uncomfortable reality—"not yet—the Holy Ghost!"

The most relevant question, however, for this church is How can our situation be remedied or, in the light of this study, exactly what are the conditions for receiving a "modern day" Pentecost? Here, the Bible speaks clearly.

Conditions for receiving a modern-day Pentecost

The first condition is, "Ask ye of the Lord, rain in the time of the latter rain; so, the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give . . . showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zech. 10:1).

The outpouring will not come automatically. Unlike nature's cycle where the seasons are set and the harvest rains (unless interrupted by atmospheric exceptions) follow dutifully the dictates of the calendar, the latter rain cannot be "taken for granted"—it will not come by default, or

happenstance, or inevitable succession. And, the latter rain cannot be "worked up," it must be "prayed down"!

We must ardently desire and Jacoblike wrestle in entreaty or the latter rain will remain a frozen Niagara of unleashed blessing. And, if that continues, our generation, like those before us, will continue doing "business as usual" and finally lie down in death having traded translation for resurrection, doomed by the doleful declaration: "not yet—the Holy Ghost!"

BUT NEVERTHELESS WITH ONLY 120

PRESENT THERE IN THE

UPPER ROOM, THE

HOLY SPIRIT FOUND

THE CONSECRATED

NUCLEUS OF THE

KINGDOM OF GRACE.

The second condition is given in Luke 24:49. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be indued," or "clothed" (NIV) "with power from on high."

The closest translation of the Greek word for "tarry," is "sit." This was not encouragement to idleness. It was, rather, a mandate to meditation before participation, the injunction to clear heads and hearts before engaging hands and feet. It is the reminder that bodily exercise without the Spirit's presence profits little (1 Tim. 4:8), and that activity (even in God's cause) that crowds out time for devotion is deficient.

In fact, it was their acting before they fully tarried that was responsible

for the choice of Mathias (who we never hear of again) to replace Judas (Acts 1). Jesus had said, in essence, "Wait. Don't do anything until after you have tarried and the Paraclete has come." Had they waited long enough, they might have selected Paul or Silas or another who would have brought stability and honor to the cause. But it appears they blew the election because while they had deciphered the sense of the house, they had not discerned the will of God.

It is not that Mathias was a bad fellow but apparently by running ahead of the Spirit, they replaced a highly competent traitor with a minimally competent loyalist. And while I'd rather have the latter in the conference office or any other place of duty, the choice should never have come to that.

By their example, we are reminded that we must have consecration before nomination; and that we must always tarry before we tally. And that if we do not, the results will inevitably declare—"not yet—the Holy Ghost."

The third condition surfaces in Acts 2:1. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." All? How could 120 be all when, according to 1 Corinthians 15:6, over 500 had seen Him in His resurrected form a few weeks earlier?

How? Evidently the other 380 plus had been so diverted and depressed by events that in spite of "ultimate evidence" they were confused about the promise that involved them tarrying together in Jerusalem.

But nevertheless with only 120 present there in the upper room, the Holy Spirit found the consecrated nucleus of the Kingdom of Grace.

Their willingness to counter popular opinion in obedience to Christ's command was essential to their participation in Pentecost—so is ours. Only those living up to Present Truth, those who, in spite of popular trends within and without the church obeyed the dictates of the

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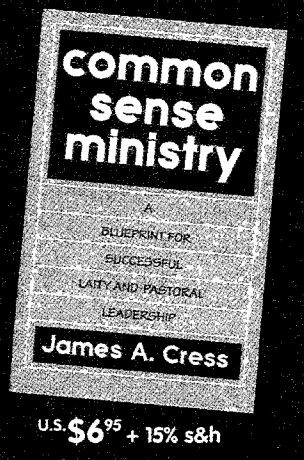
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Lord, were blessed with the promise of the rain and the fire and escaped the somber sentence—"not yet—the Holy Ghost."

The fourth condition also surfaces in Acts 2:1, and emphasizes that they were "with one accord." The term accord, which Luke repeats five times in the first five chapters of Acts, suggests, not a group of monolithic personalities but people of differing characteristics working with singular purpose and attitude.

As when tuning an organ we must test and key all notes to the standard pitch, the fundamental objective of believers is not to agree with each other, but rather to key on and agree with Jesus. We can agree with each other and still be wrong. By judging ourselves by ourselves, we guarantee ourselves dissonance and discord. When we merely agree together we lower our sights to lesser standards, we restrict the inflow of Divine power and earn the valid verdict—"not yet—the Holy Ghost."

But, it can justly be asked, since our differences of culture, as well as our many levels of education within cultures make uniform understanding and application of Scripture so difficult, How can we be truly of one accord? How? By following, in present councils, the methodology that guided the first church council.

At the Jerusalem meeting in Acts 15, accord did not blossom as transnational, cross-cultural, lock-step sameness. What they did achieve was "unity in diversity" grounded upon the principle of love, framed in the willingness to see one's personal doctrinal perspectives as no more normative than that of others and hence, subject to the impacting of the whole.

The fifth condition that they met is revealed in Acts 2:2: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

It is the way of nature that wind seeks entry into empty space—not that which is already occupied. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," but it listeth where vacuums exist, where voids invite, where vacancies beckon! So it is with the Holy Spirit.

The disciples had to empty themselves of all contrary tendencies before they could be filled with the surging Spirit—Peter of his presumption; Thomas of his doubt; James and John of their ambition; Phillip of his unbelief; Andrew of his naivete; Simon of his resentments.

We, too, if we would be filled, must empty the room for His coming. We must take down the "occupied," "no vacancy" signs that signal satisfaction with our present spiritual state—our prideful reluctance to take

off our garments of self-righteousness that Ellen White calls "no righteousness at all." Unless we do, we are destined to spend the rest of our competition-oriented, self-willed lives laboring with less than maximum results, shackled by the restricting reality—"not yet—the Holy Ghost."

What Christ has already done

The most important lesson of these verses, however, is not what we must do but what Christ has already done to make the latter rain available.

Listen again to Acts 2:1, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come . . ." Note that Pentecost was not an isolated event. It was the second of the three great festivals, and was scheduled exactly 50 days after the slaying of the lamb that marked the start of Passover, the first of the festivals.

In other words, Pentecost was sequel to Passover; reaping was anchored in sacrifice. That sequence holds true for us today. We must embrace Christ's passion before we can enjoy the Spirit's power. No Calvary—no Pentecost. No suffering Savior—no empowering Paraclete. No bleeding Lamb—no falling fire! Only the sad summary of our stunted outreach: "not yet—the Holy Ghost."

The other condition that Jesus fulfills is gleaned from our original text, John 7:39, which reads in part: "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Jesus had to be glorified before the disciples could be electrified. And so He died on Passover Friday, rested on Salvation Sabbath, returned to glory with His resurrected trophies on Wave Sheaf Sunday, following which, as the festival timetable provided, He waited 50 days to implement the outpouring.

During the initial 40 days of His wait, Jesus made six appearances to His closest followers—male and female. None more revealing than His visit with the disciples, with only Thomas absent.

At that meeting, as if He could not

wait to behold their joy, He provided them a prelude to Pentecost by breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22).

The most accurate translations have Him saying not, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," but "Receive ye—Holy Ghost." In other words, He recommended Him, not by title or by office or by function but simply by name. This is not a matter of *the* Savior, or *the* Christ introducing *the* Holy Ghost but rather their Friend Jesus presenting His Friend "Holy Ghost," now come to be their Leader. And then, with ten days left, He ascended, as David so graphically outlines in Psalm 24 and Ellen White describes in *The Desire of Ages*,³ to angelic adulation and praise.

But amidst all the celebrations above, He did not forget His followers below. So while the disciples were praying in the secret place, He was pleading in the holy place. The outpouring that came at Pentecost signaled the completion of His coronation celebration and the beginning of His role as our heavenly Paraclete. So that now we have, not only the earthly Comforter-Paraclete but the heavenly Paraclete-Comforter working in tandem for our salvation.

Pentecost signaled that Jesus had been fully knighted and His disciples could be fully lighted and the house where they were gathered was "shaken" as they were infused with the Holy Spirit.

Do it again, Lord!

Our earnest prayer should be—do it again, Lord; do it again! And it is

encouraging to note that we are not alone in this petition. The prayers of all the remnant believers who have died in earnest hope are banked-up for this momentous event.

Inspiration states that "the revenue of glory has been accumulating for this closing work . . . of the prayers that have been ascending for the fulfillment of the promise—the descent of the Holy Spirit—not one has been lost. Each prayer has been accumulating, ready to overflow and pour forth a healing flood of heavenly influence and accumulated light all over the world."⁴

When that happens, instead of pulling against each other, we will be pulling others out of Babylon. Instead of wrangling over theological obscurities, we will be rallying around fundamental certainties; instead of disseminating gossip, we will be spreading the gospel; and instead of politicking about who is the greatest, we will be proclaiming the doctrine that is the greatest—the righteousness of Christ.

Ellen White's further description of the fulfillment is: "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers."⁵

But wait—I think I hear the heavenly council now being called to order. The first item on the agenda is the matter of conversion. "Is there a

motion to make this process complete in My remnant people?" the Father asks. "Yes, Father," the heavenly Paraclete rises to say. "I move it—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:23). "I second that," the Holy Ghost states. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

Next on the agenda is the subject of the resurrection. Again, the heavenly Paraclete speaks, saying: "I move that since I have overcome the grave, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth'" (Rev. 14:3). "Is there a second?" the Father inquires. "Yea," says the Spirit rising to bear witness, "that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (verse 13).

And that takes us to the item of the Second Coming, and the transformation of the church militant to the church triumphant. Once again Jesus moves with finality, declaring, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Rev. 22:12, NKJV).

And then a wonderful thing happens, there is not one second to this motion but there are two—for the Spirit and the Bride say, "'Come!' . . . Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:17, 20, NKJV). ■

1 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1940), 827.

2 ———, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1911), 611.

3 *Ibid.*, chapter 87.

4 Ellen G. White, *Letter 96A*, 1899.

5 *The Great Controversy*, 612.

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