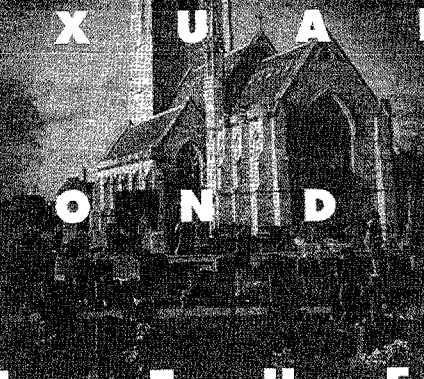


MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors

January 2004



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I N T H E
M I N I S T R Y

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Sexual misconduct in ministry: A biblical sketch of pastoral identity

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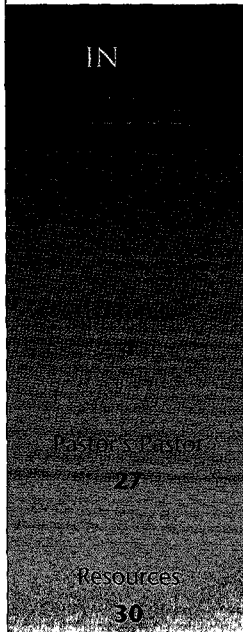
Ten ways to increase the effectiveness of pastoral ministry to those hospitalized

Delmar S. Smolinski and William E. Rabor

Safe Television: A miracle for God's glory

The first in a year-long series featuring unique, inspiring ministries being done around the world

Carlos Pardeiro



I HAVE FOUND THAT THOSE WHO SAY THEY HAVE BEEN "EMOTIONALLY HARMED BY PASTORAL COUNSEL" ATTRIBUTE IT NOT SO MUCH TO *WHAT* WAS COUNSELED BUT *HOW* THE ADVICE WAS GIVEN.

The July 2003 issue wasn't much help with the article "Train Up a Child."

It's a puzzling passage: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

However, I teach Hebrew and Greek at St. Sophia Seminary here, and looking at the original language shows that there is flagrant mistranslation.

Most translators don't understand the passage, which says "Train up a child in accordance with his [own] way."

Whose way? There's only one "his" in the verse: the child. In other words, if you "train" a child by letting it choose its own way, when it grows up nothing will improve. It will be the same self-willed, lost sinner it was conceived and born as, but now it will have adult appetites and adult strength. . .

If you don't teach your children the word of God, diligently, early, and often, you have only yourself to blame for what they become.

—Roger Kovaciny, professor, Ternopil, Ukraine

I am a hospital chaplain and enjoyed very much two articles in the July [2003] issue: "Ministry to People Facing Life-Threatening Illness" and "Understanding Grief: A Pastor's Primer."

—Paul Walker, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Another fine issue (September 2003) has been thoroughly read, enjoyed, and discussed by me and some of my . . . pastor friends in my

area. I want to particularly commend your publication of Dr. John Wong's article "Ethics for Twenty-First-Century Clergy." While we all studied ethics as part of our ministerial training, there has all too often been a disconnect between the ethics of the classroom and the real world, where flesh-and-blood people struggle with heart-wrenching situations far removed from the dispassionate discussions of the seminary lecture hall.

Wong has provided practical counsel and a workable, holistic schema with his triangle of Christian norms/situational concerns/persona. I particularly found helpful his statement that a pastor comes "to the ethical decision scene fully realizing his or her brokenness and ethical limitation." He is correct that that sort of "humility tends to deliver one from the trap of ethical arrogance . . ." I have found that those who say they have been "emotionally harmed by pastoral counsel" attribute it not so much to *what* was counseled but *how* the advice was given. One's authority rests in the biblical basis for the counsel, not in a "paternalistic manner" of delivery. Much *mahalo* (Hawaiian for "thanks") to Dr. Wong for a helpful ethical discussion.

—David Pendleton, state representative, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Thank you for the article by Derek J. Morris on "Unleashing the Congregation's Creativity." I found it fascinating. For small churches, I found

the comment that Stott made of recruiting volunteers from other churches very interesting. It is not clear whether he had in mind from other churches of the same denomination, or the bold idea from other churches in town that may differ from one's own; in either case, it would certainly add an extra dimension of creativity to the group. However, for small churches, where perhaps it would be difficult to get a group together, another possibility might be that the pastor could use his visits with his members as a source of interaction for an upcoming sermon or series. Certainly we all need fresh ideas for better and more meaningful and relevant sermons!

—John B. Oddie, pastor, Waldoboro, Maine.

I am compelled to write my thanks to T. Patrick Bradley for his article on "Domestic Violence: The Hidden Crime" in your November edition, and to *Ministry* for highlighting the needs of women who surround us as we fellowship in our churches. The needs are real, and the resources are appreciated. God bless!

—Tricia Treft, chaplain, La Grange Memorial Hospital, La Grange, Illinois.

I am just sending you this letter to thank you for the great job you're performing every day! May Jesus continue to strengthen you. I am a young pastor in West Africa receiving *Ministry* and I am really blessed. ■

—Grah Ezechias Edanh, West Africa.

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Reevaluating the pastoral identity

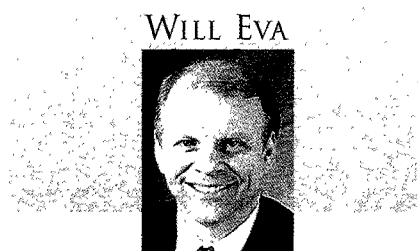
Like many who've been in ministry since the 1960s, I find myself repeating what I've heard similar-aged colleagues say: that ministry these days is simply quite different from what it was three or four decades ago.

Though we may not always have welcomed it, some change has been sorely needed and intentionally initiated. Other changes just seem to have been dumped in our laps. Independent of our needs and desires, they've shouldered their way in on the heels of alternative worldviews that science, materialistic technology, and communication have recently been offering the world with increasing persuasiveness.

These influences have negatively affected the way in which increasing numbers of people both in the world and in the Church, view the Church and its clergy. Most significantly, the negative expressions directed at ministers are impacting the way we clergy view ourselves and the essential nature of our work.

In the face of these pressures, we feel significant urges to redirect the negative images of us and our calling, and to do things to shore up our image and that of the church; things that we might not do were it not for the pressures we feel. To a large extent, it is the things we have done in response to these pressures that have gone far in changing some of the directions of the church and resetting the priorities of Christian ministry.

Following this line of thinking, many of us see validity in the following unfavorable assessment: "North American Christianity has become a consumerist menu of personal spiritual-care products intended to assure eternal life at minimal cost to the customer."¹ If we assume the basic accuracy of this description, we can readily see how it



would affect and even permeate the way pastors might act, react, and feel about their calling, and thus how the resulting ministry might strike the average person on the street, especially over the long haul.

Closely related to this, we must challenge ourselves to be much less concerned about the matter of our *popularity as pastors*, and much more focused on the matter of *respect for the pastor*. We have to honestly address the disturbing question of the value that is actually placed upon authentic pastoral ministry in the Church and in the world, and what part we clergy have actually played in influencing the worth people assign to Christian ministry here and now.

As we know, the desire to be admired and liked can cause us to become soft on the issues of truth, and over-conceding when it comes to the basic principles that guide a life authentically lived for Jesus Christ. Without realizing it we can evolve into glad-handers and back-slappers, rather than the strong, compassionate spiritual leaders people look to in their crises and in their conscious or unconscious search for God and truth.

How immensely we need a fresh, revolutionary, and deeply biblical vision of what the ministry of Christ was and is

actually all about, what we have actually been called to do and to be as ministers, and thus a reborn identity as Christ's shepherds, evangelists, prophets, priests, and teachers. And how immensely we need to respect ourselves and the ministry we are doing.

Beginning in this issue of *Ministry*, the six-part series by Miroslav Kis will call us to this every other month throughout 2004, even though it focuses primarily on the issue of the pastor and sexual ethics. Here's a sampling from this month's inaugural article:

"Can any one of us conjure up . . . the full scope and magnitude of the ministerial calling, our own calling? The kind of person the minister is called to be does not come naturally. . . . Is it possible for our human minds to ponder the intensity of energy all elements of a pastoral identity bring together as they converge and concentrate in the pastor's persona? . . . [Our work and identity is] staggering when combined with the awesomeness of the call to be 'holy to the Lord . . .' This might not be the usual way a pastor thinks of himself [or herself], but this seems to be the biblical outline of the pastoral character and task. No other profession, no other role requires so much investment on God's part in the human mind and heart."²

If you are like I am, this description of the minister's role and identity is deeply moving. It evokes in me deep desires for a kind of servanthood that will effectively live down the insipid ministry done on the "road more traveled." It calls me to live up to the essence of God's actual call to be a real Christian minister and practice real Christian ministry. ■

1 James V. Brownson, Inagrace T. Dietterich, Barry A. Harvey, Charles C. West, *StormFront, the Good News of God* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 2003), Back cover.
2 Miroslav Kis, *Sexual Misconduct in Ministry*. See following article, page 9.

Sexual misconduct in ministry: A biblical sketch of pastoral identity

Part 1

Editorial Note: This article is the first of a six-part series. The remaining five articles will be published in *Ministry's* March, May, July, September, and November issues. These articles will have been critiqued and/or formally refereed by groups of Professor Kis's colleagues in the General Conference Biblical Research Institute and at Andrews University.

One Sabbath morning, as we prepared for worship, the church elders asked me about the subject of my sermon for that day.

"Sex," I replied.

The elders looked at each other, then at me, then again at each other. Finally, one of them worried aloud, "We don't have a song in our hymnal to go with that topic."

"Too bad," I quipped. "Right in the heart of the Bible there is one."

The elders' immediate problem seemed to be finding a suitable song for my sermon. Their shock, of course, betrayed a larger issue: the subject itself.

I'll admit that they had several good reasons for their consternation. First, a sermon is a solemn public event, but my subject was sex, a matter of intimate privacy.

Second, the media and society in general speak, write, paint, film, photograph, and expose nudity and sex with surprising shamelessness. This is what the elders were concerned about. It was not that they were necessarily prudish about sexuality itself.

Adam and Eve were naked and yet they "were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:25). But there is a highly significant difference between "not being ashamed" of sex (e.g., in the presence of one's spouse, and in the privacy of one's home) and being "shameless" about it.

Sex was and is sacred. It lies at the

MIROSLAV KIS



heart of God's life-giving creative action. Central to its function is its God-given, virtually miraculous capacity to reproduce life. Thus it is not difficult to see that it is an insult to human dignity and even to human identity when we treat it with carelessness and profanity in the public square. The elders' unspoken question was, Will this visiting preacher use the pulpit to speak of sex shamelessly?

I assured the uneasy elders that I would not do that; but I also told them of the greater risk of, by default, leaving such sacred matters simply to the secular media of our culture, or worse, to the "Playboy" ideologies of our time, who purposefully omit any connection between human sexuality and God, the One who pronounced His crowning creative act, "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

During the last hymn the head elder leaned over to thank me for addressing this issue "in good taste."

In this, and in the essays that follow, we intend to discuss the subject of sexual sin in ministry and, of necessity, to look at sexuality and sex.

As we do this, it is crucial that we speak candidly and openly, yet with discretion and refinement. Every aspect of the issue and every person involved in or affected by adultery or fornication deserves our Christian love and respect, no matter on which side of the "guilty

line" they find themselves, and no matter how heinous their sin may be. This is the only way Jesus Himself would want us to proceed and the best way to avoid hypocrisy.

The series consists of six parts, featured every other month: (a) a sketch of pastoral ministry in the Bible; (b) sexuality, sex, and sexual sin in the Bible; (c) ministers' sexual sin in the Bible; (d) how sexual sin occurs; (e) the impact of a minister's adultery or fornication; and (f) the redemptive response of the church. The series will conclude with some recommendations.

Definitions

Because sexuality involves the entire human being (1 Cor. 6:18) and because several disciplines contribute to our understanding of it, it may be helpful to define some terms.

We choose to follow the example of many others by using the pronoun *he* when referring to the pastor who finds himself involved in sexual sin. The primary reason for this is that statistics show that male ministers are far more likely to find themselves in sexually related predicaments than their female counterparts,¹ and a secondary reason is to accommodate simplicity in writing on such a complex issue.

Libido. A term meaning psychic energy mostly sexual in nature. It functions as a motivating force, as a life instinct opposing the fear of death (Freud). It is "the totality of mental energy at the disposal of Eros, the instinct of love."²

Sublimation. A capacity to transform sexual drive by shifting it to other channels and forms of expression. Paul's sense of calling and his burden for the preaching of the gospel consumed all the energies of his being (1 Cor. 7:7). Arts, humanitarian work, monastic devotion, and caring for the needs of an

immediate family have proven capable of sublimating sexual drive in many otherwise healthy individuals.

The other woman refers to the sexual partner involved in adultery or fornication.

The other man refers to the husband of the other woman.

Playboy ideology. A view of sexuality characterized by: (a) the claim that sexuality is a physical/physiological function of the body with little significant connection to other dimensions of human being; (b) the insistence that the sexual act is the sole venue available for expressing one's sexuality; (c) the contention that imposing boundaries on sexual activities hamper the healthy development of human personality; and (d) the portrayal of women as sex objects useful for the satisfaction of sexual needs and fantasies.

Injured parties. God, members of the families, church, and community affected by an adulterous affair.

Pastoral identity

To begin with, in attempting to capture the biblical concept of ministry with human sexuality as a backdrop, we will pursue a two-pronged approach. First, we will survey some biblical images dealing with pastoral identity. Then we will examine the roles and functions inherent in that identity and required today by a biblical view of ministry.

Scripture uses several images for the pastor, each defining in its own unique way the ministry and the responsibility of clergy. We look at a few here.

Shepherd. Throughout the Bible God uses the image of a shepherd to convey His idea of the identity of a leader of His people. In moments of frustration with the corrupting influence of the priests and kings of Israel and Judah, God promises the coming of a Shepherd after His own heart (Isa. 40:11; Jer. 3:15; 31:10).

Jesus fulfills these prophetic words when He portrays Himself as *the*

Shepherd of the sheep (John 10:1-18). A good shepherd does not see himself in competition with the sheep, nor is his attitude towards them that of condescension. He respects his sheep's "sheepness"—their identity (verses 3, 4). If they need nurture it is not because they are inferior, but simply because they are sheep. If he leads, feeds, and waters them, if they are vulnerable and in need of protection from predators, if they get lost and cannot find their way back, it is because they are authentic and normal sheep.

The sheep are entitled to these services as long as they are his, and he cannot bear the thought of abandoning them to a thief or a butcher (verses 5-10). Between the Shepherd and His sheep there radiates a magnetic attraction of love and boundless trust instead of cold bureaucratic control, exploitative manipulation, or even sadistic coercion (Ezek. 34:1-31). The Good Shepherd loves His sheep enough to die

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for them (John 10:11, 17-18), and they know that very well (verse 5). There is a strong sense in which the Shepherd finds His identity in the identity of His sheep: He is the "Sheepman."

The apostle Peter urges church leaders to see themselves as under-shepherds—as shepherds who have a chief Shepherd over them. Jesus is the model they are invited to emulate (1 Peter 5:2-4). Even though they, too, need the shepherding ministry of Jesus, they are called to cultivate shepherdlike qualities of character toward their sheep. They must not cater to themselves at the expense of their sheep, nor should they see their role as a job or a money-making venture. The flock of God must benefit from the highest standard of selfless ministry, a standard of which hirelings are incapable.³

Priest. The image of a priest stands for an uncommon quality of a being: a holy being. The Hebrew word for "holy," *qds*, means "separate," "cut off." Imagine the awe with which Aaron and his sons participated, as Moses carried out God's instructions in the ceremony of ordination. The bodily washings, the garments, the ephod, the Urim and Thummim, the turban, the holy golden crown, the golden plate inscribed "Holy to the Lord," the sacrifices. . . . (Lev. 8:1-36). How Aaron's totally new self-concept, the *qds* identity, must have grown while his personal ego dwindled! How his hands and voice must have trembled as he made the first steps of his awesome ministry for God's people in the tabernacle!

Granted the pastoral role and function in the church cannot be identified completely with the Old Testament priesthood, yet Paul's instruction to Timothy and Titus in regard to the high qualities of character and the identity of a Christian minister do not in any way lag behind the fundamental standards of the Old Testament priest (1 Tim. 4:11, 12; 6:11, 12).

"For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of

himself, upright, *holy*, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:7-9, RSV, italics supplied).

Teacher. Biblical priests and leaders saw themselves as teachers (Lev. 10:10, 11). They submitted to a rigorous training, became well versed in the

to this post coveted such a position.

A prophet realized that the calling was an awesome privilege, an irresistible task, and a heavy burden (Jer. 20:7-12). When prophets spoke, God spoke through them (Exod. 4:14-17).

Ministers of the gospel share in a great measure a similar self-concept. Like the prophets of old, pastors are watchmen on the walls of Zion (Isa.

HE OR SHE IS GIVEN ACCESS TO THE UGLIEST
AND THE PRETTIEST SCENES, THE WORST
AND THE BEST LANGUAGES, THE MOST SHOCKING
AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SECRETS. THIS IS WHAT A
PASTOR IS ALL ABOUT.

knowledge of truth, in communicating that knowledge, and in forming the lives of God's people (Deut. 17:8-13). When they spoke they taught with the authority of an expert. Whether their teachings were truth or error, they had a strong grip on their hearers' thoughts and actions.

Jesus Himself accepted the powerful title of Rabbi (John 13:13) and people could depend on Him for protection against ignorance and falsehood. Paul required of ministers the ability to teach (2 Tim. 2:24) and repeatedly urged them to instruct those under their charge in sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:11; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:5; Titus 1:9).

Prophet. Prophets are those called to speak *before* the people and *for* God. The choice of a particular person does not seem to be based on gender, ethnicity, socio-economic, or educational status. The biblical prophet had the sense of being taken (Amos 7:15), of being surprised by God, almost as if he had been abducted by Him. Jeremiah was "recruited" with significant arm-twisting (Jer. 1:4-10), and Moses gave in only after an extensive persuasion (Exod. 3:1-4:17). No one who has been called

62:6; 1 Peter 5:2), soldiers who fight for their charges (2 Tim. 2:3), and men and women of God, committed to Him first and foremost (2 Kings 4:8-17; 1 Tim. 6:11).

Biblical antecedents to ministerial roles

God leads His people. He who knows our human nature, who understands the context in which we live, and who anticipates the dangers we face, calls the individuals to whom He gives various tasks and duties. The image of a *shepherd* anticipates a need for someone who leads, who knows the way, and who will inspire others to follow (Ps. 23).

This introduces the incredible opportunity for ministers to nurture and care for the whole person. The pastor is a person who participates in all important events in a member's life. He hears the confessions of the most confidential nature. He or she is given access to the ugliest and the prettiest scenes, the worst and the best languages, the most shocking and the most beautiful secrets. This is what a pastor is all about. He is a churchman in the highest sense. He knows what to do with all the trash and

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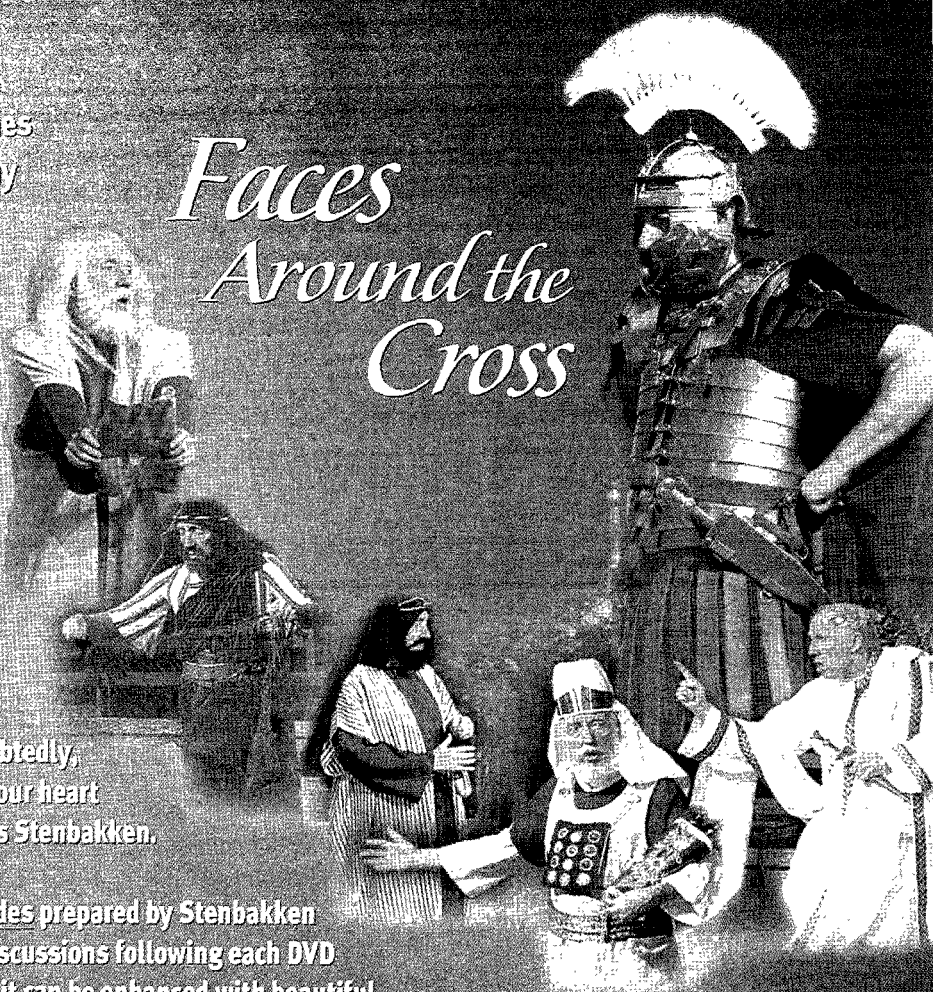
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The *priestly* role projects a need of a model of holiness and highest virtue. Paul urges Timothy to “set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12, RSV). The biblical concept of holiness is made visible in a minister’s way of life: the *qds* lifestyle.

This way of life incorporates such concerns as a passion for justice and truth, along with ethically responsible conduct. “It involves reflecting in what we *do*, the Christian moral vision by which we understand who we *are*. Righteousness is the human expression of holiness embodying a vision rooted in moral perspective.”⁴

The church needs this kind of people as intercessors and reconcilers between them and God, and as mediators between them and their neighbors. The pastor will lead his flock, because his sheep will follow. But unless he is a winning *example of commitment to holiness and virtue*, he may easily lead his flock astray.

As a *teacher*, the minister of the gospel impacts the minds and thinking processes of his flock. It is hard to know how much (or how little) he knows, nor how much (or how little) he actually lives what he teaches. The power and authority of expertise provide the minister with the necessary credibility so sorely needed to inspire people to take the risks which growth in grace and maturity demand. However, authority combined with this credibility can serve as a cover under which a destructive evil can flourish.

A minister’s *prophetic* role is the most challenging of all. It rests on all of the above characteristics with the additional difference of capital importance: the reality of the divine calling. A divine vocation reaches men and women in all walks of life and charges them with superhuman tasks. Ministers are watchmen upon the walls of Zion (Isa. 62:6, 7; Ezek. 33:1-9).

Ministers are so positioned in order that with one glance they can see inside and outside the walls. From their location they can see far and wide. This view enables them to discern trends and movements so they can sound an alarm, engage in the preparation for a defense, and assure the complete security of the church.

Additionally, it is of vital importance that the members of Christ’s body stay in constant and clear communication with the Head of the Church (2 Tim. 4:2). In their prophetic role, pastors serve as God’s spokespersons. They cannot remain silent. They speak when God deems it right whether this be “in season or out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2).

Jeremiah struggles with this. “If I say, ‘I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,’ there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot” (Jer. 20:9, RSV). Paul exclaims, “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16, RSV).

Can any one of us conjure up even the slightest notion of the full scope and magnitude of the ministerial calling, our own ministerial calling? The kind of person the minister is called to be does not come naturally. “‘For to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.’ Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, ‘Behold, I have put my words in your mouth’” (Jer. 1:7-9, RSV).

Is it possible for our human minds to ponder the intensity of energy all these elements of a pastoral identity bring together as they converge and concentrate in the pastor’s persona? The

enormous resources for the care and guidance that shepherds are called to give are staggering when combined with the awesomeness of the call to be “holy unto the Lord,” the intensity of teaching authority, the prophetic freedom, and responsibility to speak when and what God places in the heart and the mind of His instrument.

This might not be the usual way a pastor thinks of himself, but this seems to be the biblical outline of the pastoral character and task. No other profession, no other role requires so much investment on God’s part in the human mind and heart. Every fiber of the minister’s body, every pulsation of his energy, every moment of his time must be God’s, if His agenda is to be followed. The pastor is God’s ambassador, the man of God.

But this must not mean the neglect of self, of one’s marriage, one’s home, and family. On the very contrary this means that a minister must cultivate himself as one tends a flower garden. He must protect himself as one watches carefully over a unique and priceless instrument. He must listen to his body, to his mind, to the dynamics within his marriage, to his emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

The more valuable he is to God and His people, the more interesting and strategic a target he is for the devil and his devices. Temptations will most certainly take the form of “nurturing” the pastor, “catering” to his needs, “providing” for greater efficiency when it comes to his lofty tasks. Only intimate communion with God, his Shepherd, his Priest, his Teacher, and his Lord, only power of divine proportions can keep him safe in His Majesty’s service. ■

Miroslav M. Kis, Ph.D., professor of ethics at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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Bible flameout: A pastor has a falling-out with his Bible

Jon Christian

As a boy I was a firm believer in the old wives' tale claiming that if you put a white pebble under your tongue in a long foot race, you greatly increase your stamina. As the pebble slicks down and warms up, so the legend goes, it takes away the stitch in your side and gives you your second wind.

Now, as a gospel minister at the peak of my career, and with a reputation for good exegetical preaching, I was desperately searching for such a pebble. How could I go on? I had run out of things to preach, I felt I could not produce even one more sermon. In fact, overnight I had become a homiletical mute.

The most disturbing symptom of my problem was a radical, deep-rooted, indifference toward the Scriptures. Months had gone by and I had not so much as touched my Bible. I did not understand this strange phenomenon that hit me, other than to grasp the fact that like the disciples I was in a Gethsemane stupor, unable to watch with Him even one brief hour.

Someone precious to me was being ignored while I was unable to open my eyes. How could I possibly keep preaching? How could I possibly give spiritual leadership to my congregation? How could I find life again?

You'll be okay, Hon

"You'll be okay, Hon," my wife said empathetically, "It's just that you know the Bible so well that you've gotten a bit bored with it.

You'll get interested again." My initial reaction to her remark was to move the decimal point one space to the left so as to find a more realistic assessment of affairs, because I have come to understand her remarkable capacity to put a positive construction on all things negative.

On second thought, however, I knew she had a point of sorts. I was very familiar with the Scriptures. I knew the theme of every book in the canon, even the Minor Prophets. The four Gospels were not one big mish-mash flowing together as one indistinguishable narrative to me. I knew how the Gospel writers use the same story to make different points. I could walk you through most of the New Testament chapter by chapter by memory.

I knew the stories in the Bible scrambled, poached, and over easy. I had unraveled Paul's arguments one strand at a time down from his first "since" to his last "therefore," and a few years ago I had read the entire New Testament in Greek, with relative ease and without aids, even though I must admit I got bogged down in Hebrews and skipped ahead.

My wife was right, I knew the Bible, and I was bored with it; but not because I knew it. Simple familiarity had not bred contempt. Other dynamics were at play.

Something subtler than mere comprehension of the Scriptures was causing my problem. This was more than the ho-hum-pass-the-potato-chips experience that accompanies television reruns and bores you out of your wits.

The best way to describe it is to say I had unwittingly assumed a position of dominance over the Scriptures.

It is a simple fact that we seek to control what we master intellectually. My mind had done its hard work and won; it had gotten the mastery. I was in charge of the materials. The knower had become more powerful than the known.

I now often sat in judgment of the Word and it seldom sat in judgment of me. Such intellectual control deprives the Bible of its power to move the heart. It is I believe, one way of snacking on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil between meals. A Scripture not allowed to evaluate, neither transforms nor invigorates the soul, and mine was dying, but how to solve the matter I did not know.

I felt anxious about the Bible

Believe it or not, I still prayed and often,

Jon Christian is a pseudonym.

but my prayers were rapidly becoming more desperate and lonely. "Lord, help me!" I cried in the sleepless night, but no help was forthcoming.

It is my practice to sort myself out by prayer in the safety of the presence of God. Prayer is, among other things, a form of self-analysis, a type of therapy for me. I have found real health on my knees. In the midst of such a session something that should have been very obvious to me surfaced to awareness, namely, I felt anxious about the Scriptures!

I realized to my utter dismay that for years an aversive conditioning against the Bible had been going on within me. Jesus would probably have come directly to the point and said, "Jon, the weeds have grown up around your soul and have choked you to death." That notion rang an inner bell, and a light came on for me.

Years of controversy over Scriptural issues had taken their toll. I realized I was sick and tired of preaching grace and having the Neanderthal right hear only that I was preaching license to sin. I was sick and tired of having every sermon I gave on justification perceived as an attack on the law. I was sick and tired of one-eyed evangelicals who saw me as selling out the Gospel whenever I preached on sanctification. In my experience, the Scriptures had become a hornet's nest.

What was I to do with myself?

Apart from this pressure from "out there" there was a greater pressure from "in here." I had seriously overestimated my capacity for ambiguity of thought. A scholar has the capacity to hold things in tension. It is, I knew, the mark of a mature mind to hold a question in suspense, but the suspense was killing me.

The issues surrounding the atonement, creation, miracles, the nature of reality, and the wrath of God, to name but a few, remained an enormous chunk of unfinished business within me, and conditioned me against the Bible without my being aware of it.

The small child who holds a white bunny in the presence a sudden loud noise, of which it is instinctively afraid, becomes afraid of the bunny, *and* of all things white, *and* of all things soft. So, without any conscious decision on my part, I had become anxious about the Bible, preaching, and the whole Christian enterprise. What was I to do about myself?

Grace continues to amaze. It seems that God understood my scriptural and homiletical flameout and took the initiative to help me. He did so by presenting me with a serendipitous encounter at the point of Scripture.

I was sitting at the coffee table in our living room in the morning casually trying to make a decision. Before me lay three books, they were a magnificent book of art, an intriguing tome on mythology, and the Bible. Which one should I read, art or Greek mythology?

I reached for the heavy art book, but had to remove the Bible in order to get to it. As I gently lifted the Bible my hands instinctively opened it. It fell open to Luke's gospel, which is the place to which over the years my Bible has broken in. By that I mean a used Bible is like an old baseball glove—it gets broken in. In the case of the glove, it softens and breaks in to fit the owner's hand. In the case of the Bible, it breaks in to fit the owner's heart. Luke was therefore the most likely place to which my Bible would open. I began to read from the beginning.

First came the prologue to Theophilus. Yes, yes, been there, read that. Then, of course, the extended nativity narrative starting with the birth of John the Baptist followed the prologue. Nothing fresh here either.

I began to rapidly scan the story of Zachariah in the Temple but in my haste, I ran right in to a divine trap set for scriptural and homiletical flameouts like me. I slowed right down for the story addressed my existential situation and deeply moved me.

Coming to understand

Here was a man who had rotated

through the schedule in God's house for years. I could identify with that. On this rotation, however, the routine was broken because he was elected by the drawing of lots to burn the incense next to the altar. I too have been called for special duty. The story drew me in . . .

Zachariah and his wife had both prayed that she would conceive and bear a son, but he did not believe it could ever happen because of her age. I liked this man's skepticism. Suddenly the angel Gabriel appeared at the right side of the altar and declared that their request was to be granted, Elizabeth would give birth to a wonderful boy and they were to call him John (which means God is gracious).

"How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years," he objected.

"I am Gabriel," the angel replied, "I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not be able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

These words struck me with percussive force.

I felt at a depth that God had spoken to me. This shoe fitted my ugly foot perfectly. I understood that my preaching paralysis, my muteness had the same root cause as Zachariah's, namely, a refusal to accept the authority of a Word from God on its own merits, and an insistence that what God has said must be empirically verified before it can be believed.

I also understood that my reluctance to continue preaching grace because it is often controversial was a sin plain and simple and that the Spirit would not empower any compromise on grace. I must boldly name my child John, i.e., God is gracious, and raise him for God.

Although this was a word of sharp rebuke to me, it did not condemn, for
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Christ's ministry in heaven

Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Faith #23: "There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2,300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)"

From Exodus 25:8 to Revelation 11:19 Scripture is never far from the theme of the sanctuary and the verities implied in its symbolisms. From God's first commission, "Let them make Me a sanctuary," to John's final vision of

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the Most Holy Place in heaven, everything in the story of salvation finds its soul in the Christocentric symbols of the sanctuary and the truths it teaches.

Look at how much of the first five books of the Bible are tied in directly, or indirectly, to the wilderness tabernacle. See how much of Israel's Promised Land history, including the reigns of David and Solomon and the kings that followed, is framed in the context of the Jerusalem temple. After the Babylonian exile, it's hard to miss the fact that the focus was upon the temple, upon rebuilding it and reinstating its worship there. From the Exodus onward, little Old Testament salvation history makes complete sense apart from the sanctuary service.

Even in the New Testament, the emphasis continues. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah, a priest, in the temple and told him of the birth of John (Luke 1). John's cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), would be meaningless unless understood in the background and theology of the sanctuary.

Both in the beginning (John 2:12-22) of His earthly ministry and at the end (Matt. 21:12), Jesus focused on the earthly sanctuary. He even referred to Himself as the Temple (John 2:22). His sacrificial death at the time of Passover (John 19:14), along with the way Paul equates His death with the Passover

lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), can be understood only in terms of the sanctuary and its services, a point emphasized by the torn veil between the Holy and Most Holy Place at the time of Jesus' last earthly breath (Mark 15:38).

And then there's the book of Hebrews, which summarizes its first seven chapters like this: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:1-5). Of the biblical books, Hebrews alone establishes the inseparable link between Jesus and the sanctuary.

Yet, along with Hebrews, recent scholarship has shown that the book of Revelation was structured around the sanctuary. "It's not an overstatement to conclude that the final book of the New Testament gathers all the major threads of Old Testament sanctuary typology and weaves them into an intricate and beautiful tapestry to form the backdrop for the entire book."

So Seventh-day Adventists believe they're on solid biblical ground when it comes to "the sanctuary message."

The sanctuary and judgment

Of course, crucial to Seventh-day Adventist theology is the sanctuary

message as it relates to eschatological judgment (Rev. 14:6, 7). This is the portion of Adventist sanctuary teaching that comes under the severest criticism, despite the biblical evidence affirmed by scholars in many denominations.

A quick survey of the many biblical texts regarding judgment reveals some sort of final judgment process near the end of time (Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; Dan. 7:24-27). This judgment is often directly associated with the Second Coming (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12). Among those judged are the followers of Christ (Matt. 7:21-23; 22:1-13; 1 Peter 4:17; Heb. 10:30); a crucial element involved in this final reckoning is our relationship with Jesus as revealed through our works of obedience (Matt. 16:27; 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; Eccles. 12:13, 14; Rev. 20:12).

In this judgment process only two outcomes are presented: the consequences for those who inherit the kingdom of God prepared for them "from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34) versus those who go into "everlasting punishment" (verse 46). The Bible also portrays a judgment *prior* to the execution of any sentence or projected outcome (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 22:1-13; 25:31-46; Rev. 22:12). This is a concept that carries legitimate weight. For after all, how can a sentence be carried out before a legitimate judgment has assessed a given case?

Peel away the rhetoric, and with the exception of some details, such as timing, many Christians believe in a judgment or judgments not very different from the one Seventh-day Adventists believe in.

Adventists, however, have framed the judgment in the context of the sanctuary, which is how it should be framed because the sanctuary teaches the judgment as part of the gospel—the only way it should be taught.

Imagine if you were a Jew living in ancient Israel during their 40 years in the wilderness. You would learn about the plan for your salvation from the sanctuary, where the gospel was presented to Israel in symbols and types. Now suppose your understanding of that plan of

salvation was limited only to the death of the animal. If nothing else were explained to you—such as the ministry of the priests and the blood of the slain animals in the sanctuary—would you not have a more limited understanding of the plan of salvation than someone who understood not only the death of the animal but the ministry in the tabernacle with that animal's blood, and particularly the special ministry on the Day of Atonement, the day of judgment?

Who would have a better grasp of salvation, the one whose focus, knowledge, and interest ended with the

these two actions—the death of the sacrificial animal, and the ministry of the high priest in the Second Apartment of the sanctuary—somehow opposed to one another or incongruous? Of course not. As two parts of the whole, both were crucial aspects of the same thing: the plan of salvation as a whole.

Thus, if someone's understanding of what happened with the death of the animal somehow was in tension or in contradiction with that person's understanding of the Second Apartment ministry, then that person misunderstood either the death of the animal, the min-

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death of the animal (symbolic of the Cross), or the one whose understanding encompassed not only that, but the entire sanctuary ritual, starting with the death of the animals and culminating with the Day of Atonement?

The answer is obvious.

In the same way, those whose understanding of the plan of salvation is limited only to the Cross, without all that happens afterward, including the judgment, have by the nature of things a limited view of what was accomplished on the cross. One cannot fully understand the death of the animal without understanding the service that followed it; in the same way, one cannot fully understand the Cross without understanding the ministry that follows it, and that includes the judgment, as typified by the Day of Atonement ritual.

Was there any tension, much less contradiction, between the death of the animals (which symbolized the Cross) and the ministry of the high priest in the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (which symbolized the judgment, and its ultimate purpose)? Were

istry in the Second Apartment, or both. All these actions, instituted by God, cannot be in opposition to one another. If opposition or contradiction arises, the problem is not in the rituals but in a person's understanding of those rituals.

Likewise, if a person's understanding of the Cross (symbolized by the death of the animal) is somehow in tension or in contradiction with their understanding of the pre-Advent judgment (symbolized by the Second Apartment ministry), then that person misunderstands either the Cross, the judgment, or both. These things, instituted by God, cannot be in opposition. If opposition or contradiction arises, the problem is not in either the Cross or the judgment but in a person's misunderstanding of these events. Each typical event simply illustrates a different aspect of the whole.

The pre-Advent judgment and the gospel

That's why the pre-Advent judgment, the antitypical day of atonement, must be unpacked against the background of the gospel, because that's

what the sanctuary model typifies. On the typical Day of Atonement, the high priest never went into the Most Holy Place (symbolic of the judgment) without blood, because it was the Day of Atonement, and only blood atones for sin. In Leviticus 16 the key element is blood. Therefore, it is this key element that is stressed repeatedly. After all, it is blood—not law—that cleanses from sin and that therefore makes atonement between human beings and God.

The truth is, however, that many Adventists when being taught the pre-Advent judgment, have been taken into the Most Holy Place without blood. This leads to confusion and serious spiritual struggle. In the typical sanctuary, even though the law was in the ark within the Most Holy Place and was a crucial part of the ministry of God in the life of Israel, the law condemns rather than pardons. Atonement is about pardon, not condemnation. The law itself does not have any pardoning, atoning role; it has no power to save, no power to atone, no power to pardon, no power to enable people to obey any more than staring into a mirror can make an ugly face pretty. That is the role of the blood of the Sacrifice.

Thus, the message of the sanctuary is this: Christ and His righteousness, symbolized by the ceremonial blood shed on the Day of Atonement and in other sacrificial settings, is what gets us through the judgment. Without it, all of us would be lost, for none of us, no matter our works, have the quality of righteousness needed to stand before a holy God.

The sanctuary services teach us that unless we are clothed in a perfect righteousness that none of us ourselves possess or could ever earn (no matter how sincerely we try, even through the imparted power of the Holy Spirit), we would have to stand in our own works, our own righteousness—something that would never pass God's all-seeing eye.

At the center of the message of the pre-Advent judgment, which Adventists believe began in 1844 (on the basis of a careful interpretation of sanctuary related passages such as Daniel 8:14) is

that no one needs to stand in his or her own righteousness. We can stand in the righteousness of Jesus. This righteousness covers us the moment we, through surrender of ourselves to Christ, claim it for ourselves. It stays with us (though not unconditionally) right through the judgment. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). No condemnation, not now, and certainly not in the judgment. After all, what good would being covered by that righteousness do any us if we did not possess it when we needed it most?

The parable of the wedding garment

Perhaps the clearest example of Christ's righteousness covering us in judgment comes from the parable of the wedding feast. After those who were first called rejected the invitation, the servants went out into the highways, and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:11-13).

What determined whether the man was allowed to stay at the feast, or had to leave? The garment that the owner gave to the guests (a custom in that time and place). The offending guest came to the wedding, but he rejected what was offered him. What is that garment, other than the righteousness of Christ? "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. 61:10, emphasis supplied). The

guest, heeding the invitation but not the essential condition of that invitation, refused what the owner offered him.

It is important to note that the parable says that both good and the bad came to the feast. It doesn't classify the man without the garment as good or bad, that is, in and of himself. In one sense, in His parable, Jesus draws no qualitative distinction between those who come to the wedding feast: The only demarcating factor at the wedding feast, and thus before God in judgment, is whether or not we come dressed in the garment supplied for the occasion. What the guest needed at the wedding is the same thing we need in the judgment: something covering us. Otherwise we will be cast out where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. That covering, symbolized by the garment in the parable, is the righteousness of Jesus, credited to His followers by faith, and it is their only hope in the judgment.

Judgment and works

No one, though, who takes the Bible seriously can avoid the central teaching of a judgment that is set on the basis of works. Any attempt to understand the judgment without works denies a prime biblical teaching. Yet a crucial distinction must be made: Being judged by works doesn't mean being saved by them, a fact that many easily misunderstand.

How does this work? A professed follower's life comes up before God in judgment: every work, every secret thing, every idle word, comes into review (Matt. 12:36; Eccles. 3:17; 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12; Ps. 135:14; Heb. 10:30). Before such a scrutiny who could stand? No one (Rom. 3:10, 23; Gal. 3:22; 1 Tim. 1:15).

However, for the true followers of Christ, Jesus stands as their Advocate, their Representative, their Intercessor in heaven (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 6:20; 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1). And though they have nothing in and of themselves to give them merit before God, though they have no works that are good enough to justify them before the Lord, their lives—however faulty, however defective—nevertheless reveal true repentance,

obedience, loyalty, and faith (James 2:14-20; 1 John 4:20; 5:3; John 14:15; Matt. 7:24-27). How they have treated others, the poor, the needy, those in prison; how they forgave as they were forgiven; the words they spoke, the deeds they did, their obedience (Matt. 7:2; 12:36, 37; 18:23-35; 25:31-46) . . . while these things could never justify them before God, while they could never answer the demands of a broken law, they reveal those who have accepted Christ as their Substitute—and His righteousness alone, which covers them like a garment, gets them through the judgment (1 John 2:1; Matt. 22:1-14; Zech. 3:1-5; Lev. 16; Rom. 8:1, 34; Heb. 9:24).

"But how do I know," someone might ask, "if I will have the quality and quantity of works that will actually reveal that I have saving faith?" However logical, that's a wrongly premised question. It reflects the attitude of those who said, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:22), or of the Pharisee, who said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:11, 12).

Instead, consistent with the assumption and the biblical assessment that we do not have sufficient good work to present to God now or in any eschatological judgment, we must lean only on the merits of Jesus, who died for our sins and whose perfect life and works are credited to us by faith. He is our only hope of salvation, now and in the judgment.

It is as Ellen White expressed it: "But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own."² The futility of looking at our works as a reason for God to save us should cause us instead to lean

totally on the mercy and merits of Christ. Then, out of love and thankfulness for the assurance of salvation that's ours through Christ, we serve Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and body, a service that's expressed in works. How else could it be?

The judgment, then, is simply the opportunity for a climactic application of the gospel to be made in our lives. It's Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement, consummated in our behalf. The judgment apart from the gospel is like Leviticus 16 without blood: All it leads to is death, an obviously wrong denouement.

Epilogue

In one of his most famous poems, Alexander Pope wrote:

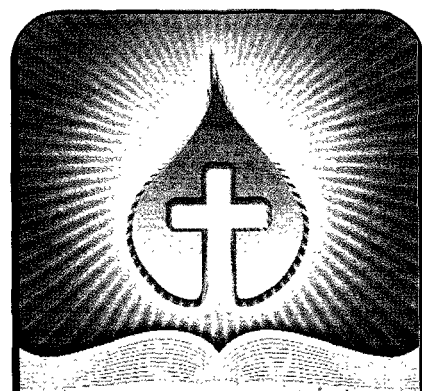
"So man, who here seems principle alone, Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown, Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal; 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole."³

It's true, we do see only a part, and not the whole. But, on the backdrop of the sanctuary, a model of the plan of salvation, God has revealed to us the greatest part of the whole: Jesus Christ's death and high priestly ministry in heaven in our behalf. And, for us—sinners needing grace, now and in the pre-Advent judgment—this partial revelation is more than enough, at least for the moment: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). ■

Editorial Note: *This article is the first of two in our series on the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. Another will appear as a part of this series in the October 2004 issue of Ministry.*

Clifford Goldstein is the editor of the Adult Bible Study Guide. He has authored 17 books.

- 1 Dick Davidson, "Sanctuary Typology," in Frank Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Revelation—Book One* (Silver Spring, Md: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 126.
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ACTS 100

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PRAYER: OFFENSIVE

Despite the Bible's instruction to pray without ceasing, heaven does not honor every prayer.

For example, some people attempt to use prayer as a heavenly vending machine to dispense their desire of that moment.

Others abuse prayer to cross boundaries of propriety and ethics or to gossip by requests for specific issues in the life of others under the guise of spiritual concern.

Political positions can be staked out using the pretense of seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Rote repetition without a repentant relationship can rob the meaning of even our Lord's model prayer.

Prayer? Yes.

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The purchase

Acts 8:26-40: A case study in sermon introduction

John McVay

One sermon introduction strategy that I enjoy is to imagine scenes implied but not described in detail in the biblical text. I find that such introductions can effectively catch the attention of the listeners and draw them into the passage. Though longer than most introductions, this type introduces the passage itself and allows direct comment on the text to be more compact. Recently, I preached a sermon on the story of the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:26-40). What follows is the introduction that I used. I offer it as encouragement to pastors to consider beginning a sermon in this style.

The shop's quarters are a bit cramped, but the bookshop is elegant in its own right. And its sign is impressive: "The Authorized Temple Bookshop." Inside, most shelves are neatly stacked with scrolls. Some, though, have become a bit disorganized, with scrolls tucked in haphazardly atop others. A few of the shelves have evaded the feather duster for a month or two.

The shop is doing its usual brisk business as pilgrims sweep into the store. The last came seeking an Arabian-stallion of a manuscript at a broken-down-donkey of a price. The unsuccessful haggling leaves uneasiness in the room.

At just that moment, the atmosphere shifts dramatically. Into the bookshop steps an exotic figure—a man from the ends of the earth, with beautiful, glistening, black skin. Clothed in folds upon folds of colorful fabric,

he bustles, more than enters into the room. His colorful garb is stamped with geometric patterns and dyed in the bright colors of the upper Nile region.

Even in this place—a tourist-oriented business in a very cosmopolitan city—such a customer is unusual. The bookstore staff are immediately attentive. This exotic gentleman steps up to the counter. His visage betrays a steely-eyed look of efficiency and intelligence. Using a Greek that bears the marks of a language institute in Alexandria, he asks, "What is the most important manuscript you sell?"

The question incites hushed conversation among the staff. Finally, the proprietor addresses the customer: "Stranger, I perceive that you are a visitor from the kingdom of Meroë.¹ It is our privilege to serve such an esteemed guest. You understand, I am sure, that this is the official bookshop of the temple, the temple of the Living God. We do not traffic in trivia. We sell no trite volumes here. But if you press me with your question, I—speaking only for myself, you understand—I would have to say that it is The Scroll of Isaiah, Isaiah the prophet."

"Could I see the copies of this scroll of the prophet Isaiah that you offer for sale? I would like to see them in the Greek language."

For a few moments, the bookshop staff stir about the room, picking out a scroll here and another there. They begin to line them up on the counter from the least costly to the most expensive. Given the obvious importance of the visitor, they do not include the cheaper examples of their line. Now they are in place, some ten manuscripts in a variety of materials—papyrus, parchment, vellum.

The scribal hands that have written the scrolls vary as well. The less expensive scrolls are composed by less-experienced scribes. The letters are well formed, but not perfectly and artistically drawn. Moving to the more expensive manuscripts, the fine hands of the best scribes are in view. The most expensive manuscript of all—on the finest and smoothest vellum—is composed by a noted artist-scribe and decorated in gilt letters. A masterpiece. A work of art.

With the manuscripts arranged, the proprietor calls the attention of his guest to the display and begins to describe the manuscripts, his descriptions punctuated by sounds of assent from the staff. Of course, merchant that he is, he accents the finest of the manu-



John McVay, Ph.D.,
is the dean of the
Seventh-day
Adventist
Theological
Seminary, Andrews
University, Berrien
Springs, Michigan.

scripts. "This manuscript is truly a work of art, a genuine treasure worthy of the state library of a kingdom as notable as your own."

When the descriptions have ended, the proprietor waits for his customer to point to a manuscript and ask, "That one—how much is it?" Instead, the stranger looks up from the manuscripts and requests, "Would it be possible to leave these on display for the next 15 minutes or so? My master would like to see them."

The proprietor nods his assent. "Of course, 15 minutes."

Fourteen and a half minutes later, through the door rushes another man, this time with two well-dressed attendants. Taller than the last, his clothing is of even brighter colors, the geometric patterns still more intricate. He steps to the counter as his attendants stand two or three respectful paces behind.

"My servant tells me that you have identified the most important manuscript sold in this shop. And here on this counter are your best examples of it . . . The Scroll of Isaiah, I believe it is called. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"And is it in fact the most important manuscript sold here?"

"Well, sir, as I expressed to your servant, we sell many important scrolls."

"But is this the most important?"

"Sir, in my opinion, it is."

The guest begins at the left side of the display and waves off the first four examples. Bookshop attendants scramble to remove the rejected manuscripts and to rearrange the remaining scrolls, the half dozen most beautiful and costly examples of The Scroll of Isaiah.

The guest now asks, "Could you leave this display—this fine exhibit of copies of The Scroll of Isaiah the Prophet—on view for just ten more minutes? My master would like to see them."

"Oh, yes, sir. We certainly can."

As the period expires, a large entourage appears. Servants hold the door and bow low as a regal figure steps into the room, followed by courtiers and servants. Armed guards are posted outside the door. A troop of cavalry waits in the street. In the space of a few seconds the bookshop becomes a study in flattery, each servant and courtesan trying to outdo the others in paying homage to the central figure.

The object of their respect is a rather short man, though he is utterly elegant. Each step and gesture is an exhibit of refinement. There is a cheerful, quiet look of authority in his eye. At his right hand is the tall, distinguished man who had entered the bookstore a few minutes before. It is he who introduces the proprietor and the fine copies of The Scroll of Isaiah the Prophet.

The elegant guest—who, it is now obvious, is the esteemed Minister of Finance of the great and wealthy Kingdom of Meroë—nods toward the manuscript and asks an unnecessary question, "May I?" The proprietor quickly grants his assent, "Why, yes, of course, please, enjoy."

A servant steps forward with a small washbasin and a towel. The high official of the Kandake, the Queen Mother of the Kingdom of Meroë, cleanses his already purified hands, dries them, and begins to handle the manuscript. The finance minister examines the manuscript for some time, finally choosing the finest, most expensive copy.

He fixes his gaze on the proprietor and asks, "You are certain that this is the finest manuscript available of The Scroll of Isaiah?"

"Indeed, your honor, it is. And if I might say so, it would prove a worthy addition to the state library of your kingdom."

The official continues his examina-

tion and the proprietor, somewhat blunderingly, adds: "Sir, honored guest, you must understand that this scroll represents the dedicated work of one of the most able scribes of the land for a minimum of three months of his life. It is the very life blood of . . ."

The guest waves a dismissive hand and the proprietor understands—his speech is over.

"How much is the scroll?"

There is no hint of barter in the question. Instead, it is a paraphrase for, "Name your price. And make it a fair one."

The merchant does so. "Sir, this splendid Greek manuscript is on sale today, for you, for \$19,999."

The guest turns toward one of his entourage and nods. The servant steps forward and pulls from the folds of his garment a bulging bag, opens the top, and begins to count out onto the countertop, some \$20,000 in gold coin. The task complete, he closes the bag, secrets it in his garments, and steps back into the group.

The proprietor, in turn, nods to his staff and they carefully prepare, roll, and wrap the manuscript. The proprietor and the esteemed guest from the distant kingdom bow slightly to each other, a sign of respect, a signal that they have concurred on the deal just concluded.

Trusted members of the visiting party reach forward to carry the scroll. The honored guest motions them away and he himself reaches forward and cradles the precious Scroll of Isaiah the Prophet as though it were the newborn baby of his queen.

Outside the doors of the bookshop, the caravan forms for the long trip home . . . ■

1 See D. W. Mead, "Ethiopian Eunuch," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:197.

The high road of Christian reconciliation

Rudolph Meyer and Gerhard van Wyk



Rudolph Meyer, Ph.D., is a researcher for the Institute of Theology and Religion, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.



Gerhard van Wyk, Th.D., is pastor of the Thomasville Seventh-day Adventist Church, Thomasville, North Carolina.

Deeply hurt people often try to find a new future. The secret, however, is to come to terms with the past. How do we cope with a hurting or violent past that cannot be changed?

To forget the ravaging violence, buried pain, overwhelming shock, and continuing trauma is not easy. Even worse is to invoke a new start and thereby trivialize the past suffering of the victims. The result could be an open infested wound corrupting new endeavors.

This is why so many oppressed societies experience conflict after liberation. They don't experience reconciliation, instead attempting to build their "new houses" on old rubble. To bring about genuine reconciliation, we need to construct a theology of reconciliation, because "bad theology makes bad politics."¹

Reconciliation determines life in the future. The past often pursues and disrupts our plans for a new society or a better marriage. If past beliefs contain distorted views, they may haunt our endeavors to move toward the new. Consequently, a major aspect of reconciliation is "coming to terms with the past."²

It is not, however, the past trauma itself that causes our problems, but the false convictions about those traumatic events. For example, when disasters strike a marriage, those involved are likely to generalize reactively: Men are brutes; women cannot be

trusted. Or violence tears apart a community. Or, one may quickly conclude that the "other" race or faith is "always" the one that ignites the fire, and that they cannot be trusted.

Such generalized, subjective conclusions—not the actual trauma, sin, or violence per se—are the causes of disruption in our lives. A woman, for example, cannot adequately relate in a marital relationship, and she moves from one disastrous marriage to another. Counseling reveals that she was molested by her uncle when she was a child, and this devastating experience of the past has not been properly dealt with.

From this one instance the woman may conclude that the reason for her inadequate relationship as an adult is that single traumatic event of the distant past. However, the real problem may be that she has not squarely dealt with the past, but instead has been carrying about in her life a heavy burden of low self-esteem.

As a result of the trauma, she has reached a wrong conclusion about herself: "I am no good," "I am filthy," or "I am the guilty one." We may try to convince her that she was not guilty. She may even agree with us theoretically, but her self-conceived lies about herself come back to determine the course of her life and to ruin it. Her trauma from the past has to be dealt with if she is to lead a normal life.

Counseling may help, and indeed may be necessary. But more than counseling, reconciliation is needed—the kind of reconciliation that becomes possible when Christ's light dispels false beliefs and when Jesus enables a person to start anew.

Good intentions are often sabotaged from inside. "The lies embedded in our memories are powerful forces which impact everything we do. It is nearly impossible to act outside of the lie's persistent controlling restraint."³ It is here that Christ's enabling power of reconciliation brings about inner healing.

Christian reconciliation or human conciliation?

What is unique about Christian reconciliation when compared to what might be called human conciliation? At least four factors need to be noted.

1. *Christian reconciliation is a spiritual act, more than a human strategy.* Reconciliation starts with God's reconciling love through Christ's cross, forgiving our sins and trans-

forming us. Reconciliation restructures our lives, community, or church, and is a response to God's renewal.

Christian reconciliation comes about not simply through technical, problem-solving methods. It "is a change of personal relations. . . . By this change a state of enmity . . . is replaced by . . . peace and fellowship."⁴

Reconciliation is more than overcoming past mistakes or renewing a marriage. It involves a new set of rules, a new conviction. Only changed convictions can renew us after Christ's light dispels the lies we have believed in.

Without that change of conviction, without a total commitment to the love that comes from Christ, genuine reconciliation cannot take place. An abused wife, for example, may continue to live with her alcoholic husband, but cannot experience the true joy of reconciliation, unless she has had that transforming experience that comes from Christ alone.

2. *No reconciliation is possible without liberation.* Without liberation, conflict is continuous, especially where the causes are covert. Often this is the case when structure violence or economic exploitation and racism remains hidden.

Conflict is never superficial; it is intertwined within a relationship and if one ignores it as peripheral, the problem continues. An alternative societal structure or a changed marital attitude will only come with liberation.

Liberation is the prerequisite of reconciliation. Take, for example, a marriage in which the husband continually abuses his wife. He wants to find resolution to the problem, his intentions are good, but operating within an oppressive structure that tolerates wife abuse, he needs to be liberated from that structure before he can solve his marital problem.

The wife also needs liberation from the structure of oppression. In the new light of freedom, both can begin again with the realization that marriage is more than two persons living

MINISTRY

Statement of Mission

MINISTRY is an international professional journal published monthly by the Ministerial Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is directed primarily to Adventist pastors and secondarily to church elders. It also addresses pastors of other communions on a bimonthly basis.

Its principal purpose is to assist pastors in proclaiming the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ within the context of the three angels' messages (Rev. 14:6-12). It does this by:

- ◆ Communicating distinctive doctrines in a Christ-centered way that strengthens commitment to Christ and His church
- ◆ Providing resources that contribute to ministers' effectiveness in evangelism, preaching, counseling, administration, and other areas that will help them to be agents of church growth and nurture
- ◆ Presenting biblical, theological, and historical studies that speak to human needs
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- ◆ Encouraging dialogue among pastors, administrators, theologians, and local elders
- ◆ Assisting pastors in training local church elders
- ◆ Contributing to the growth and stability of ministers' marriages and family relationships
- ◆ Affirming the service of ministers' spouses as they relate to the life and ministry of the church and
- ◆ Informing ministers of current issues in the church.

In providing these services, MINISTRY intends to serve as a prophetic voice calling the church to be faithful to the biblical principles that constitute Adventist truth, ideals and values. It will encourage ministers continually to grow in Christ that they may exemplify faith and encourage its development in the congregations that they serve.

together. It is two persons living together in a far-reaching covenant and commitment of love. Such liberation Christ offers.

Reconciliation is not merely forgetting past conflict, as that would never uncover the causes of evil, and may eventually open the Pandora's Box of struggles, after a so-called peace. Appealing to "forgive and forget" indicates that the suffering was not important. It conveys the shocking message that a person's God-given rights are not important to reconciliation or to life itself.

Reconciliation is viewing the suffering through the eyes of victims, so that cycles of conflict will not happen again. No quick fix can work, as long as cruel dominators, in their terrible orgies of verbal or physical abuse, erase the sacredness of human life. Perpetrators have to humbly confess and make amends.

3. *Usually, the oppressor does not initiate reconciliation, but when the victim does, he or she regains his or her dignity and "humanity."* Generally we expect reconciliation to start with the perpetrators asking for forgiveness, but often this is not the case. The gospel suggests that shattered victims can receive God's healing wholeness when they come to Him.

With the peace and assurance victims experience from God, they in fact are ready to offer forgiveness to their oppressors. Is this not what Jesus meant when He said, "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39)? Such an attitude on the part of the victim will cause the oppressor to move toward repentance.

In this process, victims regain their humanity through reconciliation, and challenge others to discover their humanity.

Christian reconciliation does not originate with the overpowering and the affluent. The powerful transnational ideologies such as capitalism, communism, liberalism, or socialism cannot reconcile people. Claims of superiority based on race, color,

nationality, religious schisms, language, and tribe are not easy to erase without the liberating, genuine experience of a new relationship with Christ and a commitment to His claim that every human is made in God's image and is precious in His sight.

Witness what happens when we rely solely on human efforts and strategies as we seek reconciliation without that power that only Christ offers: Ethnic wars erupt repeatedly defying one peace accord after another; ethno-religious convulsions destroy communal peace; and racial strife tears apart the world's cities. Without Christ, conflict is our only status and legacy.

Can we not cooperate with the alienated, or be reconciled in our failing marriages? The human answer is "No!" Envy, fear, aggression, and greed spell out "business as usual." But the good news of the gospel is that through Christ's reconciliation "others" in our world need not be a source of insecurity, but rather God's variety in God's world.

4. *Reconciliation is collaboration rather than cooperation.* Cooperation means working together. It suggests that I invite you to work together with me as I seek to fulfill my goals. I am the center and my view is the norm. In contrast, collaboration is to be a part of our combined task; to join forces, to team up, to work in partnership and to pool resources. The biblical word is co-workers.

Imagine what would happen in our marriages if we actually collaborated, joining forces, teaming up, and becoming co-workers with God. Imagine again what kind of churches we would have through cultivating the spirit of being co-workers with God.

Cooperation is merely a superficial agreement toward goals for rewards. It is a merely human approach in relationships, but it does not go deep enough. Collaboration, on the other hand, is a covenant relationship that extends acceptance and friendship toward the other, providing life sup-

port and security in an atmosphere of unselfish love.

To forgive others is to forgive ourselves and to abandon revenge.

Look at the Cross. There we see forgiveness, and we become whole. If our neighbors look into our faces and see that wholeness, they too can turn to Jesus and have a similar experience. And together we can join our lives, deal with the past, and experience genuine reconciliation. If we merely ignore the past, we will never terminate the pain of the past and will be fated to live it over and over again.

Why is reconciliation possible?

Reconciliation is possible because we are created in God's image and redeemed by divine love through His Son.

First, the image: "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:26, 27, NIV).

Because God created humanity in His image, reconciliation is possible between alienated people when they discover and affirm their common roots. God's image finds a common bond between the most estranged, and forms the basis to accept others as one's equal, to overcome the worst enmity and to forgive the most terrible hurt.

Theologians interpret God's image in many ways: rational powers, conscience, spirituality, personhood, moral responsibility, fellowship with one another, and possibility of communication with God. Bonhoeffer adds another powerful dimension: He sees in the motif of the image of God, the moral responsibility of the humans for personal and political decisions.

As such, there is a dynamic meaning to the image of God.⁵ And the

dynamic can be located in the phrase, "let them rule." God reigns. He forms the world and creates humanity in His image.⁶ Then He shares this concept of rulership with humans. But the concept of rulership must not be interpreted as a concept of power over others, subordinating them, denying them their rights and dignity. Nor does it mean exploitation of the others through political, social, or gender discrimination.

Genesis 1:26-28 is so broad and powerful that it sees the equality and dignity of all human beings and even the necessity to exercise proper stewardship over the environment in which we live. There is no room for oppression, domination, a superiority complex, or lordship at the cost of others.

Thus the Genesis endowment of rulership authority upon humans has an entirely different thrust: it is to rule, *but only according to His image, fully reflected in Christ*, as the loving and lib-

erating Servant (see Phil 2:6-12).

Christ's kingship was atypical. His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36), nor of power, but of love. His disciples were not to exercise power as the heathens, lording over one another, but to serve in humility (Matt. 23:11, 12; Mark 9:35). He Himself came not to be served, but to serve and to sacrifice His life as a ransom for others (Matt. 20:28).

What happens when we renounce economic wealth, oppressive power in politics, controlling relationships in marriages, and become passionate servants of Christ? Reconciliation and harmonious fellowship open up the high road of love and joy.

Reconciliation ultimately means for us to become one with Christ. When will this happen? Now. How does this happen? The glorious message is that we need not afflict ourselves trying to imitate His image, but rather we accept reconciliation as a free gift that is already ours from the

Christ of the Cross. If we believe in Him as our Savior, we shall be like Him—forgiving as He did on the cross, and reconciling as His life's purpose was.

It is as Paul stated it: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17, 18, NIV).

Indeed, it is our wonderful task as ministers of the gospel to proclaim and live out this reconciliation. ■

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It's imperative: Build the family altar

Morris Chalfant



Morris Chalfant is chaplain of Heritage Village, Kankakee, Illinois.

Richard Baxter was one of England's greatest ministers. In early ministry he pastored a community composed almost entirely of rich, cultured people. But he soon found that the congregation was cold, and all was not as he had expected it to be. Although disappointed he said, "The way to save this church and the community is to establish religion in the homes of the people, and to build the family altar."

Baxter spent three years in visitation, determined to establish a family altar in every home in that community. He succeeded, and as a result found that his church filled to overflowing. Thus began that magnificent ministry and life for which he became famous.

Family relationships, fundamental to being Christian

Fundamentally, Christianity must involve family relationship. You cannot have a thriving church without a family altar in the homes of its members.

Robert Burns must have had some early experience or memorable view of a Christian family at prayer, that indelibly impressed. His best-loved poem gives an intimate glimpse into the humble home where, at the close of the day's labors, the father gathers the family for evening worship.

"Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King, The saint, the father and the husband

prays: Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing That thus they all shall meet in future days; There ever bask in uncreated rays, No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear; Together hymning their Creator's praise, In such society yet still more dear, When circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

The term "family altar" may bring to mind a small table in a corner that holds a large Bible, or maybe a taper, or a bowl of flowers, even though the family altar isn't a shrine but a happening.

Crucial nature of the family altar

The elements one needs to build a family altar are one family, at least one Bible, a personal relationship with God, some knowledge of the doctrines and convictions which parents hold as truth, and a sense of responsibility toward one's children. These elements must be packaged in determination and prayer, for Satan will relentlessly oppose such an altar.

What is the point of family devotions? A feeling of closeness and togetherness? An exercise in spiritual discipline? Worship? A compulsory religious duty? A testimony proving that "God means something" to this particular family? A sign of spirituality? A sure guarantee of family solidarity ("the family that prays together stays together")?

Perhaps all of these are true to a certain degree, but it may be that the most salient reason for family devotions is one that is often overlooked. It is simply this: God has commanded us to teach His Word diligently to our children.

Passages such as Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78 remind us that it is parents—not Sabbath or Sunday Schools or other agencies—to whom God has primarily assigned the task of training children in His way.

Although I commend the honesty of those who have chosen to bury a dead ritual rather than piously going through meaningless motions, I feel it's regrettable that the tremendous potential of family devotions as a vehicle for Christian education so often goes unrecognized. Of course, spontaneous prayer and talking about God, one another, and our concerns in a natural manner throughout the day is good—and scriptural. But an additional set-aside, regular, structured time of learning God's Word together as a family is of incalculable value—if the possibilities of such a time are explored to the full.

Reasons for neglecting the family altar

The truth that I wish to emphasize is that every Christian family, as a family, should call upon the name of the Lord. Many excuses for not doing so are given, but most of them fall into two categories. Either it is not convenient, or we are afraid or ashamed to have family prayers.

If it is inconvenient, perhaps the condition which makes it so is out of harmony with the will of the Lord. Many alleged inconveniences could be overcome by an earnest desire and a determined purpose to have a family altar. If the family cannot all be brought together at one certain time, perhaps they can at another. If they cannot all come together at any one time, there is no reason why the part of the family that can be together should neglect this duty and privilege.

If we are ashamed, or embarrassed, to begin family prayers, let us remember the words of our Lord when He said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

The ideal family altar

The ideal family altar should be informal, yet reverent. It should include Bible reading, prayer, and perhaps singing, and each member of the family should have a part. However, the method is not nearly as important as the fact that there is such an altar, and that the altar is an acknowledgment that this family needs God's direction and guidance.

The family altar is basic. The first thing Abram did after leaving Haran and arriving in the land of Canaan was to build "an altar unto the Lord" (Gen. 12:7). This altar of worship became the center of Abram's family life. It affected his thinking, his planning, his actions, and it directed his life Godward into an intimacy with God

continued on page 29

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Hospital visitation: What pastors should know

**Delmar S.
Smolinski and
William E. Rabior**



*Delmar S. Smolinski
is chaplain at St.
Mary's Hospital,
Saginaw, Michigan.*



*William E. Rabior is
chaplain at St.
Mary's Hospital,
Saginaw, Michigan.*

Visiting the sick in hospitals is an important mandate of pastoral ministry. It provides an opportunity to minister to people who are vulnerable and needy and, in the process, become an instrument of God's healing touch. However, in carrying out this ministry, it is essential that pastors remember some useful pointers that will enhance their visitation ministry. Here are ten of them.

1. *Be aware of basic assumptions in pastoral care.* Every person's life has a spiritual dimension. For some this spiritual aspect may be clearly defined in terms of religious beliefs, worship rites, and denominational affiliation. For others it may not be so defined. Nonetheless, this spiritual dimension affects the course of life a person takes. Consequently, every human being has a story to tell and needs someone to tell it to.

Another assumption is that it is both God's will and basic to the human instinct that we be without sickness—that we be whole persons. Psalm 34 expresses this by reminding us that God wishes to be close to the brokenhearted and extend His healing power for those crushed in spirit. Indeed, Jesus came to this world that we might have life to the full (John 10:10).

Wholeness is never fully attained in this life but is an ongoing process of transformation and growth that reaches and is finally accomplished beyond this life. In the words of one

recent visitor to our hospital: "All healing is not on this side." Another person, a patient, said that whether there was a physical recovery or not, either way she was going home/Home.

A third assumption is that prayer is a genuine source of power in striving for wholeness, promoting health, and keeping patients and their families positively focused on healing. Recent medical research has acknowledged the complementary power of prayer in the treatment of patients.

Finally, an array of religious leaders from various traditions have served as exemplary sources of inspiration and healing throughout history. No one has a monopoly on God's Spirit. For Christians, of course, the Master Healer is Jesus who, as the Gospels tell us, spoke with authority and accomplished numerous faith-filled healings of body, mind, and spirit.

When a pastor visits the sick and injured, the recovering and the dying, he or she visits in the name and under the commission of Jesus Himself.

2. *Be aware of the consequences of being hospitalized.* First, separation is one consequence. A patient gets separated from home, family, friends, work, and the security of normal, daily routines; and anxiety begins to set in.

Second, disintegration. The patient experiences a feeling of falling apart and losing control of life and self. Questions about one's goodness and worth may arise. Concerns about one's personal identity, family relationships, employment, and mortality may surface as well.

Third, psycho-spiritual paralysis. A sense of helplessness and hopelessness may creep in and overwhelm the patient, leaving the person unable to adjust to illness and the limitations thereof. It may prevent them from seeing any or enough light at the end of the tunnel. However, these consequences of hospitalization can be countered and overcome by significant doses of faith, hope, and love—qualities that endure and make life meaningful (1 Cor. 13:13).

3. *Be aware of your attitude toward death.* What has your experience been regarding the death and loss of loved ones? Was it a painful or a blessed event? Are there still unresolved relational matters? Are you still grieving? Have you discussed your own advance directives (durable Power of Attorney for Health Care or Living Will)? Does anyone know your

preferences about organ donation? These and other questions may be very significant in the setting of the terminally ill person.

Increasing your own personal death awareness can enable you to break free from the unspeakableness of death and allow you to live life more intentionally and more in tune with the end-of-life questions patients and their families may be struggling with at the time of your visits. It is a matter of recognizing, as psychologist Carl Rogers has suggested, that facts may be painful at times, but they are always friendly. In other words, painful as some subjects may be, they are nevertheless a means of discovering the truth.

4. *Pay attention to the stress level in your own life.* Stress is at the foundation of much sickness in today's fast-paced world, particularly in the areas of cardiac, neurological, oncological, and abdominal suffering and pain. A certain amount of stress is normal in life and often is the catalyst for positive development and growth. However, too much stress can lead to the harmful depletion of physical, emotional, and spiritual energies, leading to burnout.

Visiting the hospitalized requires that you be in relatively good health yourself, if your pastoral care of others is to be effective and fruitful. Having an appropriate sense of humor about yourself and the foibles and vicissitudes of life is one way of checking the pulse of your own stress level.

5. *Pray for and with patients and families.* Along with medicine and surgery, prayer and Scripture are integral parts of the treatment and healing of patients, be it formal or informal prayer, ritualized or spontaneous prayer, spoken or silent prayer.

Prayer is God's way for humans to invite God's power and grace to meet the pastoral needs of patients and to build vital, positive relational structures. Prayer opens the doors of hope and healing. However, while visiting the patient, if the person is asleep or unconscious and the family is not

present, leave a written note, your calling card, or your church bulletin to let them know that you visited. And then, pray by yourself. Let God do the rest.

6. *Be aware of the patient in the next bed and his or her family.* Like the parishioner you have come to visit, the patient in the next bed also has spiritual needs, and occasionally you may be able to address at least some of them. Persons who share a hospital room often listen longingly as a visiting minister prays for their roommate, wishing that someone would visit with them and that prayer would be offered for them as well.

It is perfectly fine to ask the patient in the next bed, "Would you like to pray along with us, or would you mind if I offered this prayer for you, too?" Many times that patient and his or her family will be open and receptive to prayer and will be grateful that you included him or her in your praying.

Prayer is often appropriate; proselytizing rarely is. If the patient in the next bed asks for information about your church or denomination, you certainly can provide that information. But deliberately trying to win

that patient over to your faith without an invitation to do so is inappropriate in that setting and may create bad feelings which can in turn make future visits uncomfortable for everyone.

7. *Practice the practical.* Every hospital adheres to its own standards: precautions for the well-being of everyone in the hospital. Visiting clergy would do well to adhere to them too. For example, to prevent passing on any infection to the patient you are going to visit, washing hands is always a good practice before seeing a patient. This is particularly imperative if you have been in contact with blood or other body fluids.

You might be asked to wear a mask, a gown, and gloves, especially if you are called to a sterile area such as an operating room, or are entering a room in which the patient is in isolation. Remember this is to protect both the patient and you.

Don't visit patients if you have flu or a cold. Be careful about what you touch while in the patient's room. If you see something that concerns you, for example, a soiled hospital gown on the patient or dirty linen, inform the hospital staff.

Many clergy who regularly visit

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hospitals make it a point to get an annual flu shot as well as other inoculations such as those which protect against Hepatitis B or pneumonia in order to increase their immunity. Behind all this is the matter of helping the patient get well and also keeping us clergy healthy.

8. *Make use of the hospital chaplain.* Many hospitals employ well-trained chaplains. These can be valuable allies when you visit your sick parishioners. Chaplains are there to assist and not interfere, so don't hesitate to contact the chaplain during the time your parishioner is hospitalized. They know full well that a person's faith and faith community can play a vital role in the recovery process. Their goal is to harness the power of both for healing.

Chaplains recognize that collaboration with community clergy is something good and desirable. They are there as colleagues, not competitors.

The hospital chaplain is in a position to visit your sick patient during times you are unable to be there. In addition, as part of the interdisciplinary team treating patients, the chaplain can become an advocate for addressing their needs and also a liaison to both the family and the community clergy.

As hospital chaplains we regularly join clergy in prayer for their sick parishioners, and strive to assist them as best we can. For example, the visiting clergy person may have questions or concerns which we are often able to address and sometimes rapidly resolve. Chaplains are there to serve, and are always glad to have community clergy contact us and draw upon our expertise for the benefit of sick parishioners.

9. *Maximize your ministry.* You go to the hospital primarily to minister to

sick parishioners, but God may send other people to you who are also in need of your services. We have already mentioned the patient in the next bed. In addition, the family members of the person you are visiting in the hospital may actually be in greater need of your ministry than the patient you have come to visit.

The illness of one family member may overstress the rest of the family. Physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion can set in. You may be able to nurture and nourish them spiritually.

Your ministry during crisis times such as a serious illness can be instrumental in helping a family cope. Illness often brings feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and a pastor can help both patients and families draw upon spiritual resources, so they are empowered to face whatever happens.

We also cannot forget the hospital staff. Everyone from a physician to the person cleaning the floors can benefit from a pastor's kind words, a smile, or a willingness to really listen. When we allow God to work in and through us, we may be pleasantly surprised at how many people are touched, blessed, and helped through a simple hospital visit.

10. *Maintain confidentiality.* Protecting the privacy of patients and the confidential information related to them has always been important. Patients have the right to release or prohibit the release of information about themselves. Their decisions must be respected.

The hospital will generally disclose to clergy that a certain person is a patient and where they are in the hospital. They will also usually provide basic information about the patient's general condition without going into specific medical issues. If the patient chooses to restrict even this amount of information, then nothing can be divulged. This approach may seem unbending and uncooperative, but clergy must remember that it is what the patient has requested.

Because of an increased emphasis on safeguarding patient privacy and confidentiality (in the United States, at least), it is important that clergy be cautious about discussing sick patients with others. A clergy person should get permission directly from patients or their families before printing any names in church bulletins or before reading patients' names aloud in church, even when the congregation prays for the sick. ■

Bible flameout

continued from page 11

it was filled with too much hope. God's purposes would go forward, John would be born, and speech would return. My spiritual logjam, I felt, by God's grace, would not be forever.

That encounter was a turning point for me, although I do not claim to be out of the woods yet. I am seeing a therapist who is helping me work things through. Nevertheless, important pieces of the puzzle are now in place.

For one thing, I know that God has not rejected me for He has spoken to me in love, albeit on the tough side of the love equation. Moreover, I have clearly rediscovered the Bible as a place where I can encounter God. He is there and He is not silent. Thank God, my sense of anticipation when I open the Bible is back. I am preaching the Word again but with more than a touch of humility to be sure.

After Jesus had delivered the hard sermon on eating His flesh and drinking His blood, many turned back and no longer followed Him. He therefore asked His disciples with a gentle note of insecurity in his voice, "You do not want to leave me too, do you?"

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

Yes, indeed, where else shall we go and still have life? ■

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Prioritizing pastors in evangelism

JAMES A. CRESS



When Scripture declares that those who preach the gospel of peace have beautiful feet, it might have envisioned the Inter-American Division (IAD) pastors who I recently met in Guatemala.

Breaking many established rules of public evangelism: targeting homogeneous groups, featuring a well-known personality, maintaining consistency with the same speaker throughout, and thoroughly integrating programming to fit the audience's cultural expectations, IAD leadership launched a Year of World Evangelism initiative with eighteen different preachers (one from each union in their territory) in three different languages (Spanish, English, and French), beamed by satellite to hundreds of sites.

Speakers for this evangelistic series, which attracted thousands of interested attendees and hundreds of baptisms, were selected with the requirement that each currently be serving as a local pastor. Note, pastors! Not administrators or departmental leaders, not famous evangelists, not theologians, or even professors of evangelism. Pastors!

When Ivan Omana, IAD Ministerial Association Secretary envisioned this grand venture, he determined to feature only pastors who minister in the day-to-day reality of the local parish. His plan produced highest-quality programming with a technical staff of thirty-five providing state-of-the-art technological and musical support, to demonstrate the impact that local church pastors bring to soul-winning.

As I gathered with these pastors before the final weekend to pray for that night's speaker and to honor Ivan and Evelyn Omana for their leadership, a spontaneous testimony service broke out with pastor after pastor describing what they had experienced.

"We came as strangers, unknown to

each other, but within a couple of days, we were formed together in a spirit of cooperation, fellowship, and spiritual unity. Although we came from diverse cultures, educational backgrounds, cultural experiences, and languages, we have become united by proclaiming the message of life and hope."

"When I received my assigned topic, I thought this is not the subject for me. But when the time came, it was, indeed, the sermon I was meant to preach."

"I never had experienced so many persons praying for me as I prepared and presented the message. The day I was scheduled to preach, my members back home came together and prayed for my success. People backstage prayed for me and when I stepped onto the platform, I knew the Holy Spirit was empowering me. He used each of us to accomplish far more than any one of us could have done by ourselves. The secret was all of us working together. My work and life will change. In fact, I believe IAD will not be the same as a result of this venture."

Israel Leito, IAD president, prioritized the importance of pastoral evangelism by his own attendance and by scheduling year-end committee meetings in Guatemala City, thus bringing dozens of union and division laity and leaders together to witness the successful series conducted by these pastors.

Affirming the importance of their pastoral leadership, Leito said, "Satellite evangelism by superstar speakers is not unknown, but it has been unknown to feature pastors in this role. You have demonstrated that God does not call equipped people, but rather He equips those whom He calls. You are not the local pastor in your district, you are the representative of the world church in your pastoral assignment. When one pastor fails, the entire world church has failed. When one pastor succeeds, the entire world church is succeeding."

One pastor commented, "Some independent organizations tell us 'how to do the work.' But here the division leadership showed the way with the church strategically planning and implementing. Leadership set the pace. Pastor Omana focused the atmosphere on doing what God expects in the most professional method possible as well as a deeply spiritual ambience. Eighteen different pastors have spent three weeks together learning to know and respect each other's call and experience. We have dialogued in spite of language and ethnicity differences and discovered, again, that we are one family in Jesus Christ."

"Despite our different mentalities, societies, and preferences, we have come together with common objective to present the message and nothing can prevent us from coming together to finish the work. I never dreamed of being a satellite evangelist, but our leader, Pastor Omana, enthusiastically organized, prioritized, and demonstrated what ordinary pastors can do with extraordinary opportunity."

"You prayed for me, placed hands on my head, pleaded with God for my success. Thank heaven for this concept and leadership's confidence and vision. I return a better pastor, spouse, and father, in the wonderful name of Jesus." ■

Safe Television: A miracle for God's glory



Editorial Note: Throughout this year Ministry will feature accounts of special outreach ministries that are being carried out throughout the world. These features are a way of inspiring and keeping before us the possibilities of what may be done as we concentrate our evangelistic energies during this special Year of Evangelism.

Television today is not exactly family-friendly. Can caring parents sit with their children and comfortably watch TV shows without a grip on the remote control, ready to mute the sound or change channels?

Now, in the United States, they can with the arrival of a family-friendly Safe TV® broadcast on Channel 9711, 24 hours a day via Sky Angel, a nationwide satellite network of values-oriented programming.

"Safe TV is the alternative that millions have been looking for," says Carlos Pardeiro, President/CEO of KSBN Safe TV. "Our greatest burden [is] to reach the secular mind with the gospel. Our mission [is] not necessarily to broadcast religious programs to the choir."

Seven years ago Safe TV started broadcasting on the first full-power commercial television station in Adventist hands, and the accolades continue to pour in. Every year for the past six, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee has proclaimed the month of May *Safe Television For All Ages Day* for the state of Arkansas.

Hollywood has also recognized Safe TV for Excellence In Media, and Pardeiro as producer/director for Excellence in Production, has stood alongside industry standards like *Paul Harvey News*, *Touched By an Angel*, *60 Minutes*, and *Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman*. In fact, since its inception, Safe TV has been recognized with 24 awards.

This is not exactly the track Carlos was on at age 14 when he first showed

CARLOS PARDEIRO



interest in television in his native country of Uruguay. His father was an award-winning television actor, and Carlos seemed destined to follow his father's footsteps. Either that or a career as a classical guitarist or with a celebrated band that he'd organized. He wanted to become a popular entertainer, but God had a different course planned for his life.

In the early 1970s, Pardeiro was representing his country in the World Championships of Surfing in Peru when he first thought about leaving South America. During the championships he met the surfer champion from Hawaii and the Hawaiian delegation and decided to move to Hawaii. The change of venue turned out to change other areas of his life, although he continued as a musical entertainer.

Glamour and fame brought a lot of temptation and a lot of misery. Early in life Carlos began to search for God, to see if God was real. The traditions of the church in which he was raised did not provide the personal relationship with Jesus that he was instinctively searching for. "I felt empty at the end of the day," recalls Pardeiro.

About that time, the drummer in his band was killed, leaving him searching more diligently for what life was all about. Two other events solidified his search. His mother sent him a Bible, and

he met Nancy Griffin, Miss Nebraska Centennial Queen, who was also searching for God. In fact, while she was studying with one denomination, Pardeiro began studying the teachings of another, and read everything he could get his hands on.

At one point, Carlos watched Billy Graham make an altar call. "If You are out there, God, I want to know and I want to follow You," Pardeiro remembers saying to himself. He and his soon-to-be-wife Nancy came to the conclusion that they needed to look further for satisfying answers.

During a prolonged visit to Uruguay in 1973, Pardeiro and Nancy were married, and after months of studying were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of the very personal witness of two families who devoted their time to the couple.

From then on, everything Pardeiro has been doing is to serve his Lord and the church in some way. He began as a literature evangelist in Kauai for five years and saw more than 30 people baptized.

During this time, television programming was not a concern of the Pardeiros.

He recalls, "In Hawaii, we never owned a TV, because there was no reception where we lived. The kids never saw a TV until we moved to the mainland and someone gave us one. Praise the Lord," he says, "someone stole it about a year later!"

Unfortunately, as far as Pardeiro was concerned, someone else gave them another television, and that's when he realized there was a real need for alternative programming.

"There I was sitting with my daughters watching television in our family room when some outrageous commercial suddenly appeared on the screen, as if raping the mind with some unexpected, unnecessary, cheap advertisement,"

says Pardeiro. "I said out loud, 'It's not safe to watch TV anymore; we need programs that are safe. That's it! We need a whole TV station that is safe. We need safe TV for everyone.'"

It was 1990. The Pardeiros were living in Arkansas, and Carlos became part of a group of 30 lay persons with a vision of sharing the three angels' messages through television. The group began to pursue the acquisition of a construction permit for a low-power television station (LPTV) with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The first of many disappointments: The available frequency was awarded to another local competition.

The media group doubled their efforts to acquire another permit even though by then their numbers had depleted to about 15 people. Disappointment two: again a competing applicant got the permit.

"We were convinced that God would find a way," says Pardeiro. "We recognized that God was leading us to a new approach in reaching millions of people in the secular world who watch television, but are not necessarily interested in religion." Then the group was reduced to nine, and eventually only to three.

It was then they learned that a full-power television frequency was available in the northwest Arkansas area, a channel which no one had ever claimed. So, the small group initiated the appropriate proceedings. Their application was approved for a full-power frequency to Springdale, Arkansas. The law provided 30 days for others to apply for the channel.

Sure enough, someone else did apply. "The same person who, a year earlier, defeated us for the LPTV application," Pardeiro recalls. So Pardeiro's group, organized as the Total Life Community Education Foundation, Inc., with Pardeiro as President/CEO, began to pray in earnest for miracle. And God made it happen—the frequency was awarded to what is now Safe TV.

Divine providence continued to be evident when plans for the tower site fell through. Rather than rent a tower, they were able to purchase another

tower site plus additional acreage.

"God opened the door for us to acquire the 14 acres where the tower stands and for less than what it would have cost us to lease the tower space for five years," says Pardeiro. Soon a 6,800-square-foot facility was built through generous contributions of a missionary-minded friend and hundreds of hours of volunteer work from local builders. However, their large, wonderful, roomy building was filled with echoes because there was no money left to furnish it.

Two weeks before the scheduled opening of Safe TV, there was still no furniture in the building. Seated on an empty paint bucket in the corner of the empty office, Pardeiro continued to make calls to the Adventist Media Center in Thousand Oaks, California, for help, knowing they were moving into new, smaller facilities in Simi Valley.

Later, Media Center President Glenn Aufderhar called. "We have seen the way the Lord has blessed Safe TV and the great potential it has," he began. "And since the furniture we have here is more than we need for our new facility, and since it has been acquired through the gifts of our members, we have decided to give it to you at no charge to help you in this new, exciting ministry."

Furnished with beautiful furniture and with God-ordained plans for the future, Safe TV was launched with an open house that was attended by several dignitaries including city mayors and the Arkansas Governor. And so the programming began.

"We have enough programming to complete two or three complete channels if we needed to," says Pardeiro. "We've not had to look for the needle in a haystack, for we have found producers who want to do what's right. I believe the Lord has led us to this type of programming."

Safe TV's programming has no violence, immorality, or profanity, and its goal is to uplift God, family, and country. It aims to inspire and educate while providing good and wholesome fun. "Our strategy," says Pardeiro, "is to create an audience, win their confidence, minister

to their needs, and then point them to the Savior."

Now, seven years later, the miracles continue. Soon, Sky Angel will launch their global satellite to reach the entire world, and has signed up Safe TV to be a part of their global channel lineup. But the real miracle is the lives that have been changed as a result of Safe TV. ■

Carlos Pardeiro is president of KSBN Safe TV, Springdale, Arkansas.

Build the family altar

continued from page 23

so deep and binding that God revealed to Abram the impending destruction of Sodom before the judgment fell.

The entire history of Israel revolved around the altar which Abram began that day. When the altar was neglected and forgotten, captivity and sorrow came upon the nation. When the altar was rebuilt, blessing and prosperity resulted.

The rebuilding of the family altar today will arrest the tide of delinquency and raise a wall against the scourge of divorce. Daily prayers and Bible reading around the family table will equip the parents with wisdom and anchor the children's faith in the Rock of Ages. ■

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BOOK REVIEW

Preaching With Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition, by Hershael W. York and Bert Decker (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman and Holman Publishers). ISBN 080542623-X, 275 pages, hardcover, \$21.99.

York's and Decker's book of 14 chapters is divided into three parts, the text, the sermon, and the delivery.

York's thesis claims that preaching is very much alive and well, and propositional truths can still be preached in a passionate way. Preaching should not only fill people's minds with knowledge, or stimulate emotions, but it needs to change lives. Preaching is the speaking of God's words, following the approach of the prophets and the apostles in the style of Nathan: You are the man!

There is a lot to be appreciated in this book; its high regard for the Scriptures, its commitment to clear and solid thinking, and the search of the preacher towards discovering God's message, before preaching it with bold assurance. Although this book has chosen only the method of expository preaching, it nevertheless seeks to preach the message in a dynamic communicative way: The preacher's message needs to "... grip his audience by the power of his conviction, passion and warmth."

Decker focuses more on the communication of the message in the second part of the book. He provides us with excellent material that challenges preachers to transcend mere strategic communication. He also deals with tools and techniques of effective communication that can profit the preaching of all preachers.

Many preachers may query some issues that have been raised in the book. Scholars and preachers will seriously question the section, "Don't try to preach like Jesus." York's statements, for example, Jesus had "... no single methodology of preaching parables," and Jesus sometimes wishes to "... keep some of his listeners in the dark," may demonstrate something about his theology, but not a lot about Jesus' preaching methods. Decker on the other hand, recommends Jesus' method: "He was the master communicator." It seems that York's views and Decker's methodology do not always correspond. One's impression is that this book is somewhat more focused on preaching with bold assurance than preaching the gospel so that people can really understand the message.

All preachers, however, need to read this book as it challenges them with excellent material that can stimulate preaching, not only to be "effective," but also to be loyal to God's Word.

—A. Gerhard van Wyk, pastor, Thomasville, North Carolina.



Church bulletin paper

After much searching for better paper for our church bulletin, and thanks to a tip from a pastor friend in Alabama, I finally found an excellent source in Church Printers of America, located in Nashville, Tennessee. I had been wanting a slightly heavier stock, in color, and did not find it in any of the usual office supply stores.

Upon request, Church Printers sent me a wonderful little sample packet, containing all the different weights and colors that they sell. They even have the

kind of legal-size paper with the perforated tear-off stub, which they call "perforated reply bulletin." They can be reached at 1-800-626-5222.

—Jim Hoffer, pastor, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Public devotions

We all do personal daily devotions. Mine consist of reading the Bible, prayer, and journaling. But I have added an evangelistic component.


The vast majority of the time, I have my devotions in public—whether at a restaurant following lunch, or at the public library, a donut shop, at the beach, or in a Starbucks (noncaffeinated drinks are available there). A pastor friend shared this idea with me, and I have found that over the past months, hundreds have passed me and been reminded of the importance of faith. Some have been out of church for a long time, and my humble example has led them to consider returning. I have also had many conversations with passersby, all initiated by them. Add to that the many members of my own congregation who now do their morning or evening personal daily devotions in public, and we have a real presence in our little town.

—David Pendleton, pastor, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Youth fund-raising

Senior high school youth sponsors can contact local supermarkets, offering their young people to serve as grocery baggers during special busy seasons of the year. They place tip jars at each register and ask for contributions for their current projects. Many people are glad to have these extra helping hands to expedite their purchases. Some students have made an average of \$100 per hour in this way. ■

—Douglas R. Rose, pastor, Grand Prairie, Texas.



“I love the fact that I have gotten acquainted with ministers from different areas of the world, to know their backgrounds and culture and how it has influenced their religious experience. I have been able to get out of the box of my culture and the way I see things and be invited through this atmosphere to other possibilities and ways of ministry and theological knowledge. I’m happy with my choice of coming.”

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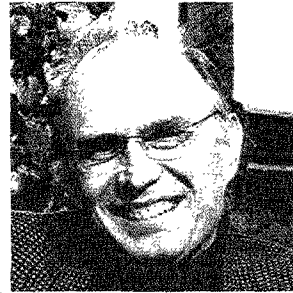


WHILE WAITING FOR JUSTICE



He's taught thousands of students the ways of non-violence in classrooms, from pulpits and in international religious conventions. **Dr. Lawrence Carter** is dean of the Martin Luther King International Chapel at Atlanta's Morehouse College, an ordained minister, and a full-time peacemaker. His numerous contributions to both scholarship and interfaith relationships identify him as one of the most respected African-American pastors in America.

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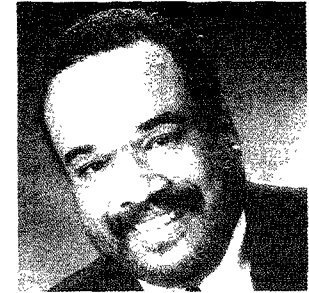
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RECONCILED BY THE WORD



Her wit and wisdom have touched lives in college classrooms and in challenging, multi-ethnic congregations. **Dr. Kendra Haloviak** is a Biblical scholar and pastor now teaching religion and ethics at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. A much sought-after speaker for spiritual retreats and seminars, Dr. Haloviak is a respected voice for women's spirituality, justice and peacemaking.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE



As director/speaker for the international Breath of Life telecast, **Dr. Walter Pearson**, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, serves his church as General Field Secretary for North America. Thirty-five years of distinguished preaching earned him the first membership in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers and Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College in Atlanta. He has preached and lectured at religious, academic and civic institutions on six continents.

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