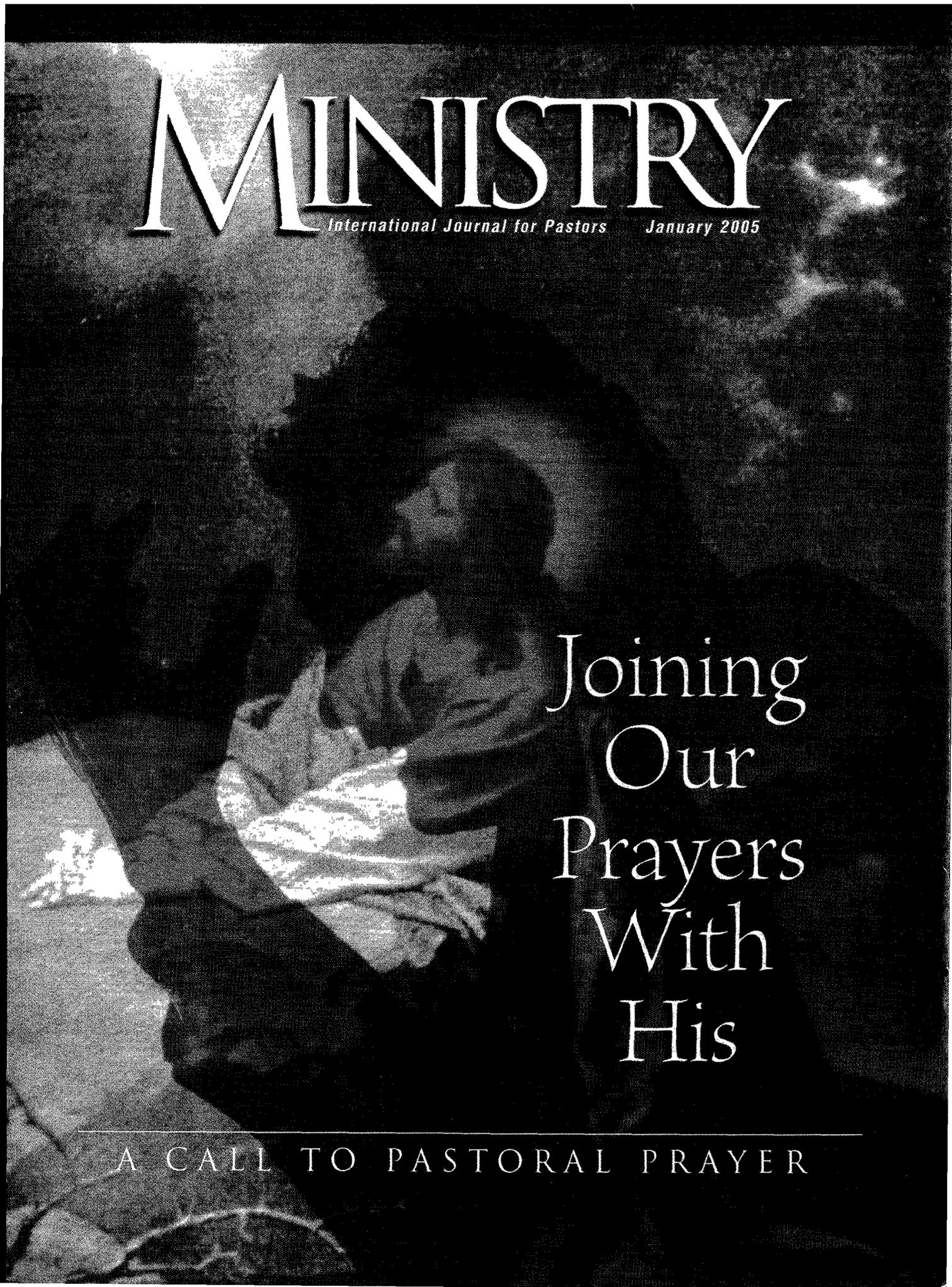


# MINISTRY

*International Journal for Pastors*    *January 2005*



Joining  
Our  
Prayers  
With  
His

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A CALL TO PASTORAL PRAYER

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I HAVE NO PROBLEM PREACHING "LETTING GUILT GO," JUST AS LONG AS THAT DOES NOT MEAN THE CREATING OF CONVENIENT ABSOLUTION FROM PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, THE TRUTH, AND CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY.

**M**inistry continues to be a source of inspiration in many ways. Two things are on my mind. One is that John McVay's use of the apostle Paul as our plumbline for bold preaching was outstanding ("Wholly Boldness: Preaching With the Courage of Paul," July 2004). I would like for every soul in the pulpit today to be able to read it. Second, our leadership has often agreed that it would not be wise to appoint a former embezzler or bank robber to the position of church treasurer. Does it seem wise to appoint a minister who has fallen into adultery, or even serial adulteries, back into the trusted position of pastor ("Requiem and Resurrection for a Fallen Brother," Dwight K. Nelson, May 2004)? Just a thought.

—Steven Clark Goad, pastor, Blythe, California.

**Editorial note:** Dwight Nelson's article was recommending our forgiveness of a repentant pastor, not permissive reinstatement.

I just reread the article "Presenting Jesus to Muslims: A Suggested Approach" (Praban Saputro, July 2004), and wonder if there is any merit to representing Jesus to Muslims? That is my passion. I know all the local Muslim imams in this area, where there are more Muslims

than anywhere else in America. They all know me as a United Church of Christ minister who is a Seventh-day Adventist. Imam Qazwini, whose congregation is building the largest mosque in America, to be dedicated this fall, regularly invites me to participate in various services.

—Felix Lorenz, Northville, Michigan.

I have no problem preaching "letting guilt go," just as long as that does not mean the creating of convenient absolution from personal responsibility, the truth, and corporate accountability ("PK Prodigals," James A. Cress, July 2004). Having attended church school—elementary through seminary—with numerous multigenerational Seventh-day Adventists, especially PKs, I am tempted to wonder who is "prodigal" and who is proactive. What some trying to preserve an ideal may see as youthful weakness and waywardness, another within the same family may see as a necessary and appropriate response to very real danger or disillusionment. Perspective is everything, isn't it?

The prodigal story is oft called upon to cover over and dismiss deeper and more disturbing realities. Unless the church and parents want to directly equate themselves to God the Father, there is obvious implication here of parental confession and public recogni-

tion of one's previous errors. The truth has always been a painful challenge. That's why many can be so easily convinced to be satisfied with the safely familiar, yet superficial line.

This article reminded me that as a pastor/teacher in Takoma Park in the 1980s, I called upon the General Conference, the *Review*, the North American Division, and *Ministry* to do a longitudinal study of young PKs' attitudes and perceptions toward the Adventism of their church employee parents. Almost twenty years later, it appears that instead of learning the truth from these "honest frontliners," the safer move is to continue to play the prodigal card. This avoidance must leave more preacher parents and members than just myself with a fair amount of ambivalence about the integrity of "the truth" we grew up hearing. Putting fingers in the air and in one's ears never has led to essential truth.

Hopefully, letting go of grief and guilt will not keep us from grabbing on to undeniable truths.

—Tim Evans, chaplain, Highland, California.

**Y**our magazine has been a real blessing to my ministry. Keep up the good work. ■

—Christian Ronalds, pastor, Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

### Free Subscription

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

## Come surf the *Ministry* wave

**M**inistryMagazine.org is *Ministry's* Web site. If you haven't paid the site a visit, it's worth doing. MinistryMagazine.org is a branch of Ministerial Association.com. You can click through to that site and then click on the Ministry Magazine button and you'll arrive at the Magazine's site that way. If you go via the Association site, you'll also be given the opportunity to peruse the other helpful service links offered by the General Conference Ministerial Association.

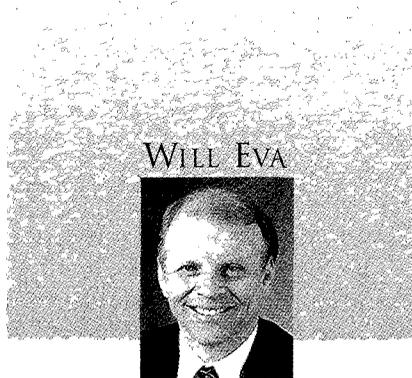
Naturally, the best way to get acquainted with *Ministry's* site is to go there yourself. But let me whet your appetite by giving you a tour here and now. You may be pleasantly surprised at some of the resources available to your fingertips.

As you enter MinistryMagazine.org you'll of course arrive on the site's homepage. On the left there's a list of possible service and resource buttons you can click on.

1. The first is "About *Ministry*." This link gives you a brief history of the magazine and provides you with a synopsis of the mission and objectives of the magazine.

2. Then there's the "Subscription" button. Here you can discover how you may subscribe to the magazine, or how you may obtain a single, particular issue of the magazine.

3. We are particularly proud of what happens with a click on the third button. This section is called "Online Archives." It allows access to every article or feature *Ministry* has published since January 1928, when the magazine was inaugurated, going through to within six months of the latest issue. Thus every issue of *Ministry* is made available for you to peruse or to add to your sources for serious sermon or other research.



This section of the site is equipped with a search mechanism that allows you to enter a word or phrase and arrive at targeted points within the archives that enable you to read online and print off what you are seeking. For example, you can enter, "second coming of Christ" or the name of a particular writer whose work you'd like to check on, and immediately be directed to where your word, topic, or writer is located in the archive.

4. If you've ever wondered how to submit an article to the magazine for possible publication, click on the fourth button. Here, among other things, you'll find a synopsis of the recommended submission process when it comes to unsolicited articles. Here questions are answered such as, Which topic arenas are most favored by the editors? What specific form do I adopt in submitting my work? and How do I actually go about submitting it?

5. Some *Ministry* readers will be interested in the next button down: "Advertiser Information." Take a look at your latest issue of *Ministry* to get an idea of what kind of advertising *Ministry* accepts. You might not have considered that some project you are working on will benefit from a bit of advertising in *Ministry*. It's a way, of course, of getting the information out about your idea, project, program, or product.

At this link, you will also be given a good idea of what it costs to advertise in the magazine and exactly how you may go about seeking advertising space in upcoming issues.

6. Perhaps you have often thought of writing a letter to the editor, but have hesitated because you don't quite know how to do it. Or maybe it's just a bit too demanding to sit down, write a letter, address it, and send through the mail. If that's your story, you really owe it to yourself to click on "Letters to the Editor." You'll find how easy it is to write a letter to the editor and shoot it off via email. (Naturally, the original regular mail system is still acceptable.)

7. The next button gives helpful information about PREACH. It's called "*MINISTRY* PREACH." This explains *Ministry's* special program for providing the magazine to clergy of all communions and faith traditions. If you are an ordained minister (or the equivalent) and serving in a church, denomination or religious organization of any kind and would like to receive *Ministry*, click here and find how you may receive six issues of *Ministry* per year at no cost to you. You will also be directed over to our associated PREACH link to discover further helpful services and programs.

8. "Ministerial Collection" is the next to last button. This section is very useful to ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or to others interested in the history, policy, or administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Clicking here will open up an extensive source of information and resource, dealing with such information as minutes of important church meetings, annual church statistics, research papers of all kinds covering matters from Adventists and ethnic issues to the 1919 Bible Conference. This link also puts you

*continued on page 27*

# Joining our prayers with His

## A call to pastoral prayer

Philip Samaan



Philip Samaan, D.Min., is professor of religion, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee.

**N**iagara Falls is one of the most magnificent natural wonders in North America. It's an irresistible sight! When I first laid my eyes on it, not only was I enchanted, but I was seized by the spiritual insights it yielded—insights that profoundly influenced my prayer life.

On my first visit, I gazed transfixed at the grandeur of its mighty flow. I saw its terrific torrents; I heard its howling thunder and felt its tumultuous power. I could not pull away; I found myself totally overwhelmed by God's abundant love and power.

As I stood praying for guidance and for a prevailing prayer life, God vividly impressed upon my mind that the continuous irresistible flood of Niagara represents Christ's prayers for me. "Yes, Lord," I said, "but this is about Christ's mighty prayers. What about my weak prayers? They are like a few droplets of water, at best only a trickle." Then conviction hit me like a thunderbolt: *Why not join your weak prayers to His mighty ones?*

### **Much water and much incense**

I always felt that my faith was feeble and my prayers puny, but now the Lord was directing my mind to look not at myself but to the Savior. He was telling me to rivet my unsteady faith to His unstoppable faith, to join my measly prayers with His mighty prayers. Take the plunge, go with the flow,

was the conviction of my heart.

This early encounter with God has had a powerful impact on my ministry as pastor and religion professor.

In my pastoral and teaching ministry, the Spirit's conviction to join my poor prayers with Christ's potent prayers led me to study Revelation 8:3, 4. The use of the words *censer, altar, incense, prayers, throne, and smoke* makes it clear that the subject in this short passage is about prayer. Such activity occurs in the vicinity of the altar of incense before the inner veil, leading directly to God's glory.

It's wonderful to see such unmistakable indicators of what happens to human prayer as it reaches into the heavenly sanctuary.

Here the curtain is pulled aside to give us a rare glimpse of how the prayers of the saints are processed. The angel, who stands by the altar of incense, was given much incense and instructed to offer it with the prayers of all the saints. And he offered up this mixture upon the golden altar, and it ascended right to the throne of God.

This passage in Revelation makes Christ's intercessions in the heavenly sanctuary relevant to our pastoral intercessions for others. It deals with two separate entities that are designed to become one: the incense and the saints' prayers. "Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand" (NKJV).

Every time I study this passage, I am reminded of my Niagara Falls experience. The trickle of my prayers mixed with the flood of Christ's prayers sounds like the puny prayers of the saints mingled with much incense of Christ's perfect righteousness and intercession.

Now I can unite my pastoral prayers with the powerful prayers of my greatest Prayer Partner, Jesus. His "much incense" makes fragrant the soiled prayers, tainted with self, that come from me. Now I am irresistibly drawn to come boldly before the throne of grace, knowing that my best prayers and petitions must be consumed by the purging fire of Christ's perfect righteousness and be fragrant by the incense of His intercessions wafting above the mercy seat.

## The emblem of His mediation

Even in the earthly sanctuary, the burning incense was to “arise before God mingled with their [people’s] prayers. This incense was an emblem of the mediation of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> The incense represents at least two things: Christ’s perfect mediation and His perfect righteousness. “These prayers [of ours], mingled with the incense of the perfection of Christ, will ascend as fragrance to the Father.”<sup>2</sup>

Here the type of Exodus 30:7 and 8 meets the antitype of Revelation 8:3 and 4. Aaron, the earthly high priest, was to burn incense upon the altar

“They united in silent prayer, with their faces toward the holy place. Thus *their petitions ascended with the cloud of incense*, while faith laid hold upon the merits of the promised Saviour prefigured by the atoning sacrifice.”<sup>3</sup>

## Sweet aroma

Paul uses similar powerful imagery to depict divine human cooperation in prayer and witness. He urges us to walk in the love of Christ, who “has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Eph. 5:2,

diffusing His sweet fragrance becomes such an all-absorbing way of life that Paul even talks of us as possessing the aroma of Christ.

Compare this with how John in Revelation 8:3 and 4 aptly describes the “much incense” of Christ’s intercession mingling with the prayers of all the saints and ascending as sweet-smelling smoke before God.

We may wonder why Jesus needs to pray for us and with us before God. Jesus’ prayers are not to appease God or to make Him love us as His Son does. The Father’s love for us is eternal, and His deep concern for our salvation is inexhaustible. He loves us with the same love by which He loves His only Son. “The Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ, who paid our ransom with His blood, by receiving and *welcoming Christ’s friends as His friends*. He is satisfied with the atonement made. He is glorified by the incarnation, the life, death, and mediation of His Son.”<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore in doing this, Christ “gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ’s propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned.”<sup>5</sup>

## Christ’s prayer vigil

In Mark 14:37 we see Jesus in the Garden appealing to Peter by name to stay awake and pray with Him. Finding His three disciples asleep, He pointedly asked Peter: “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch with Me one hour?” It is significant that Jesus mentioned neither John nor James by name, but only Peter. I believe Jesus singled out Peter because of the recent experience of Jesus praying for him “that [his] faith fail not” (Luke 22:32). Jesus wanted to engage Peter in His prayer life. He needed him and the disciples to “stay here and watch with Me” (Matt. 26:38, NKJV).

WE MAY WONDER WHY JESUS NEEDS TO PRAY  
FOR US AND WITH US BEFORE GOD.

before the mercy seat every morning and evening for “perpetual incense” before the Lord. Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, with His “much incense,” perpetually makes intercession for us before the mercy seat.

Aaron was to burn incense on the altar every morning and evening on behalf of the people; as pastors, our prayers for people ascending with the prayers of Jesus must be a daily experience, fresh every morning, carrying us through to the end of each day. This is not to be something sporadic, something that occurs now and then, but is to be something perpetual.

Offering prayer mixed with incense on a daily basis implies not only perpetuity but also priority. Our utmost pastoral priority is to begin and conclude every day with Jesus, continually breathing His spirit of prayer, so that the people of our congregations will clearly know that we have indeed been with Jesus.

E. G. White has described it this way: “The incense, ascending with the prayers of Israel, represents the merits and intercessions of Christ, His perfect righteousness, which through faith is imputed to His people. . . .

NKJV). Here we have Paul depicting Christ Himself as the burning sacrifice exuding a sweet aroma before God. And in 2 Corinthians 2:14 and 15, he describes us as the aroma of Christ, diffusing His sweet fragrance always and everywhere.

Paul has in mind the powerful analogy of a Roman triumphal procession, where a victorious general would be welcomed by many dignitaries, some carrying censers brimming with sweet burning incense.

It is the same in passages found in Ephesians and Corinthians. Paul makes use of the imagery of burning sacrifice and burning incense, to describe not only Christ’s ministry but also our joint role in it. We walk in Christ’s ultimately loving act of offering Himself as a “burning” sacrifice.

As pastors and parishioners we walk in Christ’s victory march, diffusing the sweet burning incense of our intimate knowledge of Him. When we give ourselves to God through uniting with Jesus’ intercessions, we too “present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (Rom. 12:1, NKJV). Walking in His love and

# Elevated Training

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

1 Corinthians 9:25

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The words “watch” and “with Me” are significant here because they refer to the disciples staying awake for the purpose of sharing in Christ’s prayer vigil. It is remarkable that the Mighty Intercessor, who prayed many times for His disciples, now needs them to join Him in His own prayer.

What an enormous privilege they squandered, experiencing only the periphery of the experience they could have had. If they had taken advantage of this special occasion, they would have been braced for the terrible trials just ahead of them. Could it be that Jesus counts on us, as His pastors, when He desires to share the heaviest burdens of His prayers? When He does, does He find us awake or asleep?

When the Chief Shepherd lays one of His prayer burdens upon our hearts, it is a holy calling of the highest order. This is a clear indication that He trusts us, as undershepherds, with the burdens on His heart, and that He desires to pull us close to Him in approaching the mercy seat.

It is interesting to note that Peter and John, who failed to join Jesus in prayer at Gethsemane, describe the believers (along with themselves) as priests unto God through Christ. “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5, NKJV). John writes about this priesthood ministry in Christ, who “has made us kings and priests” to His . . . Father (Rev. 1:6, NKJV).

### Priests with our High Priest

Christ our High Priest has made us pastor-priests in Him. He has ordained us to offer sacrifices of prayer and supplications through Him. We are called to enter into this priestly ministry of weeping with Jesus and sharing in His travail for others. “Blessed are they also who weep with Jesus in sympathy with the world’s sorrow and in sorrow for its sin. . . . All who are followers of Christ

will share in this experience. As they partake of His love they will enter into His travail for the saving of the lost.”<sup>6</sup>

How does our priesthood as pastors interface with His high-priestly ministry when it comes to prayer? Such holy participation always ensues from our unreserved submission to Him. For when He sits on the throne of our hearts, His life becomes our life. He lives in us and ministers through us. He loves, cares, sacrifices, affirms, and prays through us. Jesus ever lives to intercede for us. And as He ever lives in our lives, He ever prays in and through our lives. Our pastoral lives become an expression of His pastoral life.

It is our awesome privilege and sacred duty as pastors to serve as priests of intercession, even clothed with Christ’s priestly vestments. “As we acknowledge before God our appreciation of Christ’s merits, *fragrance is given to our intercessions*. Oh, who can value this great mercy and love! As we approach God through the virtue of Christ’s merits, we are *clothed with His priestly vestments*. He places us close by His side, encircling us with His human arm, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite. He puts His merits, as sweet incense, in a censer in our hands, in order to encourage our petitions.”<sup>7</sup>

This priesthood of all believers was demonstrated in the experience of Job praying for his children as well as for his critics. He consecrated his children to God and sacrificed and prayed for them regularly (Job 1:4, 5). In fact, Job in his priestly role was a type of Jesus our High Priest praying for us. Job sacrificed and prayed regularly for his children, and so did Jesus when He sacrificed Himself and now lives to pray for us. Moreover, God wanted Job to intercede for His three critics. “My servant Job shall pray for you,” God said to them. “For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly” (Job 42:8, NKJV).

Jesus also interceded for His critics and tormentors. In a sense, Job entered the sacred realm of Jesus' travail and intercessions for friend and foe alike. As Christ's pastors, we stand as priests before God—in Christ our High Priest.

Like Job, we are called to enter on a regular basis into Christ's holy realm of intercession for others.

Then there was the ministry of Samuel. The Israelites feared for their lives because they had refused to have God rule over them. But when the people asked him to pray for them, Samuel said, "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:19, 23, NKJV). He viewed his priestly prayers for them as so crucial that he considered it a sin against God not to plead for them. As pastors, we are called to enter the realm of Christ's intercessions for others, even when, or perhaps especially when, they move away from God.

### Blot me out!

Perhaps the most powerful example of Christ's intercession is found in the ministry of Moses. God wanted to destroy a stubborn Israel for their great rebellion in worshiping the golden calf, and He assured Moses that He would make a new and mighty nation out of his seed. However, Moses did not think about himself but instead was consumed with concern about the people.

Spontaneously he began to pray to God, reviewing with Him the wonderful promises He had given His people. He went up to the Lord on the mountain to intervene between God and the people because of their sins. In his prayer of intercession, Moses earnestly pleaded with God: "Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written" (Exod. 32:31, 32, NKJV).

In the councils of the Trinity, the Son of God volunteered to give His

life for the world. It would be at a tremendous cost: experiencing the second death on behalf of sinful and lost humanity. Moses' offer that his name be blotted out of the book of life was not accepted; Christ's offer was.

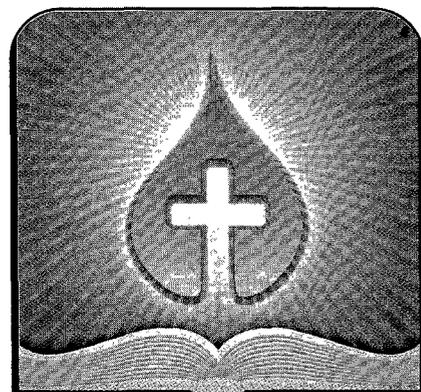
Jesus experienced the second death; His name was blotted out from the book of life. And in that generous divine act, neither Moses' name nor any name needs ever to be blotted out. Certainly Moses' earnest intercession, flowing from a heart of love, enters into that sacred realm of Christ's intercession for fallen humanity.

As shepherds under the Chief Shepherd, let us go to Christ as we are. Let us stay long in the embrace of the praying Jesus. Let His compassionate human arm encircle us and our congregations, and let His divine arm connect us with God's throne.

We may plunge the trickle of our prayers with the mighty torrents of His prevailing prayers. Then the "much incense" of His intercession will join with our tainted prayers until they are fragrant to the nostrils of God. He is joining you in prayer right now. We may rest in the arms of the Prince of Peace; rest in the assurance that no power can pluck us out of His hand. ■

**Editorial Note:** *This article is adapted from the author's latest book, Christ's Way to Pray: How Christ Prays for Us and With Us. To obtain a copy, call 706-935-8800, or email pgs@southern.edu.*

- 1 Ellen G. White, *Temperance* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1949), 43.
- 2 ———, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1900), 6:467.
- 3 ———, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1890), 353; italics supplied.
- 4 *Testimonies*, 6:364; italics supplied.
- 5 *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, 6:1078.
- 6 White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1896), 12, 13; italics supplied.
- 7 *SDABC*, Ellen G. White Comments, 6:1078; italics supplied.



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# Dealing with a fallen pastor?

**Editorial Note:** This article is the first of a further two that have been added to the six by Miroslav Kis that have appeared in *Ministry* throughout 2004. The final article will appear in the March issue of *Ministry*. It is almost redundant, yet it is important, to say that significant discussion and study has been given to the question of dealing effectively with “fallen” pastors and especially to the question of whether or not they should ever again be reinstated to full-fledged ministry. We hope that his series, which *Ministry* does not present as a final word, and this article particularly will contribute to the dialogue that has again been agitated by recent events that touch all communities of Christian faith, including that of Seventh-day Adventists.

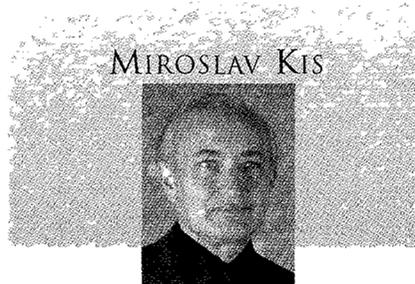
The storm is subsiding. The damage is being assessed, and the two hurting families are now gingerly taking their first steps to recovery. Will the two marriages survive? Are both erring parties remorseful? Are they both willing and able to release their illegitimate claims on each other? Will they realize that they really don't need each other? That the worst thing that can happen now is a relapse?

In some cases such decisions are made quickly, unilaterally; in others the movements are slow and painful. Only wise friendship and truly professional advice can help, because wounds must be properly examined and thoroughly cleaned before healing can commence.

Yet in all this, one more perplexing issue looms large. It rests heavily on the pastor's mind, and dealing with it demands wisdom beyond the human:

What are the professional prospects of the fallen brother?

Should he ever again be entrusted with the pastoral care for the sheep? Will the wounds ever heal sufficiently so that the injured families, the local



church, and the local community can trust him fully again?

How can we, fallible human beings, discern these things? Can we ever place ourselves fully in the shoes of the injured? Do we know how it feels when, like a trusting sheep, a woman makes herself vulnerable to her shepherd, and he treats her as a hireling would—for his own exploitative advantage and pleasure, perhaps, in the name of love?

On the other hand, can we identify with a truly repentant pastor, who can do nothing more to regain trust, nothing more than wait and turn to some other professional vocation?

No, we may not have a satisfactory answer to all these questions. Yet we must decide. We must act; and if we err, we must err on the side of mercy and that in behalf of the victims before we look at the side of the fallen pastor (John 10:17).

We will first examine and evaluate the reasons that would favor the potential reinstatement of the once fallen pastor. Next we must look courageously at factors that call us to caution, and prudence.

## Letting go?

The most painful aspect in the process of healing ministry is when love must let people go (Luke 15:12, 13). There are two such occasions for the

erring minister. The first is when his local church begins her care in terms of church discipline.

Removal from membership is the first *letting go* for which he must be prepared. The very board that assisted him through many issues during his tenure in that congregation must now confront their pastor's behavior as an issue. Yet this letting go must not become a rejection.

Removal from membership places a repentant sinner in a kind of ICU—the intensive care unit of the church. An intentional and methodical healing process must now begin in earnest. This is the instruction of Jesus in Matthew 18:17.

The person is not to be rejected. Not he but his sinful ways must be shunned. It may seem paradoxical, but our Savior paid special attention to “sinners” by associating and eating with them. All the while He was inviting them to a higher standard of moral purity.<sup>1</sup>

Christ's body must become a channel of forgiving grace as well as an artery of enabling grace, helping the fallen pastor to gain victory over his sin. In ministering to him, the church ministers to her own wounds as well. Her all-encompassing goal is to win back the lost (Matt. 18:15), to achieve sufficient reconciliation between the parties, so that arms of full fellowship may be extended to all.

But there is this other *letting go* that comes as we face the pastor's fall on the professional/vocational level. This is a singularly painful consideration for his employing organization and his colleagues to make. It contemplates an agonizing step. Only an insensitive legalist cannot feel the emptiness that fills the heart as this step is contemplated.

Fear of self-righteous legalism and the pain of watching a brother walking off become almost unbearable. If only time

could be turned back just a few months and, if only we had known what we know now, perhaps we would have risked intervening and, perchance, averted adultery and he could still be with us.

Why does this step of letting go feel so much like it's *letting down*, like *abandoning*? Why is it that love must have this harsher side? What reasons could we find to bring him back some day?

1. In despair we may think of David<sup>3</sup> of his fall, his repentance, and forgiveness. David learned wisdom from God's dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan acquainted David with his own sins and aided him in putting them away. He accepted counsel meekly and humiliated himself before the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

After the way Nathan confronted David, David could see what he had not been able to fathom before in the blindness of his passion:

◆ He measures just how expensive adultery is. A sexual affair cannot subsist on its own. It needs the props and backdrops provided by other sins such as duplicity, injustice, violence, and high-handed murder. It engages innocent bystanders as accomplices (2 Sam. 11:2-5, 6, 14-27).

◆ David realizes now that there is no power, no dignity, no authority on earth that this sin cannot bring to dust. He realizes that anyone can become subject to this sort of behavior, even him.

◆ This experience exposes both David's foolishness (Prov. 6:32) and his honesty. It also has a way of unearthing his courage. He listens quietly while one of his subjects, a junior prophet, confronts him directly; he looks in the mirror and faces his own sin squarely. While his predecessor Saul tore Samuel's robe in an effort to pretend that all is fine (1 Sam. 15:24-31), David rends his own heart before God and the prophet and bears his consequences with dignity (Ps. 51). *Yet he is not removed from his throne.*

2. Or perhaps we should look at Moses (Num. 20:10-13) and Peter<sup>5</sup> (Matt. 26:69-75), who, in spite of their

sins, did not have to leave their appointed posts of responsibility. They remained where they were professionally, still serving as spiritual leaders, and the results of their ministry following their forgiveness testifies to the power of God's restoring grace.

"Feed my lambs." "Tend my sheep." "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). These were the words Peter needed most.

After all, who really needs this departure of a fallen minister, and for what reason? Can the church afford to waste such talent and experience? Are we realistic about the nature of the ministerial profession? Adultery is not an unpardonable sin, so why not forgive and turn the page? What about pornography? One can be addicted to it, gain the victory over it, and his employment may still remain unquestioned. What is the difference?

### Consider David

Let us consider David first.

◆ Can we compare the restoration of David, a fallen public servant, to the reinstating of an erring minister? I cannot. God seems to hold firmly to the terms of reference of a king versus those of a priest or prophet. His decisive reaction to King Saul's usurping of Samuel's priestly duty indicates His insistence on guarding that distinction (1 Sam. 15:22, 23). A king's and a priest's identities are not interchangeable, and thus God's treatment of a king's adultery must not be an example for the treatment of a pastor's adultery.

◆ David was a monarch, holding an executive power (2 Sam. 8:15). When his authority all but vanished following his adultery with Bathsheba,<sup>6</sup> he could still lead, relying on the sheer prerogatives of his office. But pastors do not hold such power. Even if ministers and leaders of the church may covet "kingly power,"<sup>7</sup> Jesus placed a veto on such prerogatives for his disciples: "It shall not be so among you" (Matt. 20:26).

The pastor's power is derived from a different source than that of a political leader. Thus, short of royal hegemony, the fallen pastor's reinstatement faces an impossible challenge to his leader-

ship, due to loss of loyalty and trust.

◆ Sin is sin for all believers. There is no distinction. What is distinguished is that God holds the pastor to a more strict accountability than is the case with a lay leader like David (James 3:1).<sup>8</sup>

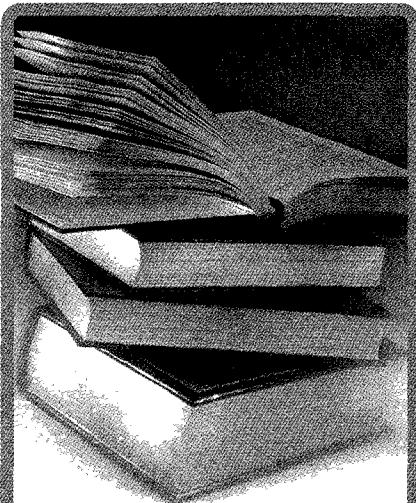
Thus the two priests, sons of Eli, died (1 Sam. 4:14-18), and adulterous priests of whom Malachi speaks were rejected by God (Mal. 2:13, 14). Ellen G. White, in writing to a fallen pastor, says, "Your guilt will be as much greater than that of the common sinner as your advantages of light and influence have been greater."<sup>9</sup>

When a layperson succumbs to temptation, he automatically breaches both his covenant with his wife and his covenant made with God at baptism. The minister's path to adultery, however, is wrought with additional barriers. As he faces the same temptation, he cannot avoid denying these same covenants as a lay person and, in addition, the covenant of ordination to a holy office, the pledge of responsibility to his flock, and the very real promises to the community at large.

When flirting, he makes a conscious decision to resist the prompting of his Christian conscience, but he also resolves to trifle with his professional identity and divine calling. It is this denial of his pastoral identity, when he engages in actions akin to that of a hireling, that leads naturally to letting him go from his post of duty. In a very real sense the pastor defrocks himself. The church has only to recognize it and act on his choices. Adultery has altered his identity. He is no more who he was before, and that is an enormous tragedy.

In the case of Moses and Peter, the issue centers on the nature of their sins. Moses had an immense problem with anger (Exod. 2:11-15; Num. 20:9-11), and Peter publicly denied his Master (Matt. 6:69-75). These are grievous sins indeed, yet they are not the sins of sexual infidelity, and the difference is not insignificant.

◆ The apostle Paul insists that sexual infidelity is unlike any other sin, because it affects the very being, and the person in his/her totality (*soma*). No other sin



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produces this kind of impact and consequences (1 Cor. 6:18).<sup>10</sup>

◆ Moses' anger and Peter's denial did not engage other people in their sin, at least not as intimately or as deeply as sexual infidelity does. Jesus teaches that adultery can happen even in the privacy of our minds (Matt. 5:28). Pornographic obsession and a lustful look are private and solitary forms of adultery that offend God, cheapen myself, and undermine my resistance to sexual involvement with my neighbor's wife.

They also inhibit my "one flesh" unity with my spouse. Yet, as long as they remain in the privacy of my mind, my neighbor's wife is safe. In such a private exercise, I am both the perpetrator and the primary victim of my fantasy. But once it involves another free-willed human being (*soma*) who trusts me because of my professional power, vocational covenant, and commitments, and I take advantage of this trust by engaging her at this most intimate level, my sin becomes uniquely destructive. It cheapens the identity of Christian ministry and spoils my self-concept and that of my neighbor's wife, of our spouses, and so on.

◆ Peter's example must not be taken by itself as the standard for dealing with ministers who commit adultery. While Peter's experience does present us with insights into the possibility of repentance, forgiveness, and the inestimable blessings of divine compassion and a forgiving community, Peter's sin was not hypocritical or done in secret, as is the case with most ministers who sin sexually. They usually attempt to hide their sin and admit to it only after their behavior is exposed.

In these days of compromise and moral laxity, it is preeminently important for us to view sexual sin as something very serious, especially when it involves a Christian minister and someone under his care. A ministry with high visibility bears a much greater responsibility, and this must be taken into account in the administration of discipline.

### Lingering by

In my view, the pastor who loses his

credentials due to adultery remains a former pastor for the rest of his life. During the time he may be involved in a therapy process, and assuming his involvement in helping all who hurt, the former pastor assists his own healing. As time passes and wounds are mended, these very painful trials may equip him to reach out to others who are tempted or overcome by temptation. He may remember the care that he and his family, as well as the family of the other woman, received from the local church and the church's administrative office. Such a former pastor may also recall what was lacking and work to improve the healing ministry for the fallen.

In the next few lines, former pastors share their insights from their firsthand experience with adultery. Their identities must remain anonymous. We also must listen to the voice of experienced leaders and experts.

1. *Pastoral position is not a right, it is a privilege.* This is one stunning realization. The pastoral office holds no entitlement. When adultery is discovered, you will be quietly relieved of your duties, and, gently but firmly, you may be urged to get legal counsel. It may be suggested that you vacate your office, and you may be referred to a treatment program for sexual addiction. That is when it dawns on you that you are not untouchable.

"I was falling off a cliff in slow motion," remembers a Lutheran pastor.<sup>11</sup> "Name recognition, years of service, degrees, sense of a call, or talents are no guarantee for employment or reinstatement."

2. *Sexual addiction?* Upon referral for treatment of your sexual addiction, your initial reaction will most likely be that of irritation. "Is an affair necessarily an issue of addiction?" It was during the two years of therapy away from his family, following the 12-step process of recovery, that this pastor was led to see that adultery is a result of one of many forms of sexual addiction. "I was confronted until I could identify sexual abuse as something I wanted to excuse as 'errors in judgment' or 'misunderstood innocent gestures of love and care.' I was forced to keep looking at my motives

until I could see my behavior as full of deliberate acts of violence motivated by selfishness and the desire to control and hurt and to get back collectively at all those who had hurt me."<sup>12</sup> In this light an indefinite loss of pastoral employment looked more defensible.

3. *A call to ministry and pastoral position are not the same.* A sense of shame and guilt may cripple any desire for involvement in the life of the church for years. But in time, and after healing has revived the sense of mission, nothing should interfere with a former pastor's assisting in serving those who are in need, even if a pastorate is not an option.

4. *Magnitude of the loss of power, trust, and privacy.* Few of us can appreciate the extent of credit, trust, and power that our parishioners grant us upon our arrival in a congregation. Unfortunately, it is only when we lose that credibility and trust that we can see the true dimensions of our loss.

In the truest sense, the confrontations, hearings, confession, repentance, therapy; the strained relationship with the spouse; and indefinite loss of employment, excruciating though these may be, are the only way back to sanity. You feel like there is no shred of privacy left in you. But another former pastor explains, "Not even time can heal that which is kept from the light of day."<sup>13</sup>

5. An affair is but the "tip of an iceberg of deep unresolved emotional and interpersonal issues of anger, loneliness, performance pressures and power hunger."<sup>14</sup> In the case of clergy adultery, we are never dealing only with a sexual misconduct. We are responding to consequences, as much as to causes. So much more is hidden behind, and we must not take the risk of leaving any aspect of recovery to chance.

6. The minister's emotional and interpersonal issues must be fully restored before he can engage in any form of helping service. "To these must be added a genuine renewal of genuine biblical spirituality, irrefutable evidence of an improved marital relationship (if he is married and his wife agrees to stay with him), and a construction of a long-term accountability and support system."<sup>15</sup>

7. The *Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Handbook* distinguishes clearly the forgiveness of sin and re-employment in pastoral ministry. "While violation of the seventh commandment makes pastors ineligible for employment in pastoral ministry, they need and can experience God's forgiving grace and love. The church should seek to restore and nurture their spiritual and family relationships."<sup>16</sup>

8. At the time when a minister's credentials are withdrawn and the pastor departs his post of duty, it is not wise to make any indication about the pastor's possible return to any form of church work.<sup>17</sup> There are several reasons for this:

(a) No one can be certain how much damage has been or is being done, nor how long and how complete the recovery will be.

(b) God desires that His ministers lead not by executive power, clever methods, or impressive charisma but much rather by *example* "in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12, RSV).

(c) The former pastor must put all his energies to work on recovery and healing for no other reason, and from no other motive, than a sense of justice that demands restitution for damages, repair of relationships, and rehabilitation of reputations. Often, promises and eagerness to turn the page create a pressure, and encourage impatience, that discourage the thoroughness and conscientious care so much needed for deep treatment of wounds and for restoration of damaged identities.

### From colleague to colleague

If only I could learn the fundamental lessons from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

First is the lesson about sin. Ever since it entered humanity, sin has never ceased to put on an appearance of goodness, which inevitably proves to have a hidden hook of evil imbedded deep within it. Yet I keep being duped by its promises to the point where I feel that sin is a natural part of me.

So I keep acting as if it is normal to  
*continued on page 29*

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# How to make your church grow:

## David Pendleton interviews Pastor Wayne Cordeiro



Wayne Cordeiro is senior pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship and chancellor of Pacific Rim Bible College.



David A. Pendleton, LL.D., is a Seventh-day Adventist minister, and a member of the Hawaii House of Representatives.

**David Pendleton:** Dr. Cordeiro, your church is the fastest growing church in Hawaii, and one of the fastest growing churches in the United States; from a handful of members about eight years ago to over 10,000 attendees each weekend. What is the primary reason for such unprecedented growth?

**Wayne Cordeiro:** Honestly, there is not really a single key; there are several. The first is that we are completely devoted to welcoming the hand of the Lord on our ministry. Without His hand, without His pleasure, we are dead in the water. We must do everything in such a way that we delight the heart of God.

The second is that it is my heart's desire to speak the gospel in the language of the people, in a way they can understand. I do so without compromising the gospel. A lot of times, churches answer questions that nobody is asking. I try to find out where people are hurting and speak to the hurts using the gospel.

Look at Jesus. He always met people's needs. Whether it was the woman caught in adultery or the woman putting a couple of pennies in the offering plate, He spoke to people where they were. Everything He said was connected to everyday life. So we at New Hope try to connect the gospel with everyday life.

The third is doing church as a team, where we involve everyone. It is not a "come and see church." It's an "equip and send church." We

tell people to come and be involved. The more people involved, the stronger the church.

**Pendleton:** You give great emphasis to personal devotions—daily Bible study and daily journaling. How much do these disciplines have to do with the success of your ministry, and what sort of program would you recommend to other pastors?

**Cordeiro:** Daily devotions are very, very important. It is the heartbeat of our church. I once saw something in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. It stated that the health of the twenty-first-century person will be determined not by what people can get doctors to do for them but by what doctors can get people to do for themselves! How true.

As a pastor and teacher, I want people to develop a *self-feeding* program. I want people to be mentored by the Holy Spirit, because one day, I as a pastor will be gone. Programs will be gone, and services will be over. But if I can get everyone in our church to have a vibrant, daily, ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ, where they feed on the Scriptures, the Lord can take me home and things will keep right on going.

To me, the personal devotions part is absolutely critical. And we hammer on that all the time. Journaling comes out of Deuteronomy chapter 17, where God required the kings to write and read the Word daily—"write for himself a copy of this law in a book" the Bible says—in order that they might not sin against the Lord. Not just read but write. When you write what the Holy Spirit is telling you, you are saying that you intend to apply to your life what you are reading, what the Lord is speaking to your heart.

I encourage people to take notes in a journal. It helps them to summarize what the Holy Spirit is saying. For example, if we are in a physics class, some student will be taking notes, and others will not. You can opt out of taking notes. However, when the tests come (and they will), guess who will fare better?

Much of the time Christians rise and fall based not on what they heard but on the tests they have faced. Taking notes prepares you for the tests in life. You weave into your life scriptural principles. A lot of us don't fare well on the tests. We are fair-weather Christians. We are not prepared for storms. But by taking notes and weaving Scripture into the fabric of

who you are, you will fare much better in the storms.

**Pendleton:** In your writings and in your speaking to other pastors, you use the word "leadership" a lot. What key leadership principles were behind the rapid growth of New Hope?

**Cordeiro:** Leadership alone is not enough to take our churches into what God has for us. It must be linked with the word "spiritual." I am not firstly a leader who happens to shepherd people. I am first a shepherd who happens to lead people.

But I also use the word with those who are serving in our church. And for that, the definition of a leader is simply this: a servant who takes initiative to serve. We are all servants, but we must take the initiative to "go first" when serving is needed. For example, if there was a piece of paper on the ground, out of ten people who pass by, perhaps eight will walk right by the need to pick it up. A leader takes the *initiative* to pick it up. A leader goes first and does something. You see chairs, for example, that need to be stacked. You take the initiative to do the task.

In heaven's account you are a leader, even though you may not have a prestigious office or impressive name tag. Leadership is servanthood in action. Servant leadership is emphasized very much at New Hope. We define it biblically, not in terms of the surrounding corporate culture.

**Pendleton:** You have written about "fractals." What do you mean by that?

**Cordeiro:** A fractal is a simple pattern that can be repeated and reiterated again and again. It's actually a mathematical term. For our usage, it's a group of ten. It comes from Exodus 18, where Jethro said to Moses, "If you don't stop trying to do everything yourself, you will wear both yourself out as well as the people." Jethro instructed him to appoint

leaders over 1,000s, 100s, 50s, and 10s. David used similar groupings. The smallest of 10 is what we call the basic building block of a fractal system. It is one person overseeing a group of four. Now you might think, "Hey, that's five, not ten!" Right, but what I do is put an invisible "X" next to each of the people that signifies their spouse, and now there is a total of ten. You see, fractals is not just about a team, but a team consisting of healthy interpersonal relationships.

The concept is that I serve these four and their relationships so they are better able to do well. When they do, then the ministry does excellently. My goal is to live for their success. Each of those four will have their own fractal, another group of ten.

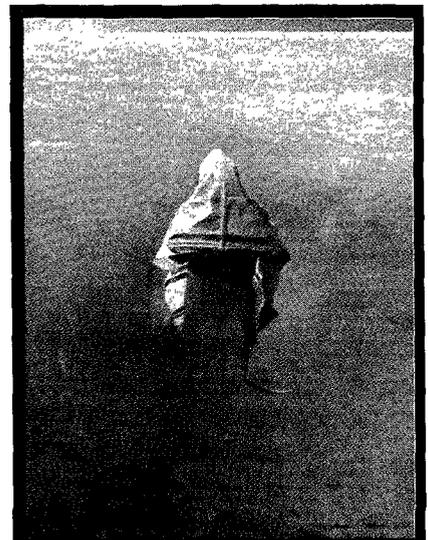
Ephesians 4 reminds pastors to attend to the equipping of the saints. Often a pastor tries to do it all, to have as many as possible help him do ministry. With fractals, a pastor helps others do the work of ministry. Each of these individuals have their own fractals and on down the line.

**Pendleton:** What advice do you have for pastors regarding time management and prioritizing. And how do you balance family and a demanding ministry?

**Cordeiro:** Balance in life is not static. Balance and static are not necessarily synonymous. You have to be led by the Holy Spirit. If you have a balance beam, you balance it by holding it directly in the middle and not moving. But in life there is always going to be movement.

There will be times that the Holy Spirit may put His finger on your family. He will "weight" your home life to alert you to a battlefield that is forming. But with the weight on one end of the balance beam, you are "out of balance." So what do we do to get it back in balance?

You move the fulcrum, or the center balance point, toward the side that is weighted. Let's use the fulcrum to depict your heart and attention.



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When you do this consistently, you maintain a Spirit-led, balanced life.

**Pendleton:** You preach nearly every weekend. If you aren't preaching at New Hope, you are preaching elsewhere. And when you preach at New Hope, it is five times every weekend. What sermon preparation and sermon delivery advice would you share with pastors?

**Cordeiro:** My daily devotions contribute a lot to my sermons. Ninety-five percent of what I preach comes from my journals, where I have mined the Scriptures on a regular daily basis. That way the Scriptures are always "fresh bread" for me. The best time-management program for pastors is to do their devotions daily and to journal daily. You can find more about journaling at <http://www.eNewhope.org>

Another thing I do is to take a two- or three-day retreat every seven weeks. There I plan out my sermon schedule for another six months into the future. I will ask of the Lord, "What do You want to speak to Your church about?" I then do my best to put that into themes or series. I stay on a theme for about six weeks.

**Pendleton:** When you relocated to Honolulu from Hilo, you gave up a very large and established church, which you had grown until it was ready to plant a new one from practically nothing here on this island. Now you have over 10,000 attendees on any given Sunday. Pioneering a new church is fundamentally different from accepting a call to an already established church. What advice would you give to someone contemplating planting a new church?

**Cordeiro:** Both are valid. You need

the ongoing ministry of saints being equipped to save the lost, and you also need to *expand* the ongoing ministry of saints being equipped to save the lost. I think each requires a bit of a different gifting.

A pioneering pastor needs to be more entrepreneurial, more innovative, and more imaginative. Taking over a church requires more administrative, shepherding gifts. And quite often the gifts needed to start a new ministry are not the same gifts needed to sustain a ministry. You need different kinds of gifts for different kinds of situations.

So a pioneer pastor needs to be able to shift gears. Some cannot make that shift. For some it is better to start their own church. For others it is to pastor an already established church. Both are equally valid and needed.

**Pendleton:** Encouraging other pastors is a major ministry of yours. You have the Hawaii Leadership Practicum. You have the Doing Church presented at Team conferences. You write books and speak extensively at pastoral conferences and consult with churches. What are the pitfalls that need to be carefully avoided by pastors as they proceed through a lifetime of ministry, and what do you see as the biggest challenges holding pastors back from reaching their full ministry potential?

**Cordeiro:** A pitfall that needs to be avoided, but is religiously acceptable, is maintaining what you have. You can get satisfied with doing only what is simply expected of you. You can minister for a whole lifetime like that. Many do. However, if you are going to make a real impact in your lifetime, you have to do more than "maintaining."

The Lord says to *occupy* until He comes. That word is a military term. Some pastors feel that if people are still coming to church every weekend, things are OK. I say, we have to look to the fruit. How many new people are coming? How many marriages

are being saved? How many outreaches have you had into the community this year? What percentage of the church is actually feeding themselves on the Word of God? You have to keep count of how many are being baptized.

Sometimes pastors, for fear of looking bad in the eyes of their church peers, are satisfied to hold on to what they have. They are maintaining but are not increasing their impact in the community. There is fear of failing or being rejected, so they end up doing nothing that poses a risk.

We need to be willing to take risks. C. T. Studd once said, "The gamblers for gold are many, but the gamblers for God are so few. Where are the gamblers for God?" When I read that, I remember writing on the margin of the page, "Lord, I will be a gambler for You."

People take risks on the stock market and in business start-ups. But it seems that when it comes to God, pastors are often the most conservative of all. Yet the Lord says, "If you risk everything on Me, I will reward you 30, 60, even 100 fold!" I don't know of any other investment where you can receive that sort of return. And when God says it, you know it's true.

The other thing pastors need to avoid is envy and pride. They want to learn, but denominational pride may keep them from learning from another pastor. We need to be willing to learn from one another, even across denominational lines. Heaven rejoices when we do so.

**Pendleton:** Who have been your most outstanding mentors? Aside from Jesus Christ, who have been those who have most influenced and shaped your ministry?

**Cordeiro:** I have many mentors. I have what you would call *contemporary mentors*. These are people who are alive today who I can call or email or sit with. Some of them you may know. I will sit with Bill Hybels, Rick  
*continued on page 29*



## DON'T MISS THE BOAT

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# Expository homiletics

Jud Lake

Recent publications on homiletics have identified four paradigms, each with its own outcome for listening congregations: (1) the Traditional Homiletic—understanding truth through explanation; (2) the Kerygmatic Homiletic—encountering the presence of God; (3) the New Homiletic—experiencing faith and meaning; and (4) the Postliberal Homiletic—engaging the local cultural-linguistic community.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this article is to introduce a fifth homiletical paradigm that focuses on helping congregations understand and experience the power of the biblical text in its context.<sup>2</sup>

This homiletical approach began in 1980 with the publishing of Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*<sup>3</sup> considered by editors of the journal *Preaching* to be "one of the most influential homiletics texts ever published."<sup>4</sup> Robinson laid the theoretical foundation by defining expository preaching as "the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."<sup>5</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s, expository theorists built upon this foundation, providing works of their own that developed their

approaches to expository preaching.

It is important to note that while all these works emerged from the framework of the Traditional Homiletic, the distinguishing feature that sets them apart is the emphasis they put on expository methodology: describing expository preaching, its assumptions about Scripture, the role of hermeneutics and exegesis, and their intentional focus on such emphases as application philosophy. Other traditionalists advocate preaching from the biblical text, but lack this emphasis on expository methodology.

While there is no unanimity among this expository group in all things, they do share a common belief articulated by David Bass: "There are not, strictly speaking, several kinds of preaching (topical, expository, textual) or many kinds of sermons (doctrinal, lectionary, life situation, relational, etc.); there is only one: [and that is] expositional." Only this kind of preaching is worthy of the name because in it "the truth of a Scripture text is explained and applied to the lives of the hearers."<sup>6</sup> As such, the significant body of literature emerging from these expository homileticians suggests the existence of what I call the Expository Homiletic, the fifth major paradigm characterizing the contemporary homiletical landscape.<sup>7</sup>

## Eight reasons to embrace the Expository Homiletic

The literature of the Expository Homiletic has much to offer Seventh-day Adventist preachers and others who value the Bible as the Word of God. I suggest eight reasons why we need to embrace the writings of this important homiletical paradigm.

First, it capitalizes on the biblical model of preaching advocated by the apostle Paul: "Preach the Word!" (2 Tim. 4:2, NKJV). Commenting on this verse, Ellen G. White has urged ministers to "speak in sincerity and deep earnestness, as a voice from God expounding the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>8</sup> This happens only when the preacher is "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, NKJV; cf. Neh. 8:8, NKJV).

Second, it holds to a high view of Scripture and thus stresses the centrality of the biblical text during the preaching of the sermon. Renowned expositor John Stott writes: "It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching. . . . To expound



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Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor prizes open what . . . is obscure, unravels what is knotted and unfolds what is tightly packed. The opposite of exposition is 'imposition,' which is to impose on the text what is not there. . . . Whether it is long or short, our responsibility as expositors is to open it up in such a way that it speaks its message clearly, plainly, accurately, relevantly, without addition, subtraction, or falsification. In expository preaching the biblical text is neither a conventional introduction to a sermon on a largely different theme, nor a convenient peg on which to hang a ragbag of miscellaneous thoughts, but a master which dictates and controls what is said."<sup>9</sup>

A longtime teacher of expositors, Walter Kaiser, is known for this hyperbolic statement: "Preach a topical sermon only once every five years—and then immediately . . . repent and ask God's forgiveness!"<sup>10</sup> Kaiser's point is that congregations need a steady diet of preaching "guided by God's Word in its origins, production, and proclamation."<sup>11</sup> Such preaching will move us away from topical preaching, in which the sermon is governed by a topic,<sup>12</sup> to expository preaching, in which the sermon is governed by the inspired text.

Third, *this expository homiletic stresses the importance of careful exegesis* through which the biblical text is accurately understood. In the various expository volumes, one will find an abundance of practical helps that aid us in analyzing the historical-cultural, literary, grammatical, semantic, and theological contexts of Scripture. Moreover, one will find helpful suggestions on how to use this exegetical data creatively in expository preaching.

Fourth, *this homiletic is ideational in nature*. Haddon Robinson makes the following unforgettable statement in *Biblical Preaching*: "A sermon should be a bullet, not buckshot." By this he means that a sermon "is the explana-

tion, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture."<sup>13</sup>

Expository homiletics have followed this single-idea approach consistently over the years because they believe those who listen to sermons search for unity and order. These homiletics teach preachers to extract an idea from God's Word and make that idea the central idea of the sermon. This practice has a successful track record and has proven itself as the best approach for engaging exposition.<sup>14</sup>

Fifth, *this expository paradigm teaches the Christ-centered nature of Scripture* and thus emphasizes that all expository preaching should be Christ-centered. Seventh-day Adventists believe in the importance of uplifting Christ in the sermon. Foundational to the Adventist understanding of what is at the heart of good preaching is the concept that "Christ crucified, Christ ascended into the heavens, Christ coming again, should soften, gladden, and fill the mind of the minister of the gospel that he will present these truths to the people in love and deep earnestness."<sup>15</sup>

Bryan Chapell's *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* is fast becoming an evangelical classic on this subject. In two remarkable chapters<sup>16</sup> he sets forth a Christ-centered methodology for preaching the expository sermon that resonates with the Adventist understanding of the great controversy. He writes: "A passage retains its Christocentric focus, and a sermon becomes Christ-centered, not because the preacher finds a slick way of wedging a reference to Jesus' person or work into the message but because the sermon identifies a function this particular text legitimately serves in the great drama of the Son's crusade against the serpent."<sup>17</sup>

Sixth, *this expository homiletic emphasizes creativity in sermon form*. For instance, expository scholar Harold Bryson provides examples of

20 sermon forms or designs that can be applied to various genre in Scripture: nine deductive designs, five inductive designs, and six narrative designs.<sup>18</sup> As such, the caricature "three points and a poem for every sermon" finds no place in the thinking of these expository homiletics.

Seventh, *this expository homiletic provides effective strategies* for applying the ancient text to the contemporary audience. For example, discussions of audience relevance, dynamic illustration, and careful application are found frequenting its books. The conviction is that authentic expository preaching should convey biblical truth while avoiding pedantic explanation or oral commentary. Thus, one will find helpful ideas on how to explain and apply Scripture in such a way that it engages contemporary audiences.

Eighth, *this expository paradigm places stress on the role of the Holy Spirit and prayer* during the preparation and preaching of the sermon. The conviction of many in this paradigm is that when the biblical text is faithfully expounded, the Holy Spirit will anoint the expositor with a special empowerment that carries his or her delivery beyond natural abilities.<sup>19</sup> This is true, of course. But in contrast to this rather limited view of the role of the Spirit in preaching, there is the conviction that in each sermon experience, ministers should "plead with God to imbue them with His Spirit, and enable them to lift up Christ as the sinner's only hope."<sup>20</sup> This prayer encompasses the whole of the preaching experience. What a difference this can make in our preaching!

### **Preach biblically! Preach better**

By embracing the Expository Homiletic and implementing its principles in our pulpits, we can preach better, and preach biblically. Then our congregations will hear text-centered, audience-focused, Christ-centered, Spirit-filled sermons that impact their

**The following two groups of books represent some of the best thinking on preaching in the Expository Homiletic. The first group consists of primers that provide a biblical philosophy of preaching and instruction on how to do it. The second group focuses on specific aspects of expository preaching.**

### Primers

Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994). Here's an exceedingly helpful volume that emphasizes the Christ-centered nature of expository preaching. In addition to setting forth a clear method for preaching Christ from the Scriptures, this volume provides a biblical approach to application and illustration. Fresh, crisp, and contemporary, this textbook is a must-read for the expositor.

Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills For Great Preaching* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994). A solid and comprehensive textbook by a seasoned expository homiletician. McDill explains 12 specific skills preachers can use in preparing engaging biblical sermons. Two exceptionally helpful features are clear definitions of homiletical terms and worksheets for applying the 12 skills.

Michael J. Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). This recent and noteworthy text broadens expository theory by incorporating insights from the other homiletical paradigms and thus shows how expository preaching can be relevant to this postmodern generation. Quicke writes: "What postmodern listeners need is not less Bible but more lived-out Bible, not worked-up sermons but worked-out sermons" (140). A holistic approach highly recommended.

Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001). This is the best place to start for those seeking a beginning textbook on expository preaching. Robinson is a founding father of the Expository Homiletic and no recent preaching textbook has been used as widely as this one in Bible colleges and seminaries. It is worth returning to again and again.

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody, 1999). This book serves as a revision, expansion, and update of Jerry Vines' previous works on expository sermon preparation and delivery. It is a veritable encyclopedia full of helpful information, fresh insights, and practical guidelines on relevant expository preaching.

### Specific aspects of expository preaching

Daniel M. Dorani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: P&R Publishing, 2001). This is the best volume to date on the theory and practice of applying Scripture to the contemporary world. It fills the gap between biblical interpretation and real-life application. A must-read for the expositor.

Scott J. Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001). This is a thorough yet practical work on the essential components of biblical interpretation and application. Excellent as a first read in biblical hermeneutics.

Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002). This is a powerful volume on expository preaching that, in addition to providing a step-by-step guide, addresses the issues of life change and prayer. One appendix contains a "Prayer Guide for Preaching." Don't be without this book in your library!

Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988). A more advanced text that discusses the relationship of hermeneutics to homiletics. The book includes chapter-by-chapter instructions for preaching from various biblical genres. It's an excellent reference work for the expositor.

Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching From the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). This book contains excellent guidelines for preaching expository sermons from the Old Testament by a front-ranking Old Testament scholar and preacher. Any minister serious about preaching the whole counsel of God will cherish this book.

Walter L. Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984). This is a more advanced and time-tested volume with excellent counsel on preaching expository sermons from the New Testament. It is especially helpful in exegeting and applying the text, structuring the sermon, and preaching from difficult texts. It's essential reading for expounding the New Testament.

lives and deepen their knowledge of Scripture. The result will be churches that grow and flourish because God's Word accomplishes its purpose (Isa. 55:10, 11). ■

- 1 For discussion of these four paradigms, see Robert S. Reid, "Faithful Preaching: Preaching Epistemology, Faith Stages, and Rhetorical Practice," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 21 (1998): 164-199; Lucy Atkinson Rose, "Preaching in the Round-Table Church," (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1994); and Judson S. Lake, "An Evaluation of Haddon Robinson's Homiletical Method: An Evangelical Perspective," (Th.D. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2003), 20-44.
- 2 This article is based on chapter two in my doctoral dissertation, and a chapter I contributed to a *festschrift* in honor of Norman Gulley. See "The Birth of a New Homiletical Paradigm," in *The Cosmic Battle for Planet Earth: Essays in Honor of Norman Gulley*, Ron du Preez and Jiri Moskala, eds. (Bern Springs, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2003), 187-209.
- 3 Robinson recently released the revised second edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980, 2001).
- 4 See "1999 Book of the Year," *Preaching* (January/February 2000), 6.
- 5 Robinson, 21. See also Lake, "An Evaluation of Haddon Robinson's Homiletical Method," 128-155.
- 6 David M. Bast, "Why Preach?" *The Reformed Review* 39/3 (Spring 1986), 175, 176.
- 7 See Mark A. Howell, "Hermeneutical Bridges and Homiletical Methods: A Comparative Analysis of the New Homiletic and Expository Preaching Theory 1970-1995," (Ph.D. dissertation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999), 26, 109ff; and Lake, "The Birth of a New Homiletical Paradigm," 195, notes 33, 34.
- 8 Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Pub. Assn., 1948), 147.
- 9 John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 125, 126.
- 10 Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 19.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 This is not to disparage evangelistic-thematic (or biblical-thematic) preaching, a very important practice in Seventh-day Adventism. There is a place for preaching on the great topical themes of Scripture (Holy Spirit, Second Coming, Sabbath, etc.), but the "regular diet" for our congregations should be *lectio continua*, the systematic exposition of Scripture passages in their God-given context.
- 13 Robinson, 35.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 57, 58; for an apologetic of ideational preaching, see Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, eds. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), which serves as a *festschrift* to Haddon Robinson.
- 15 White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 4:399, 400.
- 16 Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 263-311.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 293.
- 18 Harold Bryson, *Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching Through a Book of the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 339-372; see also Donald Hamilton, *Homiletical Handbook* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 32-116, for discussion of various forms for expository sermons.
- 19 For an unforgettable study on this subject, see Tony Sargent, *The Sacred Anointing: The Preaching of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994).
- 20 White, *Gospel Workers*, 155.

# New heaven and the new earth: the home of the redeemed

## **Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Faith #26, The Millennium and the End of Sin.**

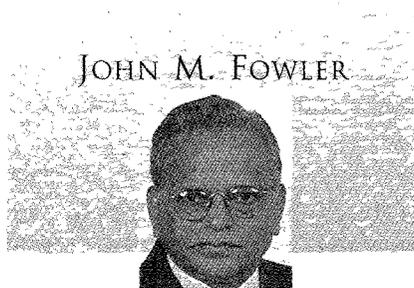
*The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Ezek. 28:18, 19.)*

**Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Faith #27, The New Earth.** *On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)*

**T**he new heaven and the new earth" is the expression the Bible employs four times to describe the future home of the redeemed.

In Isaiah the phrase summarizes the divine promise for the last days: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind" (Isa. 65:17; cf. 66:22).<sup>1</sup>

In 2 Peter the apostle posits the new creation in connection with end-time events: "But the day of the Lord will



come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. . . . But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (3:10-13). The apostle John takes the last two chapters of Revelation to explain the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth.

The future home of the saints is thus the consummative focus of the Scriptures. The Bible begins with the creation of the earth and the disruption of God's purpose by the entrance of sin. The Bible closes with the destruction of sin, the restoration of the created order, and the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth.

To the Bible writers, the coming new heaven and the new earth is an absolute reality. It is not a pie-in-the-sky utopia. Nor is it a theological myth. Scripture portrays history as God's venue of redemptive action. That history, linear in character, is moving toward its eschatological fulfillment.

Two questions need to be raised: What does the Bible say about the hope and reality of the new earth? What are the characteristics of the new earth?

## **The new earth in the Old Testament**

When Abraham was called to a

covenantal relationship with God, God's promise to him was not limited to the possession of Canaan. The covenant foresaw a definite point in redemptive history when Abraham would enter "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

The Old Testament prophecies predict the removal of sin and injustice when the earth would be "full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). In that age of divine order, the earth would yield its abundance, the wilderness would become like Eden (Isa. 51:3), "the desert shall rejoice and blossom," and "the burning sand shall become a pool" (Isa. 35:1, 7). Peace shall characterize all relationships: "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; . . . They shall not hurt or destroy" (Isa. 65:25).

No citizen of that new age will say, "I am sick" (Isa. 33:24). There will be no death, and "God will wipe away all tears" (Isa. 25:8). Above all, God's people will "abide in peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:18). God will be their King (Zech. 14:16) and rule the earth in righteousness.

Isaiah specifically spoke of the creation of "new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. 65:17; 66:22). Daniel saw in the multimetal image of Daniel 2 and the march of world powers across history from his time to the establishment of God's kingdom on this earth. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the divided status of the world since Rome (represented by various parts of the image) successively pass across the stage. The last days of human history were portrayed as unstable as the union of iron and clay. Such a confused and chaotic order of human history would be brought to a swift close by God who

“will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44).

### **The Gospels and the Kingdom**

Jesus began His ministry with the proclamation that the time had come and the kingdom of God was at hand (Mark 1:14, 15). That the kingdom had both a present reality and a future fulfillment is clear from such passages as Luke 17:20, 21 (“The kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”) and Matthew 12:28 (“If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”).

Jesus is more than an announcer of the kingdom: He is the content and the medium of that kingdom. Through His person and His ministry, God’s reign was established forever. Through Him alone we enter God’s kingdom.

The kingdom present also points to the kingdom future. The future aspect of God’s kingdom is illustrated in the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come.” If the kingdom were wholly limited only to the present, the prayer would lose much of its force and meaning, especially in view of the fact that Jesus told the disciples that He Himself would bring the kingdom when He returns with power (Mark 9:1; cf. Matt. 16:28).

The looking forward to, the preparing for, and the praying for the kingdom certainly indicate not just a present reality but a future fulfillment. Viewed from this angle, Jesus’ promise of the eschatological banquet in which the elect from the four corners of the world will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must inevitably mean the gathering of the redeemed of all ages at a point in time to inherit the earth (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28, 29; cf. Luke 22:16, 18; 22:29).

The Gospels further teach that just as the kingdom came into the world by the direct intervention of God in human history through the Incarnation, so will the future kingdom come through a similar act in the return of Jesus in history. Witness the eschatological discourses of Jesus (Matt. 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21) in reply to the disciples’ question, “Tell us, when will this be and what will be the sign of your coming

and of the close of the age?”

The answer depicts both the condition of the earth and the certainty of the return of Jesus. The present age will continue with its social, political, moral, and religious disorder. The conflict between good and evil will rage in all its intensity and diversity, even as the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world, and the world order is confronted with the redemptive message and the impending collapse of the age.

The time of the Second Coming is not known, but the event is certain: Christ will come “in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26); “as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of man be in his day” (Luke 17:24). The interim between now and the Parousia is to be used by the disciples in a life of preparedness (Matt. 25:1-13) and proclamation, in order that the eschatological kingdom does not take them unawares.

### **Paul and the new earth**

Paul’s understanding of the return of Christ is invariably related to his grasp of what Christ accomplished in His incarnate state. The connection between the Incarnation and the Second Coming is reinforced by the use of the word *epiphaneia*, “appearing,” to describe both events.

In 2 Timothy 1:10, Paul attributes to the *epiphaneia* of Christ the abolition of death, and bringing in of life and immortality, through the gospel. The *epiphaneia* will occur a second time in the “appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13; cf. 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8), at which time the resurrection decree of Christ will bring about the eschatological dethroning of death. With the subjugation of death, immortality will become the heritage of the redeemed. Victory would be final (1 Cor. 15:51-57).

Paul is also certain that the Second Coming will provide the long-awaited opportunity for eternal fellowship “with Christ”: “we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17); “we might live with him” (1 Thess. 5:10; cf. Phil. 1:23;

Col. 3:14); “we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom. 8:17). Thus Paul’s eschatological hope consists not just in the prospect of divine glory (Rom. 5:2; 8:18, 21) or in the receipt of immortality (1 Cor. 15:53, 54), but in the ultimate joy of being with Christ.

The apostle thus anticipates a perpetual and glorious fellowship with the Lord. The Pauline perspective of cosmic restoration provides a clue that the divine-human fellowship is to be anticipated in the renewed earth, as is evident from Romans 8:18-21. There Paul asks his readers to discount “the sufferings of this present time.” They are nothing compared to the glory awaiting the believer.

The whole created order had been subject to the futility of this age of sin, and the entire creation “waits with eager longing”—literally “stands on tip-toe”—for the moment of cosmic liberation. The created order “will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Toward this freeing, “the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now.”

What is this cosmic liberation in Paul’s thinking? Since the corruption of the earth is not merely ethical in character, it must be taken to mean that the motif is a reference to decay and disharmony so apparent around the earth. Just as the mortal body must put on immortality, just as corruption must be swallowed by incorruption, just as death must give way to life (1 Cor. 15:50-54), so the cosmic decay and disorder must be excised in order that a renewed and transformed earth and heaven may become the eternal home of the redeemed humanity.

### **The new earth in other epistles**

In keeping with its theme of the “better” and the “heavenly,” the book of Hebrews directs the Christian to the certainty of a future rest and a future city that God has prepared (Heb. 4:1-8; 11:10, 16). The city that God has prepared is a motif by which the author of

Hebrews reinforces the future certainty of the Christian reward.

The heroes of faith are said to have seen from afar the eschatological city. Abraham "looked forward to the city" (Heb. 11:10). The saints of the Old Testament realized perfectly well that they were "strangers and exiles on the earth." This earth was not their home, and in faith, they saw "from afar" "a homeland," "a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (Heb. 11:13-16). The future inheritance of the saints is thus neither an eschatological riddle nor a theological striptease; it is a reality, visible to the eyes of faith, understandable to the mind of the regenerate person.

In his forceful statement on the final conflagration of the universe, Peter says: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up . . . the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:10-13). Monuments of men will give way to the mighty pronouncements of God's judgment.

Fiery judgment is a familiar biblical picture associated with the Day of the Lord (Isa. 13:9-13; 29:6; 30:30; 65:12; 66:15, 16; Dan. 7:9-11; Nahum 1:5, 6; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8; Heb. 12:29; 1 Peter 1:7). But what role does fire play in the cosmic convulsions Peter foresaw? Will there be annihilation or renewal?

The question is whether there is an irreconcilable break between the old and the new, so that the old is completely destroyed and the new is a result of creation *ex nihilo*. Or did Peter foresee the idea of change, a qualitative newness, a radical transformation, a purging process?

The word for "new" used in Revelation 21:1 helps to clarify the issue. Two Greek words are commonly

used to emphasize newness. *Neos* signifies "what was not there before," "what has only just risen or appeared," "what is new and distinctive," "what is new in time or origin."

*Kainos* carries the import of "what is new in nature," "different from the usual, impressive, better than the old, superior in value or attraction."<sup>2</sup> In other words, *Neos* denotes something new in time or origin, something that is brand new; *kainos* something new in quality or character, new in terms of radical renewal. The use of *kainos*, therefore, "suggests fresh life rising from the decay and wreck of the old world."<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, what is emphasized is renewal and continuity. The fires that will destroy this evil age will act as a purifying agent to renew the heavens and the earth. The emerging cosmos is not a creation *ex nihilo*, but a cosmos in harmony with God's eternal purposes, prepared to be the home of God's redeemed.

### Revelation and the new earth

The book of Revelation speaks directly of the new earth as being real, concrete, and eternal: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.' And he who sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' And he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning

and the end'" (Rev. 21:1-6).

What precedes the creation of the new heaven and the new earth? The closing chapters of the book of Revelation indicate that the new earth is God's *finale*. Logic demands and inspiration records that certain other last-day events precede the creation of the home of the redeemed: the Second Coming, the gathering of the saints, the millennial reign in heaven, the descending of the Holy City, and the final destruction of Satan, sin, and sinners. (For events connected with millennium, see box. on page 24)

The annihilation of "the wicked" is accomplished by an eschatological judgment of fire (Rev. 20:13-16). The fire that consumes Satan and the sinners purifies the earth.

### Characteristics of the new earth

Using scriptural data, can we now paint a mosaic of the new age? Such an attempt is both possible and essential, if only to complete the content of the Christian hope. Without falling into the trap of materialistic literalism or slipping into the tendency to dismiss everything heavenly as symbolic, we should find it possible to understand the characteristics of the new earth.

*God's action.* The new heaven and the new earth will be the result of God's activity. Human genius has no part in the conception or the consummation of the eternal kingdom. Four times in Revelation 21:5-8, the prophet argues that the initiative and the fulfillment of the eternal home fully rest with God.

It is the One who sits upon the throne—the symbol of sovereignty of the entire created order—who swears by His authority: "Behold I make all things new." Further, the prophet was told to put the promise down in writing, "for these words are trustworthy and true." The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, God Himself has promised this eternal "her-

itage" to the overcomer.

*God's victory.* God's creation of the new earth will victoriously conclude the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The struggle between the "christic" and the "antichristic" forces, with all their complexity, subtlety, and magnitude dominate redemptive history. When that history reaches its climax at the end-time, the great controversy will end, and God's new age will begin.

How can we be sure of this? The reality of victory was affirmed at the Cross by the Lamb, and it is the Lamb that dominates the book of last things: Revelation. He is the source of ultimate triumph.

*God's renewal.* The newness of the new order is a result of God's renewal and transformation of the cosmos. We have already seen how *kainos*, used in 2 Peter and Revelation 21, rules out the idea of annihilation. Out of the cata-

clysmic judgment of God, a transformed and recreated cosmos will emerge. This "final inauguration of the new age is accompanied by a renovation of all nature."<sup>4</sup>

*God with humans.* In the new earth, God will be with humans. Revelation repeats the promise three times (Rev. 21:3, 4). Perhaps it is in this declaration that we ought to locate the essential newness of the eternal kingdom. The biblical presentation of the new earth throbs with the single most important idea that God would be the dynamic of that order.

This earth, where Eden stood, where Satan injected his venom in the pristine purity of creation, where God proclaimed His law and affirmed His covenant, where the lonely cross effectively crushed Satan, this earth will become the site of God's throne. God shall be with His people, "They shall be

mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act" (Mal. 3:17). "It is this new situation which is the key to the other symbols of newness: the Holy City, the bride, the death of death, the water of life, the sonship of the conquerors."<sup>5</sup>

*End of the old.* In the new earth, the former things will pass away and "shall not be remembered or come into mind" (Rev. 2:5; Isa. 65:17). "Former" suggests an association with sin: All the consequences of the Fall will disappear. "God . . . will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4): Every emotional scar will be healed by the Ruler of the new earth, so that there will be no more "mourning nor crying nor pain" (Rev. 21:4). In the new earth neither the helplessness of infancy nor the terror of aging will be a problem to its inhabitants (Isa. 65:20). "Death [itself] shall be no more" (Rev. 21:4). "Every trace of

## THE MILLENNIUM

Revelation 21 and 22 describe the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth as God's *finale* in the movement of eschatological events. But before this, comes the millennium, as mentioned in Revelation 19 and 20. These two chapters constitute one long narrative that describes Christ's second coming (Rev. 19:11-21) to be followed by the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints. It is important to note the events associated with the millennium—before, during, and after—in order to understand the biblical scheme of the last-day events culminating in God's *finale*.

### Events before the millennium

*The Second Coming.* Revelation 19:11-21 clearly places the second coming of Christ as taking place before the millennium. Revelation 19:19, 20 describe that during the Second Coming, the diabolic forces of the earth, including the living wicked and their human leaders represented by the beast and the false prophets, are destroyed, but the captain of evil, Satan, symbolized by the dragon, who is taken captive, is chained and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

*The gathering of the saints.* The Second Coming also marks the gathering of the saints. At the command of the returning Jesus, the dead in Christ rise to join the living saints who ascend to meet Him in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The initial destination of the saints is heaven—not earth—to be with Christ for a thousand years. Thus the first resurrection that awakens the saints from the dead and initiates the translation of the living saints, ensures the great gathering of the believers to be with Christ for the millennial reign in heaven (Rev. 20:6). Christ does not establish His kingdom of glory on this earth at this time; instead the earth remains a wasteland, desolate and chaotic (Jer. 4:23-25).

### Events during the millennium

*Christ in heaven with the redeemed.* At His second coming, Christ takes home with Him the living and the resurrected saints. The saints are pronounced "blessed and holy" and over them the second death, which is the eternal punishment for sin, has no power. Indeed, "they shall be priests of God and of Christ" (Rev. 20:6).

*Saints reign with Christ and judge the wicked.* During the millennium Christ fulfills His promise to give His followers "power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26). Having received this power, they shall reign with Him (Rev. 20:4, 6).

What does it mean to reign with Christ? While we must not speculate on what is not revealed, we can fairly suggest that to reign with Christ would include some kind of participation in Christ's governance and judgment process over satanic forces and those who cast their lot with them. For after the millennium comes the resurrection of the wicked (Rev. 20:5)

the curse . . . [will be] swept away."<sup>6</sup>

*Righteousness forever.* In the new earth, harmony and righteousness will characterize land and life (2 Peter 3:13). With the abolition of the curse upon the earth (Rev. 22:3; cf Gen. 3:16-19), creation will be freed from its bondage and decay (Rom. 8:18-22). The desolate will be transformed like the Garden of Eden (Isa. 30:23; 35:1, 2, 7; 65:17; 66:22; Hosea 1:10; 2:18; Zech. 8:12). Unfairness and injustice of this life will be a forgotten phenomena: "They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat" (Isa. 65:21, 22).

Work will have its dignity and fulfillment: "They shall not labor in vain" (Isa. 65:23). Peace will characterize the environment: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; . . . They shall not hurt or destroy" (Isa. 65:25). "A little child shall lead them" (Isa. 11:6). Sickness will be

no more and perfect health shall characterize the inhabitants: "The leaves of the tree [of life] were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2; cf Ps. 46:4).

*Life of worship.* Worship and service of God will be the dominant occupation of the redeemed in the new earth: "his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3, 4). The covenantal promise that the redeemed shall be His people, with God's law written on their hearts, will become a reality: absolute and joyful obedience to God's will shall be the accepted norm of the universe (Exod. 19:5, 6; Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 34:30; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 8:10; Ezek. 36:26; Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1; Jer. 3:17; Zeph. 3:9).

In short, the new life will be theocentric: Our existence "will be marked by perfect knowledge of God, perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect service

of God."<sup>7</sup>

*Fulfilling activity.* The new earth will be a place of fruitful and fulfilling activity: "They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit" (Isa. 65:21). The new earth will be no place to sit through all eternity strumming a golden harp, or to lead an ethereal, vaporized existence of a disembodied spirit.

No, the new earth will be a real place with satisfying activity open to the saints—not just physical work, but opportunities to probe the mysteries of God's love: "There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. . . . There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still

*continued on page 30*

and the total annihilation of all evil forces, including Satan (20:10-15).

It is this participation in the judgment process of the wicked that Paul spoke of as the privilege of the saints (1 Cor. 6:2, 3). The millennial judgment does not decide the question of who is lost and saved. God has already decided that issue and those who are to be saved are resurrected in the first resurrection, and others rise up in the second resurrection to receive the wages of their rebellion against God.

The review of the judgment process during the millennium is to provide the saints absolute satisfaction with God's justice. No question on the fate of any who are lost will remain after this process.

*Satan bound on earth.* Revelation 20:1-3 speaks of Satan bound and left on this earth to brood over his evil designs and schemes. The binding is not literal. With all the living and resurrected saints taken to heaven, with all the wicked slain at the Second Coming, there is no one on earth for Satan to tempt and deceive—the primary occupation of Satan since he entered the Garden of Eden.

A chain of circumstances binds Satan, however, for a thousand years, after which the return of the saints from heaven and the resurrection of the wicked will release him for a little while (Rev. 20:3).

## **Events at the end of millennium**

*The second resurrection.* At the end of the millennium, "the rest of the dead"—that is, the wicked—will be resurrected. This resurrection is not unto salvation, but unto condemnation (John 5:29) and judgment.

*Satan's release and final onslaught.* The second resurrection bringing the wicked to life releases Satan from his bondage of inactivity, and he springs to action again, leading the wicked against "the camp of the saints and the beloved city [the New Jerusalem]" (Rev. 20:9), which, with Christ and the saints, has by now descended from heaven. Gathering the wicked, the evil one attacks New Jerusalem (Rev. 20:8, 9), hoping that what he could not accomplish by stealth and deceit throughout human history can now be achieved by sheer force.

*Judgment and destruction.* But the attempt of satanic forces and the rebellious wicked does not succeed. God pronounces His judgment against evil, and fire from heaven destroys the wicked (Rev. 20:9). Satan comes under the full penalty of God's law and is finally destroyed.

*The new heaven and the new earth.* The cataclysmic judgment of fire at the end of the millennium will destroy not only the evil forces, but also will cleanse and purify this earth. Peter's unmistakable prophecy will be fulfilled (2 Peter 3:10-13). John anticipates the same outcome: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Rev. 21:1).

# Pastoral life in the center

Ferdinand O.  
Regalado



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In his book, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, Eugene Peterson told how his own daughter awoke him to the realization that he was neglecting family obligations because of his busyness in pastoral ministry. “I was sitting in the living room after supper on a Tuesday evening in June when she came to me asking me to read a book to her. I told her that I couldn’t because I had a meeting at the church. She said, ‘This is the thirty-eighth night in a row that you have not been home.’”<sup>1</sup>

Or how about this? “We dash here and there desperately trying to fulfill the many obligations that press in upon us. We jerk back and forth between business commitments and family responsibilities. While we are busy responding to the needs of child or spouse, we feel guilty about neglecting the demands of work. When we respond to the pressures of work, we fear we are failing our family.”<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps you can relate to Peterson’s portrayal? You find yourself torn between family obligation and pastoral work. Which one should you choose?

I remember when I was teaching full time in college, while at the same time I was pastoring a local church near our university on weekends. In addition, I was a freshman husband and a neophyte father to my newborn daughter. I wanted to be a perfect husband-father and a competent teacher-pastor, and

fear of drowning in the sea of conflicting roles and goals tortured me.

As I look back, I realize that I simply survived and moved on to another assignment without getting answers. Only recently did I stumble upon Richard J. Foster’s *Freedom of Simplicity*, which gave me the help I needed.

Foster suggests that to experience freedom from the entanglement of conflicting roles, we must “live in the Center.”<sup>3</sup> In effect, he’s suggesting that every aspect of a pastor’s life, whether chairing a board meeting or reading a story to your five-year-old child, must be God-centered. “Gardening was no longer an experience outside of my relationship with God—I discovered God in the gardening. Swimming was no longer just good exercise—it became an opportunity for communion with God. God in Christ had become the Center.”<sup>4</sup>

## Living in the Center

What does it mean to live life in the Center? How can a pastor-spouse with such demanding work both in the church and at home practice life in the Center?

1. *Living in the Center means viewing all aspects of our lives in relation to God.* This is holistic living. There is a tendency for us to dichotomize our lives into two separate realms: the secular and the spiritual.

We tend to think that helping our wife wash the dishes or helping her do the laundry is not part of our ministry because we assume that it is not part of our sacred duty. It’s outside the scope of our job description as a pastor. Any menial work not included in our pastoral portfolios is viewed as unsanctified or irreligious. Note these words, however: “The greater part of our Saviour’s life on earth was spent in patient toil in the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth. Ministering angels attended the Lord of life as He walked side by side with peasants and laborers, unrecognized and unhonored. He was as faithfully fulfilling His mission while working at His humble trade as when He healed the sick or walked upon the storm-tossed waves of Galilee. So in the humblest duties and lowliest positions of life, we may walk and work with Jesus.”<sup>5</sup>

One of my students in a Bible class I taught wrote what she felt about the class and the teacher. She indicated that she valued the teacher very much, not so much for the things he taught but more on the life that he

lived, especially when she often saw her professor hanging a basketful of clothes on the clothesline.

Because of what my student wrote, I realized that doing the seemingly ordinary task becomes a medium of extraordinary witnessing.

2. *Living in the Center means considering every aspect of a pastor's life both at home and at the church as worship.* The apostle Paul admonishes us, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31, NIV). "Whatever you do"—these are important words. Again, they include all the mundane tasks of a pastor in the home life and in the church life. If ever there is an invitation for us to speak on an occasion that would conflict with our regular family day, we should not worry when we feel obliged to say no. In my Filipino culture, it is difficult to say no. At times, out of extreme politeness, we consent even if it's against our will. But living in the Center calls for us to say "No" in such a situation.

Our definition of worship is typically limited to singing praise songs or going to church. But when we view worship as more than just a celebration of God's presence as honoring Him with our lifestyle as well, our outlook will change. Paul reminds us to "offer your bodies as living sacrifices—holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom. 12:1, NIV). From the biblical perspective, worship encompasses the whole life, whether we are spending our time giving Bible studies or playing basketball with our kids. Everything we do in our life is done because we love God and desire to honor and worship Him.

Spending time with family is considered an act of worship. But many feel guilty for doing otherwise. "Because they [people] are not connected with some directly religious work, many feel that their lives are useless, that they are doing nothing for the advancement of God's kingdom. If they could do some great

thing how gladly they would undertake it! But because they can serve only in little things, they think themselves justified in doing nothing. In this they err. A man may be in the active service of God while engaged in the ordinary, everyday duties—while felling trees, clearing the ground, or following the flow. The mother who trains her children for Christ is as truly working for God as is the minister in the pulpit."<sup>6</sup>

3. *Living in the Center means extending our pastoral ministry even into our own homes.* It is a great Christian paradox when we are very soft-spoken and tender to our counselee in the church, while we shout and bicker at our children and wife at home. If we are patient and understanding to our parishioners, we should also be patient and understanding to our family members. At times when we don't behave as a pastor to our homes, our influence with our children and our wife will be compromised. Our children would look at us as pharisaical and hypocritical.

Larry Burkett tells this story: "Evan was the pastor of a large evangelical church and spent almost every waking moment there. Although his family was having problems, he prided himself on never allowing those problems to interfere with his ministry activities.

"Then one Sunday morning the local police chief called. The pastor's 16-year-old son had been arrested for drug possession, again. The previous day his wife had suffered an emotional breakdown and had been committed to the psychiatric ward at a local hospital. As Evan hung up the phone that Sunday morning, he realized his whole life was a lie. He was in bondage to his own ego and pride. He would have counseled any businessperson in the same situation to drop the business and get his or her life straightened out."<sup>7</sup>

Thankfully, the story of Evan does not end there. He was able to recover from that problem. He was able to redeem his relationships with his

wife, with his son, and with his God. But the story speaks volumes to all of us pastors. We should not wait until the same tragedy strikes us before we begin to change our personal and pastoral reference point from one that is arbitrarily divided to one that operates from the Center.

If we could do counseling and pastoring with our church members, we should do the same for and with our family members. Our work as pastors should not be confined to the church but equally include to our own home. In doing this, we will indeed be living in the Center. ■

- 1 Eugene H. Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: an Exploration in Vocational Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 35.
- 2 Richard J. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 77.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 78.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 80.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1892), 81, 82.
- 6 Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1917), 219.
- 7 Larry Burkett, "Overcoming Being Overly Committed," in *Profiles of Success*, ed. Ronnie Belanger and Brian Mast (North Brunswick, N.J.: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1999), 185.

## Come surf the Ministry wave!

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Come surf the *Ministry* wave! ■

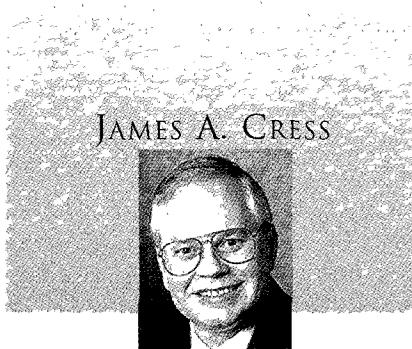
# Impacted by herstory

**M**ost history is written from the male perspective. Perhaps that is why we often validate their contributions more than we do the women in our midst. Recognizing that about two thirds of our world membership is female compared with the paucity of their representation in elected positions or even governing committees, I am reflecting on some of those women who have impacted my ministry. I hope you will be encouraged to recall and affirm those whose "her-story" have blessed your life. Recount their faithfulness, tell their stories, honor their ministry.

**Mary Cress**, my Mother's love for her Lord, her family, and her church demonstrated a practical, common sense approach to team ministry and general fun in the parsonage. **Ann Wyatt** defies all mother-in-law jokes and gave me the great gift of a talented, thinking partner in marriage and ministry. **Sharon's** skills in ministry, management, mission, and merriment affirm that two are better than one. Life must be fun; Sharon is!

**Johnnie Kelly** and **Virginia Cherry** nurtured me during my Mom's serious illness, and **Mae Poole** and **Etta Wright** (her daughter, Julia Norcott, serves as *Ministry's* managing editor) grandparented we three PKs. **Margaret Fuller**, secretary to GC presidents, nurtured my newly-baptized Mom. And speaking of presidential secretaries, **Annette Stephens** was encouraging me long before we came to Washington.

**Maxine Leonhardt**, best friend and surrogate Mom who, except for being female, would have been union treasurer. Many of us know Maxine held such responsibility without the title. **Mary Anderson, Clara Camp, Phyllis Carmen, Jane King, Loa Gayle Larson, Joyce Lemon, Pat Penno, Naomi Sigler**



and **Kathy Turner**, and Caring saints, creative leaders, plus some of the best cooks in Georgia. **Rosetta Baldwin**, heroic example of Christlike service. South Atlantic Conference has named a school in her honor; heaven will probably rename New Jerusalem's Main Street for her. **Evelyn M. M. Lindberg** gave me the opportunity to prove my determination to write. True friend and example to hundreds of Southern College students. After three years of Greek, **Leona Running** convinced me also to study Hebrew. Her vision for seminary students far exceeds my capabilities. Sisters-in-law **Pamela Keele Cress, Lynn Bandell Cress, and Eulita Wyatt Heisey** each demonstrate in their own professions that pastor's spouses are not stamped from the same cookie-cutter. And **Deanna Wyatt** consistently demonstrates love, tolerance, and unique creativity. Nieces **Jana Cress** and **Meredith Cress** are a delight, maybe too much like Uncle Jim, and typically ready for any adventure.

**Corea Cemer** believed anyone could serve Jesus and by her example and partnership, she instilled in Sharon and me our love for evangelism. **Vinna Mansell** inspired confidence and provided an example when we were rough from the patch interns. **Bernice Carubba**, along with her conference-

president spouse, knew how to inspire young families to team ministry. **Marjorie Hanhardt**, secretary to three or four presidents, showed grace and skill as the one who really ran Florida Conference, and her stepdaughter, **Annabelle Owens**, always gives far more than she receives. **Minon Hamm** taught spirituality integrated in the workplace and she models what she believes. **Patty Mitchell**, PK, friend, pastor's spouse for more than 40 years, and a genuine Christian individual. **Merlo Bock** affirmed individuality and behind-the-scene nurture as well as gracious hospitality and friendship. **Sarajini Chedalawada** proved that a life of faithful, consistent service will always impact others for eternity. **Kit Watts**, champion of women in ministry. Pastor, editor, creative genius, friend, and fellow dog lover. **Marie Spangler, Ellen Bresee, Jeanne Zachary, and Margarida Sarli**, each affirmed powerful ministry by pastoral spouses. **Marge Gray** leads by example even as she faithfully followed her spouse's numerous ventures. **Hazel Gordon** raised caring for pastors and their families to an art form and her story literally inspires. **Penny Shell**, director of La Sierra University's Women's Resource Center models caring ministry and successful advocacy for women pastors. **Phyllis Ware**, Secretary-Treasurer of Central States, served an extended term as interim conference president.

**Gloria Massenburg**, my faithful and outstanding administrative secretary, encourages my ministry every day. **Judy Thomas**, business leader and philanthropist with a vision for creative ventures and cross-denominational support for ministers worldwide. **Jaci Cress**, our niece who will graduate, marry, and enter Adventist ministry this year. ■

## Fallen pastor

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sin, and I give it not only a visa or a place of residence in me and in my behavior but citizenship. It must not be so. Sin is an intruder, a life-sapping parasite. My sinfulness is not my true identity. It is but a tragic caricature of God's image in me.

Christ at His death on the cross took with Him my sin and left it there in the tomb on the morning of the resurrection. "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts" (Rom. 6:12, NASB).

In fact, I have found that sin has nothing good to offer. There is no peace in it when I'm restless, no wisdom when I need counsel, no boldness when I'm discouraged. Adultery is no solution to the problem when my marriage does not answer my needs.

My female congregant does not need to hear about my marital issues in order to encourage her to open her heart. Sin is perfectly impotent for good.

The second lesson is about the devil. A long time ago I read somewhere that the devil has 99 blankets. He tempts you, but you resist. He does not give up until he convinces you that he will cover your sin hermetically so that no one will be able to see it; it's just between him (the father of lies) and you.

And so in time you may give in. You come home, your spouse is cheerful and loving. You stand to preach; eloquence and insights at maximum. Everything seems to continue to go well. You feel you are well covered, but your resistance is weaker for every next temptation. After 40 blankets you feel a weight, but by now the habit has conquered your will. At 80 or 90 blankets you seek for temptation yourself. Then comes the 100th sin.

At this point, the devil comes and very compassionately informs you that

not only does he not have any more blankets, but he unfortunately has to take off 99 from your history, because he needs to go to the neighboring district where your colleague "needs" his help. Thus in one instant you are discovered naked, under the floodlights, and in full view of your wife, your children, your church, your fellow pastors, and your community. Not even a fig leaf to cover you!

Except for the Father's voice: "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him. . . ." God has but one robe, and no sins are hidden beneath it as there are under the devil's blanket. Under His robe, sins and sinful habits are revealed and extracted, however painful that process may be.

At times it might even feel like an amputation without the benefit of anesthesia. But the benefits of being justified in God's sight and brought to live a sanctified life are eternal.

And there you stand. No rights, no expectations, just grace—at the threshold of healing, back at home. ■

- 1 See Marlin Jeschke, *Discipling in the Church* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1988), 74-89.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 5:683
- 3 Tim LaHaye, *If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 107, 116-118.
- 4 White, 683.
- 5 LaHaye, 115, 119.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), 727-745.
- 7 ———, *Life Sketches* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), 386; *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 232, 233.
- 8 Dr Jimmy Draper quoted by LaHaye, 134.
- 9 Ellen G. White, Letter written in 1886, see also LaHaye, 128.
- 10 See a more extensive discussion in *Ministry*, 76, No 3: 10-12, 19.
- 11 Anonymous, "A Lutheran Pastor," *Pastoral Psychology Journal*, 39, No. 4 (1991): 259-264.
- 12 *Pastoral Psychology Journal*, *ibid.*
- 13 Anonymous, "Sexual Addiction" *Pastoral Psychology Journal*, 39, No. 4 (1991) 265-268.
- 14 Judith Karman, "Healing the Wounded Pastor in a Dysfunctional World," *Fuller Focus*, 11, (Winter 1993): 23.
- 15 Stanley J. Grenz and Roy D. Bell, *Betrayal of Trust* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 172.
- 16 *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Spring, Md. The Ministerial Association: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1997), 56.
- 17 Grenz, 172

## How to make your church grow

continued from page 17

Warren, Jack Hayford, or John Maxwell. They have helped me in my writing or thinking through various issues.

I also have what I call *literary mentors*. They are those I may never meet, except through their books. For example, I may read Max Lucado or Philip Yancey, or some other great thinker. I will mentor under them through their writings.

The third category of mentors is *historical mentors*—Mother Teresa or other great saints of yesteryear: Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone, George Mueller, and Jim Elliot. I have read their books. They are no longer alive, but they still mentor me from

the past through their books.

But the greatest of these are *biblical mentors*. Men and women speak to me from the past through inspired Scripture—I can sit with David and learn about leadership. I sit often with Solomon, who has taught me so much about how to develop wisdom. I have sat with Paul, who constantly encourages me in the areas of being creative in reaching the lost. When you do your devotions, you can benefit from the wisdom of the ages. You can have wisdom beyond your years as you minister in the twenty-first century!

The people of God are surpassingly precious. They deserve to be led well, and I am so glad the Lord has not left us to do the task alone. He told me that He'd be with me every step of the way . . . and you know something? He has done exactly that. ■

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## Ritual for Cleansing After Hearing Gossip

David J. Zucker

It happens to all of us. We are present at a conversation that turns into malicious gossip. It may have elements of racism, sexism, or some other form of slander. We may want to voice our disapproval. But in that particular situation, we feel we cannot confront the speaker with the words that come to mind . . . "What you just said makes me uncomfortable." We sense that under the particular circumstances of the conversation, to speak up or to speak out would be counterproductive, professionally inappropriate, or psychologically distressing.

After leaving the conversation, we reflect on it, and we start to feel emotionally and intellectually polluted. Inwardly we feel soiled and sullied by what was said. We feel frustrated because we left without saying anything to counterbalance the slander. Our very hearing feels desecrated.

How do we rid ourselves of this sense of personal violation? What can we do to move on? How can we rid ourselves of the feeling of taintedness that overtook us simply because we were present when those damaging words were uttered?

One effective way of dealing with such an unsought intrusion into our lives is to participate in a ritual termed "Cleansing Ourselves When Having Heard Gossip."

First, we may find a quiet place to center ourselves.

Go to the nearest washroom and wash your hands; then rinse out your mouth, and finally, take some water and symbolically rinse out your ears.

Then, recite these, or similar, words: "Lord who knows my inner spirit, purify me from what I have experienced. I have 'washed my hands' of that event; I have 'cleansed my tongue' in recognition of the words that I could not speak by way of protest; and I have 'rinsed my ears' for having heard such talk. May my thoughts and these cleansing deeds be acceptable before You. Amen."

Finally, follow up your prayer with a specific act of kindness to someone to restore some goodness, and godliness, to this world. ■

*Rabbi David J. Zucker, Ph.D., is chaplain/director of spiritual care and recreation at Shalom Park, a senior continuum of care center, Aurora, Colorado.*

## Heaven and Earth

*continued from page 25*

there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body."<sup>8</sup>

*New Jerusalem.* The new earth would house the city of God. "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).

Several points may be noted. First, the city descends from heaven, as if to

emphasize that in God's scheme of the eschaton, humanity has no participatory role.

Second, the city is beyond human comprehension (Rev. 21:9-15). Its radiance springs from the glory of God. It has four gates, one on each side as if to invite humans to contemplate the reality that God's metropolis gathers saints from all corners of the earth: The city of God has no segregated entrance! The city is a perfect cube, reminiscent of the Holy of Holies where all dimensions were equal. Its walls are adorned with precious jewels. Its gates are made of pearl and its streets of pure gold.

Third, the city has no temple. No structure is needed in the new earth to symbolize divine presence. Divinity Himself has come to stay with humanity, and what need is there for a temple or of a sun or moon, for that matter? The presence of God transcends the material, making it secondary.

For all its glory, radiance, and its theocentric nature, however, the new Jerusalem is a city conceived by the Cross, and the book of Revelation would have us never forget it: The city is the bride of the Lamb; its foundations carry the names of the apostles of the Lamb; and the city's lamp is the Lamb!

Eternity receives its illumination from a hill far away, where the light of heaven overwhelmed the darkness of the evil one, and lit the lamp of redemption. New Jerusalem is the city of the redeemed: They will "follow the Lamb wherever he goes" (Rev. 14:4).

Finally, the city pulsates with life (Rev. 22:1-5). The river of the water of life is there. The tree of life with 12 kinds of fruits, is there also, and its leaves are for the health of the inhabitants. Face-to-face fellowship with God and the Lamb are possible there. The restoration of the dignity and domain of humanity, with the redeemed reigning "for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:1-5) is the reason this place exists!

To God be the glory! ■

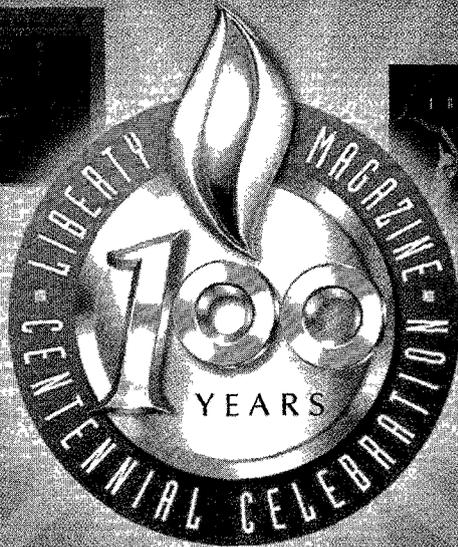
*John M. Fowler, Ed.D., is an associate director of the Department of Education at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and a contributing editor of Ministry.*

- 1 All Scripture passages, unless otherwise stated, are from the Revised Standard Version.
- 2 Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 3:447.
- 3 Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1908), 275.
- 4 F. F. Bruce, *Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), 91.
- 5 P. S. Minear, *I Saw a New Earth* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1968), 273.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), 674.
- 7 John Calvin, *Isaiah*, 4 vols., tr. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), 4: 404.
- 8 White, 677.

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