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PREACHING THROUGH A STORM

When crisis strikes the pulpit preacher



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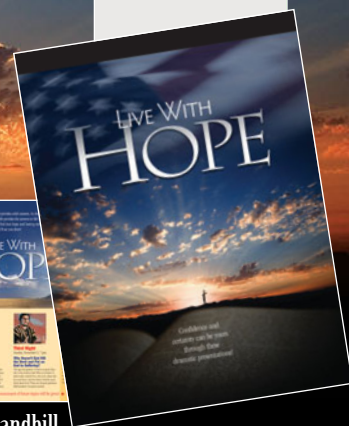


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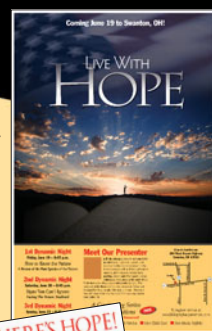
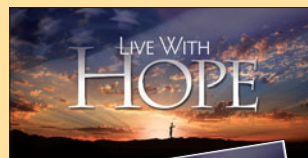
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"I'M KICKING MYSELF ONCE AGAIN FOR NOT THINKING TO ASK, 'HOW DID YOU DO THAT?' WHAT A SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT."

The Trinity

Thanks for the concise survey of the doctrine of the Trinity ("The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History," February 2009). It is worth noting that possibly the last official vestige of anti-Trinitarianism was removed when the new hymnal was adopted in 1985. All the Trinitarian themes that were removed or replaced with more "acceptable" Arian lines in the old hymnal were reinstated in the new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. A classic example is no. 73 (in both hymnals), "Holy, Holy, Holy." In the earlier hymnal, the first stanza ends with "God over all who rules eternity!" The new hymnal has, "God in three persons, blessed Trinity!"

—Pedrito Maynard-Reid, Walla Walla, Washington, United States

Kudos for the challenging articles on the Trinity in your February 2009 issue. Thanks, also for John Johnson's in-depth research on the role of the Holy Spirit at the Cross. The Godhead was involved!

On your view regarding the role of the congregation in "sound theology," I differ with the editorial, "Sound Theology Builds Healthy Churches." From an educational perspective, very few members in

small congregations will qualify and pastors in multichurch districts may not have time or energy to argue or debate issues when their professional training is limited. I learned my limitations in the Pennsylvania and Ohio Conferences in the '60s and '70s as a greenhorn pastor-immigrant from Burma trained at Spicer Memorial College in the '50s.

—Keith R. Mundt, Riverside, California, United States

Pastor's pastor

As I reflect on the Pastor's Pastor column titled "Reconnect, Reclaim, Reflame" (February 2009), I thought to myself, *Would I ever love to rebaptize even a few of the inactive members in my area!* What a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

Your article reminds me of someone I haven't thought of in a long time: evangelist Robert L. Boothby. If I have the story right, he was instrumental in leading somewhere around 100,000 into the church back in the 1930s through the 1960s. During my first pastoral assignment, I served as song leader for one of his evangelistic series. A lot of his success had to do with wearing out the tires on his car and the soles on his shoes, as well as preaching the Sabbath at least 30 times during a

crusade. We'd be invited in and his first question was always "Have you ever heard of the Sabbath?" During one of our visiting days together, he told me that he had pastored a church that had a list of 60 inactive members. He said he was successful in reclaiming 58 of them. I'm kicking myself once again for not thinking to ask, "How did you do that?" What a significant achievement.

—John Glass, email

Church planting

I was moved with both excitement and anxiety as I read Abraham Rangel Flores's article, "Seven Years in Karlsruhe: Memories of a Church Planter" (December 2008). Yes, I am strongly encouraged to learn through my experiences and procedures: going through God's process in order to grow, that is very true. Because due to the absence of evidence from God in our plan, we fail to go ahead and overcome—Joshua 1:9. Our ready-made plans result in failure, frustration, and even abandonment and God's work comes to a standstill. Step on in faith (blanket or no blanket). This is the mission of the gospel.

May God bless Pastor Flores. I hope to meet him in the New Jerusalem soon.

—S. D. Nguluwe, pastor, Blantyre, Malawi



What challenges are you facing?

For three years, my church laid the groundwork for a church planting project in Houma, Louisiana. Finally, the time arrived for one last evangelistic endeavor in the target community. Our guest evangelist and Bible workers were in place, and we were excited for what we knew the Holy Spirit was poised to bring to fruition.

Each night of the first week of meetings was well attended, and the nightly sermons were well received. As that first Saturday night drew to an end, we looked back with pleasure on the solid foundation that had been laid. I had not slept well for much of that first week, for we had encountered several issues; and one of my responsibilities, as host pastor, was to make sure that all problems that arose were properly rectified. Now, with each challenge having been addressed, I was looking forward to my first good night's sleep in quite a while.

But shortly after midnight that Sunday morning, July 16, 1995, I was startled out of my sleep by a message that I never in my wildest dreams expected to receive. My mother had fallen ill and was taken to a nearby hospital in serious condition. When I was able to speak to my father, he told me that she had suffered a stroke a few hours earlier, but the doctors believed that it was minor, comparatively.

I was able to hear my mother's voice a few minutes later. And as many mothers do, she did her best to assure me that there was nothing for me to worry about; that she was going to be all right, her slurred speech notwithstanding. But now I was facing a difficult dilemma: Do I go back to my hometown, spend time with my mother, and give support to my dad? Or do I continue on with the work that we had started in 1992?

That was only the beginning of a trying summer for many of our team members, for we soon realized that we were being attacked by Satan—and he was attempting to thwart God's work by afflicting our family members. First it was my mother, then the wife of our evangelist—she was hospitalized for most of the time we were preaching and teaching.

Clergy are people too

Sometimes we can easily forget that members of the clergy are people too—people with our own heartaches and physical pain. Interestingly, we as clergy—whether pastors, professors, leaders, chaplains—are the ones who sometimes fail to recognize this reality. Perhaps that is because we feel we have to be strong for everyone else; or perhaps we aren't comfortable with sharing our personal issues with church members or other clergy in the same way we want them to share with us. As such, we keep a lot of things bottled up when the truth is our brothers and sisters in Christ are—aside from our family members—our greatest human source of strength and encouragement.

My own challenges

I earlier mentioned a family challenge; but like every other pastor, I have also faced professional challenges. I am thankful for pastors such as recently retired Alfred Booker and the late A. R. Carethers, who took me under their wings and shepherded me through personal and professional frustrations during my early years of ministry. Other pastors, especially young ones, face their own questions and wish someone would help them find the answers.


To such pastors and other gospel workers, we dedicate this issue.

Among the many articles that speak to ministerial families and the challenges they face are articles by S. Joseph Kidder, Dan Serns, and Martin Weber—men who have mentored hundreds of pastors over several

NOW, WITH EACH CHALLENGE HAVING BEEN ADDRESSED, I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO MY FIRST GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP IN QUITE A WHILE.

decades. They share sound counsel with our readers that will prevent many stresses both in the home life and with their congregations—stresses that could needlessly derail many fine ministries before they even take root.

But there are also those particularly agonizing moments when we are touched at the deepest level of our being: when a friend from childhood dies earlier than should be expected; when someone close to us experiences inexplicable violence; when a dear relative suffers through a horrible disease. For me, my toughest moments transpired in 1987 and 1995, and my wife was there to hold my hand through it all. In our lead article, Charles A. Tapp shares his personal story and how God brought him—and continues to bring him—through his personal tough moments.

If you are reading this issue and are going through your own personal "storm," as Tapp refers to it, I pray that you will experience the full strength and support that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, stands ready to give to you. 

Tell us what you think about this editorial. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

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Preaching through a storm:

When crisis strikes the pulpit preacher

Having been in ministry for more than 25 years, I have had my share of hospital visits. The majority of these visits was simply to provide a word of encouragement to a parishioner who was in for a brief stay. But then there have been the other times that brought tears not only to my eyes but also to my soul. You know the ones where the physician comes to share the prognosis with the family, and it isn't good news. These are the moments that leave you feeling completely helpless and at a loss for words—in spite of what you may have learned in pastoral ministry class. I have discovered that during these times, the most effective form of ministry that a pastor can render is simply the ministry of presence. Although visiting the sick and the suffering becomes, in most cases, trying at best, years spent in ministry have taught me to handle it with a certain degree of professionalism and grace.

But there is one visit from which I have yet to recover. This time I was not there merely to share a word of encouragement with a member of my congregation, for it was not a parishioner who lay in the bed as the doctor rendered his prognosis. The patient was my wife, Maureen. Yes, in a sense, I was her pastor and she my member, but this was different. Despite all of my years of pastoral training, as well as the countless hospital visits I had made throughout my ministry, nothing had prepared me for the news that we received that evening. The diagnosis: multiple

sclerosis (MS). The prognosis was not good. I was stunned. So was my wife. Although I could see that the news had fallen upon her like a ton of bricks, I also saw in her eyes a look of courage as she gathered her composure to say, "OK, OK." For a moment, it was as if she was saying that everything was going to be all right.

But the same could not be said for me. There was no look of courage in my eyes—only fear. I did my best to conceal it, but it was there. My heart was pounding so loudly that I thought it could be heard throughout the hospital halls. I wanted to quickly pray this thing away. After all, I was the pastor. Maybe God would take all of my years of faithful service to His people into consideration. Maybe I would receive some kind of special dispensation. But I quickly learned that this was not to be. This was a storm that was not just going to blow over; but, as I would later learn, would be around for quite some time.

Now storms are nothing new in the life of a pastor. We are accustomed to handling storms. Whether it's the storm of a difficult member who believes that their job includes keeping our feet planted firmly on the road of humility, or whether it's a storm of some theological controversy that has the winds of doctrinal debate blowing through our pews.

Storm that hits the pulpit

But this storm was different. This wasn't a storm that had hit the pews,

but one that struck the pulpit. As a pastor, I am accustomed to hearing the painful stories that my members share of the storms that have blown into their lives from time to time. I have listened with great interest to their testimonies of how God had seen them through, as well as the many lessons these experiences had taught them. But now it was my turn.

I quickly discovered that going through a storm of such magnitude has a way of teaching you some very valuable lessons. I learned such a lesson that day in my wife's hospital room. I discovered that there was nothing in my ministerial training to help me as a pastor as I prepared to navigate through this storm that had blown so unexpectedly into the life of my family. If that was part of the curriculum taught in pastoral ministry class, I must have been absent that day.

One of the reasons why I believe that we, as pastors, have such difficulty handling these kinds of storms is because our role usually includes ministering to the one in the storm. After all, we're the ones that are usually called to the bedside of the sick and suffering to offer words of hope and comfort. Yes, the pain we see is real, but yet in some strange way, we feel shielded from it. I must admit that there have been times during a hospital visit where I have merely gone through the motions, you know, saying just the right words, but not allowing myself to "feel" the patient's pain. Sometimes I'm sure that I used it as a defense

mechanism so as not to allow the pain to consume me. And we do need to be mindful of this, because in our line of work, we spend a great deal of time in the same room with pain.

But of all the lessons that this experience has taught, and continues to teach me, one stands out as crucial: if I am going to make it through this storm, endurance will call for complete honesty on my part.

Facing the storm with honesty

I soon learned that the S that appears on my chest does not stand for “superman” but rather for “sinner saved by grace.” Sometimes we pastors honestly begin to believe the praises that others heap upon us. Because we operate in the realm of the supernatural at times, we tend to think that we are immune to the many challenges that our members experience on a daily basis. This storm quickly reminded me that I was not “Super” man, but rather a child of God who was in need of the same counsel and comfort that I, as a pastor, was accustomed to extending to others in their time of need.

I also had to come to grips with the fact that there would be times when I did not feel spiritual or pastoral.

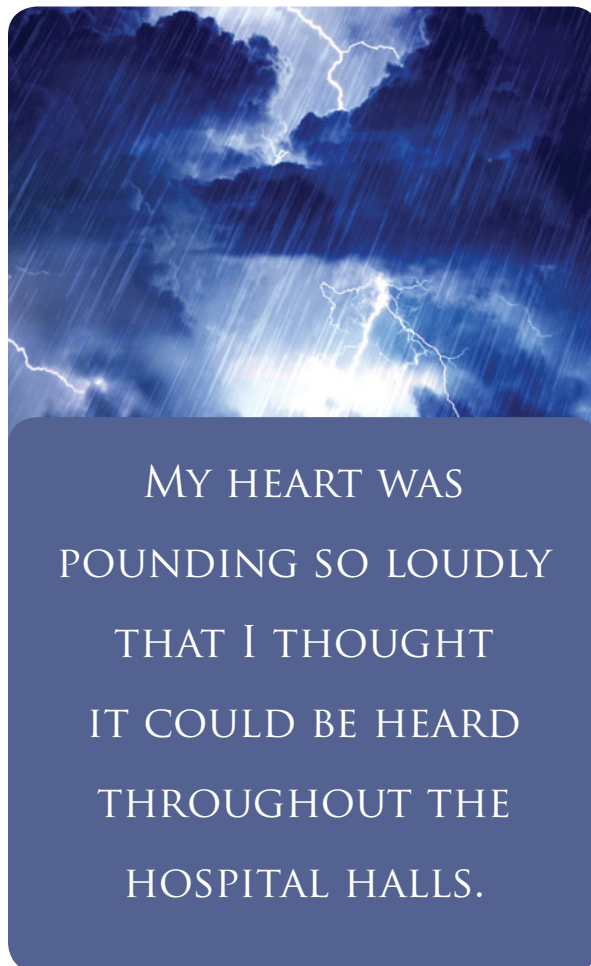
To be perfectly honest, there were moments when I was not able to motivate myself to even look for comfort in the Word that I so often preached to others. And true honesty with God comes into play here because during these moments I had to resist putting on my pastoral persona and allow myself to become transparent with others, myself, and most of all with my God. I must admit that there were times when I felt like the disciples who were caught in the midst of their own storm one night,

and I, too, found myself crying out to God, “Carest thou not that we perish?” (Mark 4:38). And yes, there were times when I would beat myself up because of the way I felt. *After all, this was no way for a pastor to feel.* But what really made the difference was when a colleague of mine reminded me that God truly understood what I

Leaning on the church family

The next lesson on honesty I would learn from this storm would prove to be the most humbling and difficult of all. It came when I was called to be honest with my church.¹ I found it hard to initially come to grips with the fact that while being in the midst of this storm, I was in no position to provide the level of ministry they deserved. Because the nature of my wife’s condition quickly escalated, I came to the conclusion that I would need to take time away from the church so that I could care for my wife, my family, and yes, even myself. I am reminded of the instruction that the flight attendant gives each time I prepare to fly. The passengers are told that in the case of a loss of cabin pressure, we are to place the oxygen masks on ourselves before we attempt to come to the aid of the one under our care. Sometimes as pastors, we have difficulty understanding, and even for our members at times, that there are going to be moments when we will need to seek assistance for ourselves before we will be able to meet the needs of others.

But I must give credit where credit is due. My church leadership insisted that I take time off so that I could use this precious time to minister to my wife, our three daughters, and yes, myself. I don’t know what we would have done without our church family. They were a tower of strength for us on so many levels. This episode has also taught me that as pastors, our members are able and willing to minister to us in our time of personal crisis, but only if we are willing to grant them, as well as ourselves, permission to do so. As pastors, we need to learn a lesson from the



was going through. Not only did He understand, my pastor friend would say, but He also cared.

I found it interesting that, although I couldn’t bring myself to read God’s Word, strangely enough, I did find comfort in reading the sermons that I had shared with my congregations over the years. Somehow, reading the words that God had given me to preach to others now became a powerful source of strength and comfort to this discouraged preacher.


ministry of the apostle Paul. He understood that there should never be a time in our ministry where we felt ashamed to call on the saints and say, "Brothers, pray for us" (1 Thess. 5:25, NIV). There have been days in this storm when I could not pray for myself. During these times, the prayers of these faithful saints have seen us through.

Well, it has been some two years now since my wife, Maureen, and I were given the news that fateful afternoon, only to discover a year later that she had been misdiagnosed. Instead of having MS, tests showed that she had a different neurological disease that in many ways is much more challenging than the original diagnosis. But God is good. Although she has had to leave her work as a nurse, and has had to use the aid of both a cane and a wheelchair at times, her faith in God continues to stand tall.

As for me, I did return to the pulpit, and yes, the church was intact. But when I returned, I did so as a preacher with a different perspective about my God, my ministry, and yes, myself. Going through a storm of this magnitude has a way of changing not only the way we see our circumstances but also how we view ourselves. I have been reminded that sometimes God does not change our circumstances because He wants our circumstances to change us. As the words of the song so powerfully put it, "Sometimes He calms the storm, and other times He calms His child."²

Now don't get me wrong, the storm is far from over. There are days where my faith wavers and I experience what I call a "Job" moment. In life, there are some storms that will always be yours. But I have discovered that the key consists in learning how to preach through

them. And by preaching through a storm, it doesn't mean necessarily from the pulpit, although in some instances, this might be the case. But it means placing a newly found confidence in the Word of God. It means allowing the same Word that we so often preach to others, to preach to us.

As for my wife, she still struggles with the various challenges that this disease brings to the table. And barring some act of God, she will have this battle for the rest of her life. But as she continues to remind me, as well as our church family, "Although I may have this disease, this disease doesn't have me!" What encouraging words for me to hear as a pastor. For they come from the most important member in the pew, my wife. 

¹ During this time, I was pastoring the Seabrook Seventh-day Adventist Church in Seabrook, Maryland, United States.

² "Sometimes He Calms the Storm," by Scott Krippayne.

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Martin Weber, DMin, is communication director for the Mid-America Union of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, United States.



Keeping PKs in the church

What shall it profit pastors to baptize the whole city but lose their own children? To dedicate one's entire lifework to the salvation of other people's children while losing one's own is not only a tragedy but a travesty.

The following facts of spiritual life in the parsonage emerged among 40 attrition factors in my doctoral data,¹ from responses to my research question: *What influences from Seventh-day Adventist clergy parents may affect whether their children experience attrition from that denomination upon becoming adults?*

The greatest predictor of future faithfulness is whether the pastor's kid (PK) during their childhood takes initiative to approach a clergy parent to discuss spiritual matters. Among the most significant predictors of future attrition (or loss) is having parents enter the pastorate during their 30s. Whereas pastors who enter ministry in their 40s are the least likely to lose their adult children.

I emailed a 111-point questionnaire to each of 222 active and retired clergy in the Mid-America Union² who have adult children. Data collected from 113 questionnaires reveal the following summary of conclusions:

- Having a clergy grandparent is a significant stabilizing factor in the spiritual life of a PK.
- Parental conservatism regarding lifestyle standards is *not* statistically significant in attrition.
- Legalism regarding gospel doctrine is a moderately significant cause of attrition.

- Legalism regarding practicing the principles of the gospel is a major cause of attrition.
- For clergy parents to hold their own children to a higher behavioral standard is one of the highest causes of attrition. In other words, whether mother and father tend to be conservative or liberal makes no measurable difference in the attrition of their children—as long as they are nice about it.
- Lack of relationality in the pastoral family is the most serious cause of PK attrition. Pastors with the highest retention rate of adult children are those who managed to provide the most positive and joy-filled family experience in the parsonage and were close enough to talk about anything in an atmosphere of freedom that allowed children and teens latitude in developing their own faith experience.
- Closely associated with family relationality is the freedom and trust expressed in discussing controversial issues. No greater cause of attrition exists than to attempt to shield children from knowledge of, or to resist discussion about, church or denominational conflict.³ Congregational criticism of pastoral family members portends future attrition of adult children.

While these attrition factors are serious concerns, informed clergy parents need not feel that the souls of their children are necessarily imperiled.

Preventing attrition of clergy children

Many negative factors are unavoidable in parsonage life, but parents can be proactive in safeguarding the spirituality of their children. Consider, for example, the prospect of entering ministry during one's 30s—that uniquely treacherous entry point for their children. College theology departments should offer older students specialized instruction and perhaps help them find family counseling to resolve issues that could eventually hurt their children in the parsonage. Employing conferences should provide PKs and their parents nurture and fellowship. Retired clergy in the congregation could serve as spiritual grandparents to their pastor's children and might even mentor these thirtysomething pastors and their spouses.

Most significant in avoiding attrition is being able to discuss church problems in the parsonage while sustaining togetherness in the family circle and giving teens sufficient freedom to develop their own faith experience without the expectation of being supersaints. The parents' best defense against attrition includes fostering the positive elements of joyous relationality and intrinsic spirituality in the family while avoiding negative factors such as suppression, rigidity, and legalism.

Perhaps unexpectedly, I propose another preventative influence against future PK attrition: a grace-based practical application of the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief about heaven's sanctuary and its celestial judgment.

In the heart of Romans 8, a passage beloved by Christians everywhere, is comfort and instruction that highlights the role of both Father and Son in the heavenly sanctuary, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8:33, 34).⁴

Nobody in the church has the right to judge PKs—not even clergy parents. Pastors and their spouses do have a responsibility to train their children in the ways of God, but not even they possess the right to oppress older PKs by imposing human interpretations of right and wrong. God is the only Judge of human behavior. He alone has the authority to condemn, yet His predisposition is forgiveness and vindication. Jesus works with Him toward that purpose in the sanctuary.

In such a nurturing context of spiritual freedom, PKs as children and teens will feel safe about initiating spiritual conversations with their parents. Not only is this the greatest predictor of future faithfulness as adults, there is compelling evidence of what happens when PKs don't feel this freedom. Section III of my doctoral report notes that five PKs filled out questionnaires of their own and sent them to me. Their data is not sufficient in quantity to be scientific, but it provides anecdotal evidence of the spiritual carnage that comes from a lack of freedom. All but one of these PKs described their church experience as rigid, not flexible; closed, not open; exclusive, not inclusive; unfair, not fair; cold, not warm; dark, not bright; and dull, not exciting.

They reported strong disagreement with Adventist lifestyle standards. They seemed particularly offended about what they experienced as heavy-handedness in enforcing these standards and unwillingness to even dialogue about it. It was interesting to note that

most of these five alienated PKs still embrace many fundamental Adventist doctrines such as the Sabbath, yet they resolutely reject the church that teaches them. When asked if they might possibly be active members in the Adventist Church 20 years from now, if time lasts, they each replied "small chance" or "no chance."

One of the PKs responding to my questionnaire is not in attrition, being both a faithful attendee and participant in church life who will "absolutely" remain committed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He testified to the opposite in most of the above options, describing his parents' churches as warm, kind, bright, inclusive, fair, open, and exciting—yet still he experienced them as "stiff." It was interesting that this PK, an active disciple, seemed just as disappointed as the others with being "loaded down with restrictions" and rules that "almost always" "just didn't make sense." When asked whether programs at church while he was growing up made him think, he said it was "not at all true." Although he believes every Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief, he seriously questions the church's traditional behavioral standards and particularly an unwillingness to dialogue about them.

Together these PK responses provide a nonscientific yet compelling need for a church atmosphere that offers flexibility rather than rigidity and freedom rather than oppression. While not only essential for avoiding attrition—it is also scriptural: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

I believe from my data that many Seventh-day Adventists fail to realize not all moral issues are absolutes. While some things are clearly right or wrong, with other essentials God has left some ambiguity for the conscience to sort out. Prayer, for example, is a profoundly moral matter, but exactly how much to pray remains open to one's own conscience.

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Modesty also is a moral issue—but standards of modesty are not universal absolutes, as evident from various cultures around the world. For Adventists, jewelry has been an issue of enduring controversy. Many PKs express frustration with church policies, written or informal, that permit “acceptable” adornments like cufflinks and gaudy gold pins but forbid even the most demure necklace. Also frustrating to many is when obviously out-of-shape adult members lecture healthy teens about dairy or caffeine consumption while not even mentioning exercise and other basic health principles.

None of the PKs in my research demand that the Adventist Church adopt their views on lifestyle issues; they just want some latitude in living out their own conscience. Indeed, this is scriptural: “Let each be fully convinced in his own mind” (Rom. 14:5). Notice that Scripture doesn’t say “Do what feels good” or “Do what you want to do” in moral matters that are not absolutes. Rather, do what the Holy Spirit persuades you to do amid moral ambiguity.

Worship music is one of the top five issues of congregational conflict reported by clergy in my data.⁵ Some members canonize their personal musical preferences and go about imposing them upon the church. They care not that young adults and others want some variety. The psalms are thousands of years old, yet singing them in a contemporary tune becomes somehow problematic for many members who have no qualm condemning those who might see things a different way.

It may do little good to pray for PKs in attrition or other prodigals to come back to church if the person greeting (confronting) them in the church foyer stands as the frowning older brother of Christ’s Lucan

absence of negativity, such as anger and conflict, guilt and shame. By contrast, biblical peace is proactive and energetic, fulfilling God’s eternal purpose for the cosmos. *Shalom* includes wholeness, safety, fruitfulness, equality, and so much more, in the context of a loving faith community.

Jesus came to earth as the Prince of *Shalom* (Isa. 9:6). Being Jewish, He had *shalom* in mind when declaring, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Seventh-day Adventist clergy parents desperately need this blessedness, both ministering and receiving *shalom* within their churches and their families.

For the sake of preventing attrition of PKs and other young adults, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would do well to heed the

time-honored wisdom: *In essentials, unity. In nonessentials, liberty. In all things, charity.* ☑

NOBODY IN THE CHURCH HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE PKs—NOT EVEN CLERGY PARENTS. PASTORS AND THEIR SPOUSES DO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN IN THE WAYS OF GOD, BUT NOT EVEN THEY POSSESS THE RIGHT TO OPPRESS OLDER PKs BY IMPOSING HUMAN INTERPRETATIONS OF RIGHT AND WRONG.

parable. Condemning and divisive members must themselves be confronted by the church and disciplined if they refuse to cease their ungodly oppression and gossip. Church discipline for such members is a sacred responsibility from Scripture, “Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition” (Titus 3:10). Warn disrupters of church unity once and then again. If they cause trouble yet a third time, subject them to church discipline as Christ outlined in Matthew 18.

Surveying the data of my research project, both positive and negative, I envision a church that will be a safe and healthy place for its clergy and their children. I propose the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, commonly and superficially translated as “peace.” Some tend to regard peace as the

1 To obtain the data found in my paper titled, *Denominational Attrition Among Adult Children of Seventh-day Adventist Clergy*, visit the Web site of the General Conference Ministerial Association, www.ministerialassociation.com.

2 The Mid-America Union includes the nine-state region of the United States stretching north and south from Canada to the Oklahoma border and then from the eastern boundary of the Mississippi River west to the border of Utah, plus the northwest corner of New Mexico.

3 Not that every detail of every church issue should be revealed to PKs, which would violate confidentiality. The point is that instead of pretending that nothing bad happens in the church, parents should dialogue with their children in an age-appropriate manner.

4 All scriptures are from the New King James Version.

5 The top five problems in Mid-America Adventist churches as reported by the clergy subjects of my study: (1) power struggles among members, (2) pastoral conflict with lay leaders, (3) worship music style disputes, (4) disagreement about lifestyle standards, and (5) general church gossip (perhaps surprisingly, church finances tied for only 14th).

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The team

My colleagues and I were chatting as we waited for the train at the Morissett Station in Australia. The train was due in a few minutes, and we were the only ones waiting. This did seem odd, so I asked for a track timetable. The station master said, "Trains are half an hour earlier because of the track work being done toward the Sydney station."

I shared this information with the group, as well as additional insights from the amended timetable. The train would take us to Wyong, from there to Gosford we would be on a bus, then take a train all the way to Sydney, and a plane home to Perth. We had left plenty of time for all the connections and another part of our group had caught the "half an hour earlier" train and were on their way. I informed my colleagues that we had to make changes to and from buses to get the connecting train that would get us to the Sydney airport in time. All acknowledged the need to move quickly.

The group I was traveling with were all Seventh-day Adventist pastors who had just had a week of professional development at Avondale College with hundreds of other pastors from all over Australia.

The train ride to Wyong and the bus transfer went without incident. However, as the bus pulled into the Gosford station, I noticed the train to Sydney already on the platform. We were running on the overpass when it left.

One by one, the men trudged down to the platform with their

luggage. We regrouped and I looked at the timetable again. The next train would get us to Central Station at 6:25 P.M., which would leave us 25 minutes to get to the Qantas check-in counter by the 30-minute deadline before takeoff. Doable, but improbable. The group took the news philosophically. We were visitors to the state and traveling on public transport. What could we do?

The train arrived on time at Gosford. We all piled into the third carriage from the front at both doors. The pastors sat in various groups with lots of baggage piled around. Sitting in a train, waiting to go home after a week with no control over the progress has interesting affects on different personalities. One said, "Nothing we can do, so let's just relax and enjoy ourselves," and promptly went to sleep. Another, "We will never make it. I guess we'll have to stay in a hotel and get the morning flight." Another, "Why didn't anyone tell us that there was track work and the trains were earlier—we had plenty of time to get there if we had known." Others said, "Let's try and make it. You know, we can pray." And many of us did.

I was with the few who said, "Let's give it a try." I phoned Qantas Airlines to explain the predicament of 13 of its passengers booked on the flight to Perth that evening. It took several calls, as the train passes through many tunnels that are not mobile phone friendly. The Qantas staff were understanding and thanked me for the forewarning, but they were just as adamant that Qantas was unlikely to hold the

plane, since it costs them thousands of dollars each minute to delay an aircraft. Their only suggestion was to try our best to get there.

I also phoned one of my colleagues who had made the earlier train and told him our predicament. I asked him to speak to the Qantas check-in staff and tell them of our plight. He called back after their early check-in and told me much the same story as the Qantas staff. The consolation was that the rest of the pastoral group knew our predicament, and they were praying for us.

As we got closer to Central Station, we could see the train was going to be on time. I had traveled this route more than the others, and one of them suggested that I outline for the group the layout of Central Station and how to get to the airport platform. This seemed to help. One of the pastors had phoned a friend who lived in Sydney and traveled by train each day. He learned that we had four minutes to get from the arriving platform to the airport line. This was only possible if we ran and climbed the stairs rather than taking the elevator. As the train came into Central Station, pastors, suitcases, and boxes crowded the train doorways. As soon as the doors flung open, we were off.

There were people and bags going everywhere. The wheels of the suitcases sounded like a jet plane taking off. The pounding of shoes on the concrete platform sounded like a herd of stampeding elephants, and people noticed the 13 men running through Central Station. Other passengers heard the commotion, and

as we passed, their faces turned from shock to smiles. Some even cheered us on saying, "Go for it!" "Hope you make it." I was among the leading group, but my extra bag kept falling off the top of the wheeled suitcase. As I stopped to fix it, I saw people scattering, but one lady stopped and offered to carry an extra bag. People can be so kind.

When I reached the top of the stairs, the train had pulled up. The doors opened, and the first pastors jumped on the last train. I approached the train with my heart pounding and lungs puffing. I noticed the platform guard checking those arriving. He looked in my direction, but I dared not make eye contact. There were eight men yet to board this train. I stood on the platform with my bags in the open doors, so the automatic doors could not close. One by one, pastors, like straggling cows, staggered up the stairs with suitcases, boxes, and bags and jumped through the open door. Each time another approached and boarded the train, we would grab their luggage and cheer.

One pastor, who needed a hip replacement, hobbled on. Another, carrying his bags like an ox, was the last on board. The doors closed without the platform guard saying anything. Although I did not look at him, one of the guys said, "He had a huge grin on his face."

We praised each other for working together and making it this far. I reminded the guys of what was ahead of us—a flight of escalators to get out of the train station, two other escalators, as well as a fair distance to get to the Qantas check-in.

As soon as the train arrived at the Sydney Domestic terminal, the stampeding elephant circus began again—lots of noise, startled looks,

and cheers of support, with the more able-bodied pastors carrying luggage for those less able. We had three minutes to get to check-in. Could we do it? By the time I arrived at the Qantas counter, one pastor had beaten the 6:50 deadline and was booked in. I thought, *Maybe we can all do it.*

I went straight to the Qantas Club check-in line, and no one was in line. "How good is that?" I blurted out to the lady at the counter between deep breaths. I told her we were part


"Almost," I said, not even bothering to count.

"OK," were the sweetest words I had heard in a long time. "Line up at these three counters."

We were homeward bound. Our waiting colleagues rejoiced to see us in line to board the flight. I didn't sleep on the plane—no one in that group did—for the adrenaline lasted for hours.

I have pondered the many lessons from this train, bus, and plane trip. I'm glad with Jesus in my life that I

don't have to think that I will just "barely make it" into the heavenly home, as we barely "made it" while attempting to catch the train and the plane. I learned, too, that there are some very kind people around us whom we don't even know. And, all of the pastors involved believed we did the impossible—and that God was with us all the way. However, here's the best thought: while I'm on earth ministering to others through the power of God, I also have the privilege of working with a group of pastors who know, maybe even better

after our experience together, what the word *team* really means. 

I'M GLAD WITH JESUS IN MY LIFE THAT I DON'T HAVE TO THINK THAT I WILL JUST "BARELY MAKE IT" INTO THE HEAVENLY HOME, AS WE BARELY "MADE IT" WHILE ATTEMPTING TO CATCH THE TRAIN AND THE PLANE.

of a group, the others were already booked in, and we had run ahead to inform Qantas of our predicament.

"Just let me check," said the not-so-amused but efficient check-in lady, as she dialed a number.

I prayed silently, "Please God. We're so close!"

As she talked, I saw her nodding. I was more positive, but at the same time, she was seeing more and more people with heavy baggage staggering up, out of breath.

She held the phone and spoke to me, "How many of you?"

"Twelve," I replied.

"How much luggage?"

"I think about sixteen pieces."

"Are you all here?"



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Joy Wendt has the privilege of serving alongside her husband, David, who pastors in Pikeville and Graysville, Tennessee, United States.



Longing for an ordinary wife's life?

Journalists seem to relish any morsel of news about the defeat of a pastor's family. The headlines describe in gory detail one story after another in which a pastor's spouse has incurred ignominy. Other stories even showcase ministers' wives acting inappropriately in public. The wife of one popular megachurch pastor reportedly lost control in a dispute with a flight attendant just prior to the family's departure for vacation, causing her whole family to be deplaned and miss the flight.¹ If the report is true, why did she lose control and why have so much anger built up?

However, the scenario is not new. Consider this story of megachurch pastor Whang Sa-Sun who pioneered the Korean Methodist Church in San Francisco.

San Francisco was not a friendly place for Korean Americans in the early 1920s and 1930s. Nevertheless, it was here that Whang Sa-Sun felt called to labor. The first barrier was finding a vocation that would support him as he ministered. Even finding a building to rent to start a business was a challenge. Somehow, he found work, eventually setting up shop as a dry cleaner. But that was only his day job. His real passion? Sharing the gospel. Many long hours were spent helping others. B. Y. Choy, who knew this faithful minister for decades, writes, "Hundreds of Korean students and political refugees received advice, counsel and help in securing jobs. Many stayed at [Whang Sa-Sun's] home until they

found a place to live or got jobs.... He gave no attention to his own personal gains or glory but always concerned himself with the welfare and interests of others."²

Eventually, Pastor Whang also became a successful megachurch pastor. Did his wife lose control? Never in public, anyway. In fact, it was several years after his death that the feelings of his widow would come out. In a 1980 interview, she divulged, "As a pastor's wife I had no time for myself. For 24 hours my heart was heavy. So was my head. I longed for an ordinary wife's life. When will you leave pastoral work? I would plead with him. His stock answer: You should be grateful that we are doing the Lord's work."³

That's an interesting paradox—we are doing the Lord's work. Whether the pastor ministers in a megachurch or a small district, every pastoral family will find that job expectations cross and blur regularly into the lines of home and family. You remember the first time you became aware of this blending, don't you? Maybe it was when your husband told you that he felt the Lord was calling him into ministry, and you wondered exactly what that strange tone in his voice or faraway look in his eyes would mean when dreams collided with reality. Or perhaps when the day arrived for interviews with conference leaders, you sensed that you were more involved in the picture of ministry than you thought. You worried what to wear to make just the right impression, only to have your husband comment, "Could you

wear something less professional, maybe more domestic?" Maybe you were filled with excitement at the prospect of being able to be a support and encouragement to the man you love. You looked forward to working together in the great harvest field saving souls for the kingdom. Eagerly, you embraced inspired statements like this one:

A responsibility rests upon the minister's wife which she should not and cannot lightly throw off. God will require the talent lent her, with usury. She should work earnestly, faithfully, and unitedly with her husband to save souls. She should never urge her wishes and desires, or express a lack of interest in her husband's labor, or dwell upon homesick, discontented feelings. All these natural feelings must be overcome. She should have a purpose in life which should be unfalteringly carried out. What if this conflicts with the feelings and pleasures and natural tastes! These should be cheerfully and readily sacrificed, in order to do good and save souls.⁴

Wonderful thoughts. But what if your pastor husband has been in a district for two years longer than you think he should have been? At least it seems that way to you now. You wish you could move today. Right now! Maybe it's an undercover ring of gossipers you've just discovered and you feel hurt and betrayed. Or, the level of dysfunction and dwarfed spirituality

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**Reaching out and Transforming the
Community for God and His Kingdom**

among some of the members of your husband's small churches seems too unbelievable for even a reality TV show. You feel overwhelmed and afraid that your children might be permanently influenced by all the things they see and hear. Or maybe, like former pastor's wife Stephanie Elzy once experienced,

IN TIME OF FIERY TRIALS, IT IS EASY TO BLAME THE MINISTRY. WE IMAGINE THAT IF WE DID NOT LIVE IN THE PROVERBIAL FISHBOWL OR HAVE TO BE DRAINED BY BEING AROUND PEOPLE ALL THE TIME, THINGS WOULD BE BETTER.

the status quo and financial strain are crushing you.⁵ Perhaps it's the schedule of your husband, and you vow that if he answers his cell phone one more time during dinner, you'll throw it out the window. Maybe you long for time for yourself, like Mrs. Whang Sa-Sun. Do you find yourself wishing as she did that your husband had another job, one that wouldn't affect or involve the family so much? Do you long for an "ordinary wife's" life, as she did?

Again, you're not the only one. Even the faithful wife of J. N. Loughborough, a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the formative years, must have

wished for a "normal" life too. We aren't told that she pleaded with her husband to leave the work as Mrs. Sa-Sun did, but we do find her family among the 30 believers who left the gospel work for more promising fields. This group also included J. N. Andrews, another minister. They all decided to move to Waukon, Iowa, and take up farming. At least farmers could see the results of their hard labors. Weeds and weather as foes seemed much easier, or at least less draining, than dealing with people. Financial strain, humiliation, criticism, and feelings of failure due to no apparent success were constant companions on the path of ministry. Surely, this land with its fertile fields promised better returns. We read, "The young ministers in the group had found the work in the cause hard, the separation from family difficult, especially for the wife and mother, and there was no plan for regular financial support. It seemed that the enemy was stepping in to thwart the work of God just at a time when the outlook was most promising."⁶ Further, "This was a time when 'the West' with its good farmland was opening up to settlers. This lured many families from their rocky New England farms to the promise of a more comfortable and easy life."⁷

Thankfully, the same God who had compassion on Elijah when he left the work cares for pastors' families in a special way. Nowhere in the story do we read that God condemned His servant for fleeing the scene of battle and becoming depressed and overwhelmed (although He did tenderly encourage Elijah to get back to work).⁸

God didn't give up on His servants in Waukon, either. He sent James and Ellen White on a long journey to remind them of their first love and calling to ministry. But He did not stop there. Just as He took care of Elijah's physical need by feeding him, so He remembered His servants who repented and left Waukon to take up the gospel plow again. Church leaders began

to realize the importance of regular and systematic compensation for ministers. As pastoral families, we still benefit from that decision. What about Mrs. Sa-Sun and her husband? She concludes, "When he retired [in 1942] I realized my longings for a comfortable life was wrong. I really felt sorry for my husband and the Lord. So I repented in my prayers sobbing much tears."⁹

In time of fiery trials, it is easy to blame the ministry. We imagine that if we did not live in the proverbial fishbowl or have to be drained by being around people all the time, things would be better.

I confess that I have been tempted—when under extreme pressure caused by conflict with unhealthy or unreasonable church members—to fantasize about the days when my husband owned his own business as a contractor with the state. Bringing in twice the money he now makes, it seems that he made more money then for less hassle. Visions of our picturesque home and parklike lawn overlooking mountains and fertile valleys come to mind. This place that we owned before being called to ministry is the same home that he grew up in. It's the place where we worked together and watched our babies grow into children. This all comes into my mind in a rich, nostalgic glow of glory—never mind that there were trials then too. No, this temptation to long for the leeks and onions of Egypt¹⁰ comes to me as perfect and flawless—a surreal imagination of our own personal Waukon, Iowa. *Those were the good ole days*, a voice whispers, *the days when you were an ordinary wife and you didn't have to put up with all the trials that come from being a pastor's wife. People having petty issues or criticizing your children or your husband. Not to mention how the incessant expectations of others wears on your personal spirituality and joy or puts stress on your marriage! Wouldn't you love to be an ordinary wife again?* The temptation culminates in that single thought.

Would I? I wonder. Then, another thought presses gently into my mind, *What kind of ordinary wife?* I remember a book I read about army wives. Even though people compare being a pastor's wife to being married to someone in the military, the situations are very different. There may be some similarities, but a close look reveals that the expectations of a military family are even harder. Yes, I have a lot of respect for military families and the tough issues that they must face. But military and minister's families are not alone in having troubles due to fishbowl living. Many other professions such as politicians, teachers, lawyers, and many in the medical field deal with these issues. And, the list could go on. Aside from afflictions that come as a result of one's profession, we must remember that many of our struggles come from trying to survive in today's culture. Family psychologist, Dr. Kevin Leman, in his book *Keeping Your Family Together When the World is Falling Apart*, says it this way, "One major reason the families of our nation are in trouble is that moms and dads are not really putting each other or the family first."¹¹ He further states that even though many people think they do put family first, they become victims of trying to have it all.

I think back to the times when I've felt overwhelmed. There have been some real issues I've had to address. Setting boundaries and coordinating my schedule with my husband's to ensure time to build our relationship and take our date night, for instance. Most of all, I have had to keep my own priorities straight—putting God first, then husband, children, and ministry. When I feel overwhelmed by my own pain, my vision can become distorted and I risk blaming the ministry and longing for the idyllic life of an ordinary wife—which is merely a mirage, as Mrs. Sa-Sun learned through hindsight. Could it be that the enemy who so often "comes in like a flood"¹² has chosen to overwhelm me just at the moment

when God and my husband most need me to be strong? Maybe I need to remember the words of Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

I don't wish to be an ordinary wife anymore. I just pray that God will help me to be a loving wife to David when he needs me most. Yes, a loving wife to *Pastor David*. After all, sometimes his job leaves him feeling drained, too, and the last thing he needs is a suggestion to move—to Waukon, Iowa. ❏

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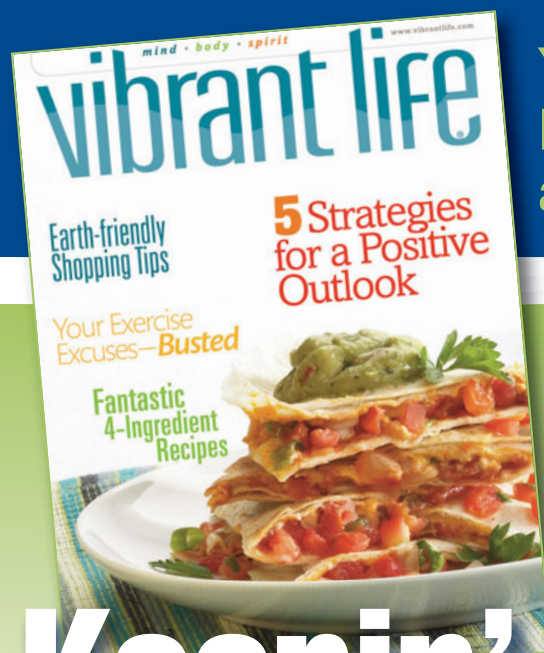
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Keepin' It Fresh

Over the past few years the Adventist health message has gained in popularity thanks to an article in *National Geographic*, *The Blue Zones* book, and even a feature on *Oprah*. Heather Quintana, editor of *Vibrant Life* magazine, shares some insights about what the church's health journal is doing to take advantage of the general public's interest in our health message.

What new approaches are you taking toward the health message?

Jesus spent a lot of time healing mind, body, and spirit. *Vibrant Life* shares His ministry by meeting people where they are and by providing information and encouragement that will help them live abundantly.

We strive to present health principles in a modern way that works for people who are busy. We want to give practical, affordable suggestions that fit into demanding schedules and help people prevent and fight

disease. For example, some topics include healthy foods for less than 50 cents, five-minute health boosters, four-ingredient recipes, the benefits of Sabbath rest, and simple exercises you can do at home without equipment or a gym membership.

When people open the magazine, they'll see a fresh, new design full of color and life. There are more links to bonus material on the Web site, VibrantLife.com. For the first time we have a regular column and a blog about going green that describe how we can be better stewards of our environment. We have a Trend Watch column that offers a wholistic, Adventist perspective on health fads; a variety of accomplished chefs sharing their favorite recipes; firsthand experiences about making healthy changes; and more information for young families trying to make healthy choices.

How are you incorporating spirituality into health?

Spirituality is a beautiful component of overall health. Having a relationship with God empowers people to make positive changes in their lives. If you're struggling with depression or hopelessness, it affects your activity level, your diet, and your overall well-being. Conversely, when your life includes healthy components such as rest, healthful foods, strong relationships, fresh air, and exercise, you've cleared the way for spiritual growth. *Vibrant Life* recognizes the undeniable connection of the mental, physical, and spiritual components of life.

Whom is *Vibrant Life* written for?

Whether you are fit and vigorous or struggling with health problems, *Vibrant Life* has information that will help you move closer to the life you were designed to live. Most important, the magazine is created for sharing the Adventist approach to health and wholeness. It's a wonderful way to introduce people to God's plan for us to have harmony of mind, body, and spirit. You can give subscriptions to neighbors, friends, and coworkers; order a stack to place in a local grocery store, business, or doctor's office; or use it as a part of local church health initiatives, such as blood drives and cooking classes.

Vibrant Life is published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. To receive a free trial issue of *Vibrant Life*, please call us at 800-456-3991 or visit us at www.VibrantLife.com.



Heather Quintana says *Vibrant Life* recognizes the undeniable connection of the mental, physical, and spiritual components of life.

A D V E R T O R I A L

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The biblical role of the pastor

What does the pastor do? Is there a job description? Is there a *biblical* job description? When I graduated from the seminary and went to my first church, I asked several seasoned pastors these questions. One answered, "Just go out there and make the people happy." Another encouraged me to visit, visit, and visit more. Another one felt that the main role of the pastor is to bring new people to the church.

According to the Scriptures, though, what should the pastor do? Do we have a model in the Scriptures that might help us understand the role?

After many years of observation and careful examination of the literature, I found two distinctive pastoral roles: the traditional and the contemporary.

The traditional and contemporary roles of the pastor

For many centuries, people viewed the role of the pastor as a servant caregiver who does the following:

1. Teaching/preaching of traditional doctrine
2. Caregiving, such as visitation, counseling, comforting, and taking care of the needs of people
3. Performing rites of passage, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals
4. Administration, such as taking care of meetings, putting together a bulletin, and developing

programs for the church and evangelism

5. And finally, serving as ambassador of the church to the community

People expect pastors to do this, and pastors also view their role in this way. Actually, pastors did this for many centuries.

But around the 1970s and 1980s, a new understanding started to emerge. Many book authors and pastors of megachurches started to see the role of the pastor as a chief executive officer (CEO/leader), who casts a vision and rallies and motivates people to carry on the new vision in a changed and healthy environment.

Most books on church growth and leadership today argue that if pastors continue to do what pastors have done for so many years, they will fail. Greg Ogden, in *Unfinished Business*,¹ proposes that the pastor should be a visionary leader who constantly builds other leaders, casts the vision, and changes the culture and structure of the church, while doing all of this with an eye for mission, evangelism, and growth.

However fresh, insightful, and useful, both these ideas are weak theologically. The old model of a servant caregiver does not lend itself to growth, but creates a culture of people dependent upon the pastor, a role utterly inconsistent with the biblical principles of the priesthood of all believers. It also encourages people to focus on their needs and thus hinders the growth of the kingdom of God.

The new model of a CEO/leader combines a mixture of some biblical insights and adaptation of business practices. Most of the church growth books are basically books about leadership models adapted to the church.

But, many dangers lurk behind this model. First, it might lead people to follow a charismatic personality rather than biblical principles. Second, this new model also focuses on the needs of the local church to the exclusion of the global church. The emphasis of this model, and this should be noted, becomes the building of a megachurch rather than building a healthy church. Finally, any model we adapt needs biblical and theological development. The role of the pastor should be based on a biblical model and have a strong theological foundation.

So, then, what are we to do as pastors?

The answer can be found in the ministry of Jesus. The New Testament account reveals that Jesus did five things: (1) Jesus built His relationship with His Father, (2) He preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, (3) He met the needs of people, (4) He made disciples through the power of the Spirit, and (5) He gave His life as a sacrifice. These are the keys to true biblical ministry.

Relationship with the Father

Over and over, the Scriptures show us that Jesus placed the highest priority of His life on spending time alone with the Father. His life reveals an intense passion for the presence of

God. His heart longed and hungered to touch the heart of God.

Note the following incidents:

- “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God” (Luke 6:12).²
- “After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone” (Matt. 14:23).
- “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35).

Jesus lived a life of prayer. He started every day in communion with the heavenly Father. He ended every day in close relationship with His Father. At times, He even spent the whole night in communion with His Father. Jesus actually was in touch with His heavenly Father all the time.

The first thing that Jesus did each day was to fill the well of His being with the presence of His Father; He then lived with heaven in mind all day long. He managed His time by moving from being to behaving. His being was about being in union with the Father and experiencing the joy of His Sonship. And His doing was about doing the will of the Father. This made His doing so effective as He received grace and power from the Father.

In *Steps to Christ*, Ellen White said, “His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.”³

Ellen White, in the same book, also admonishes us to start every day with prayer.

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I

lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.⁴

When the pastor lives a life of prayer like Jesus and becomes intentional about discipleship and spiritual formation, God will use them to transform the church into a sanctuary for spiritually transformed lives. Jesus said, “My house will be called a house of prayer” (Matt. 21:13). He did not say that His church should be a place of singing or preaching or doing ministry, however important these things may be. The church is about leading people to the throne of grace to experience the presence of God and receive power from Him. Unfortunately, too many technicians have invaded the church with programs and ideas and turned it into a human institution rather than the living body of Christ. When we live a life of connectedness with the heavenly Father, the church becomes a sanctuary of prayer, grace, and the dwelling of the presence of God.

Jesus’ hunger for the presence of God should be our motivation and inspiration to be more and more like Him.

Preach the gospel

Jesus often preached, proclaiming a message of God’s love. In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, in Luke 4:18, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, / because he has anointed me / to preach good news to the poor.” Also, Matthew 9:35 says, “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom.” Jesus taught the people every day, giving guidance through the Word and

calling them to confess their sins and to experience a transformed life.

The ministry of the Word always leads people to transformed lives. There is power in the Word. The word of God brought this world into existence. The word brought Jesus Christ from the grave. And the Word brings us back to spiritual health and meaningful change.

From an early age, Jesus developed passionate love for the Scriptures. He learned them and taught them with power and authority (Luke 2:46–50). His love for the Father motivated Him to read His Book and learn about His will.

The pastor should always lead people to a better understanding of the Word of God. Notice the following vital spiritual things that the Word does for us.

- God’s Word gives us life (Phil. 2:16).
- God’s Word can make us righteous (1 Cor. 15:1, 2).
- God’s Word can produce growth (1 Pet. 2:2).
- God’s Word sanctifies us (John 17:7).
- God’s Word gives us wisdom (Ps. 119:98).

So often we reduce Scripture to mere information. Paul reminds us that the Scriptures give us a new life in Jesus. Paul’s command to Timothy urged him to give careful attention to the public reading and preaching (expounding) of the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13). In his second epistle, he reminds Timothy that the whole of Scripture is divinely inspired and therefore profitable for “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things

new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.⁵

It's time to stop rehearsing what we believe and start looking at what difference it makes. We need spiritual renewal more than knowledge. We must study the Bible, not for curiosity, but for a new heart. That encapsulates the essence of the power of the Word. Jesus did not preach sociology, politics, or psychology; He always preached the Word. For this reason, He had power and authority.

Meet the needs of the people

Often the Bible says that Jesus, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). Jesus loved people. He knew that lost people matter to God, therefore, lost people mattered to Him.

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."⁶

Christ's method builds relationships and meets needs. The first thing Jesus did was to mingle with people, desiring their good. By doing so, He touched their hearts. The second thing Jesus did was to show sympathy for them. The way He did this was that He met them at their daily vocations and manifested an interest in their secular affairs. The third thing that He did was to win their confidence. When we build a relationship, when the needs are met, and when the heart is touched, then we bid people to follow Jesus.

Notice the progressive steps that Christ took in witnessing: He started by mingling with people and ended up calling them to be disciples.

Making disciples

As soon as He began His public ministry, Jesus began to call disciples. He called and empowered twelve men to be His disciples—twelve men who would champion His evangelistic cause. As Robert Coleman says in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, "His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. . . . Men were to be His method of winning the world to God."⁷

The wisdom of His method centered in the fundamental principle of concentration upon those men whom He intended to use to transform the world, not programs, and not the masses. Theologically speaking, this has always been the methodology of Jesus. Jesus challenged His disciples for this reason by saying, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2).

Jesus basically says that we have a math problem. We need more workers, more disciples, to gather the harvest, so go and make disciples. Our role is to pray for the harvest and especially for harvesters. God's role is to send us people who will be the new harvesters.

The need to build disciples is so fundamental that Jesus spent three and a half years in full-time discipleship formation. In fact, if Jesus had not built His disciples, there would not be a church today.

A life of service and sacrifice

There are two important truths about Christ. First, He was a Servant Leader. Any study of Christian leadership is incomplete unless we study the servant sacrificial life of Christ. "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45, MLB). "'I am among you as one who serves'" (Luke 22:27, MLB). The King of the whole universe was not into self-glorification, self-

satisfaction, power, or control. He was into service and ministry.


The second truth about Jesus is that He gave His life as a living sacrifice; to redeem us, Jesus lived and suffered and died. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death at Calvary, God paid the price of our redemption. In fact, the price paid for our redemption, the infinite price paid by God the Father in sending His Son to die on our behalf, should give us an idea of just how valuable we are to God. Jesus declared, "'The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost'" (Luke 19:10). Lost people matter to God. Thus, if I am to be a genuine pastor and disciple of Jesus Christ, then lost people will matter to me as well. The pastor's role is to instill this value in the heart of their congregation.

This sacrificial life manifests itself on at least two levels. The first level is to live a life of giving—of time, of resources, and of life. The second level is to give our lives in sacrificial giving, even to death.

God calls us to live the life Jesus lived. Pastoral ministry is not about us, but about Him—about knowing and serving Him.

Conclusion

So what does the pastor do?

First and foremost, we need to deepen our relationship with the Father through prayer that results in an intimate relationship with Him. Then we will be able to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God and build leaders to take care of the needs of the people. Authentic leadership in the church is about servant leadership. Jesus came to serve and not to be served. He came to offer His life as sacrifice. He calls us to do the same. 

1 Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

2 Unless otherwise noted, all texts quoted are from the NIV.

3 Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1908), 94.

4 Ibid., 70.

5 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 171.

6 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 143.

7 Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Old Tappan, NJ: Spire Books, 1963), 21.

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Unity: How good, pleasant, and triumphant

How good and pleasant it is / when brothers live together in unity" (Ps. 133:1, NIV). That familiar and sage advice from the psalmist comes as God's desire for all humankind, especially for Christians—and even more especially for Seventh-day Adventist Christians. God's plan includes having a devotion to unity that permeates the multifaceted and intricate patterns that make up our lives—our church life, our leadership life, our work life, our family life, and most importantly, our innermost life where we meet our God at an intimate level.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we know that time is running out, rapidly. Satan knows this as well, and he increases the challenges faced by humankind as he tries to overwhelm and destroy all of God's creation, particularly the Christian community. Satan hopes, thereby, to frustrate God's plan for our redemption and our eternal life. In practical terms, this means Satan wages wars, spreads pandemic diseases, hurricanes, floods, and fires, and creates interpersonal strife of every kind. We are advantaged, though, because we are told that these things would come, and when they do come we know that God, whom we serve, is in complete control. We have the assurance that God, in His loving mercy, will give us direction on how to go through whatever trials Satan causes.

Additionally, God, in His infinite wisdom, has shown us that when Satan tries to upset the success of our individual and corporate lives, our survival lies in how well we embrace

Christian unity. Ellen White stresses the need for unity in no uncertain terms: "Union brings strength; disunion, weakness. United with one another, working together in harmony for the salvation of [humankind], we shall indeed be 'laborers together with God.' Those who refuse to work in harmony greatly dishonor God."¹ We can't help but be convinced of the advantages of unity as we read further the insight God gave His prophet. We can almost sense her solemn, yet loving concern for those who choose to be at cross-purposes with each other when she wrote that if they "could draw aside the curtain veiling the future and see the result of their disunion they would surely be led to repent."²

Dangers of disunity

Satan tries to confuse the issue of unity by inducing Christians to equate unity with uniformity. It is not. Unity is the spirit of resolve that unites Christians—especially Adventist Christians—in a common commitment to act for the greater and community good of the church, to stand as one for God's cause. A significant part of the world persists in self-seeking, grasping for power and money, and pursuing pleasure solely for gratifications in their own narrow sphere. When Christians show disunity, we provide vehicles to increase Satan's power and further his plans because we no longer demonstrate a solid united force for good. All too frequently, our disunity leads to a loss of goodwill and translates into money in the world's

coffers—money that could be used to help further God's cause.

Ellen White clearly states that "he [Satan] will war against them [the people of God], and seek to divide and scatter them, that they may grow weak and be overthrown. The people of God should move understandingly, and should be united in their efforts."³ Further, "I saw that God's people should act wisely and leave nothing undone on their part to place the business of the church in a secure state."⁴ The obvious conclusion? That the secure state of the church's business is achieved when its leaders are united in that purpose.

As with any winning team, we gain strength from each other's diligence and focus on the united good. Individuals who forget or disregard the team, only weaken the team—no matter how brilliant the move or personally beneficial. Hear the firm, yet still loving warning, "One professed Christian who moves unadvisedly does much harm to the cause of present truth."⁵ The team wins—not the individual.

A case might be made that individual, independent action obtains better results; that we waste the time spent in gaining consensus. But find out where God stands, "These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amendable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course independent of the brethren."⁶


Do we get it? Persuading Christians to choose an independent path is Satan's "special work." Such a course compromises our ability to "place the business of the church in a secure state."⁷

Moreover, the essential harm done when we lack unity is ultimately to our individual selves—to our spiritual lives. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross testifies to us that God has a personal concern for each one of us as His children. Jesus' life is inextricably tied to His family on earth. His plan and purpose for us includes having a trusting and loving relationship with Him—that we grow in grace and in His nurture. The twin component to that loving relationship with Jesus comprises a loving state of unity among ourselves. When we have that unity, we become avenues through which God will work for His children and His church.

Unity and the church's advance

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, since its organization, has

created financial mechanisms that demonstrate those Christian principles of unity, selflessness, and preparation for the final hours of this earth's history. Our history is rich with the tradition of selfless support. From the returning of tithe to the giving of generous mission offerings, we have sustained the work of God beyond our local church and conference. Further, we have established revolving funds to help those entities whose funds are scarce and where "worldly" resources will not take the risk of assisting or would seek to make a profit. Loans to sister organizations from these revolving funds have saved those organizations from suffering for lack of capital. We have created an insurance company to insure the church, pooling capital together so that funds are available for designated disasters. When disaster strikes in any part of the world, we give of our money, time, and skills to rebuild churches, schools, and generally aid stricken people. These are all examples of Seventh-day Adventist Church unity.

Seventh-day Adventist Church unity equates with unity in spiritual growth, in belief, in relationships, and in mission. To that end, we are to be sympathetic of each other's challenges, have confidence in each other's abilities, and work for each other's well-being. The triumph of our God-given mission—from the local congregation, to the local conference, to the union conference, to the division—results because we refuse to stray from God's plan of unity; that we stand united as one with one purpose. In so doing, we will prove the wisdom of God, for indeed, it is good and pleasant for brothers to live together in unity. In fact, it is the only viable way. 

- 1 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 8:240.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 1:210.
- 4 Ibid., 211.
- 5 Ibid., 212.
- 6 White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1962), 29.
- 7 White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:211.

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If you pastor more than one church—we want to hear from you

Here at the *Ministry* magazine editorial offices, we are planning another issue featuring and recognizing the work of pastors who have more than one church. In order for this issue to be valuable to ministers around the world, we need your participation. You are invited to prepare an article for *Ministry* magazine. Here are some suggested topics you may consider:

- Training lay leaders to effectively work with you
- Designing sermons to meet the needs of different churches
- Addressing family life in a multichurch district with special emphasis on children
- Organizing the evangelistic outreach in a district
- Coordinating boards and committees in a district
- Working with the communities in the district
- Creating a spirit of cooperation among the churches
- Recognizing the needs of the pastor's spouse and children for continuity as the pastor preaches in a different church each week

If you pastor several churches, you will no doubt have other topics in mind.

NEXT STEPS:

- Email, write, or call and discuss with us the topic or topics you are suggesting.
- Once we have agreed on the specific topic, we will ask you to proceed with the writing.

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU BY APRIL 15, 2009.

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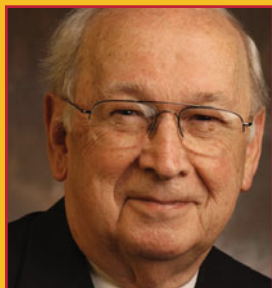


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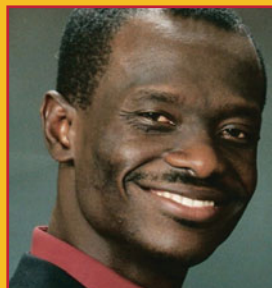


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When you move to a new district: Pointers to a positive ministry

Moving to a new district every so often is not a strange phenomenon to Adventist pastors. Such moves involve both challenges and blessings. While pastors find it difficult to leave behind church family, friends, and familiar surroundings, the move also provides an opportunity to leave behind mistakes and enjoy a fresh start in a new place. As one who has gone that route many a time, I have discovered that the first one hundred days in the new district are important to set the direction and the vision of your ministry for your new congregation.

Let that vision and direction include at least the following ten pointers.

1. Begin with a transforming touch (Luke 10:1–3). During your first month, establish an outreach advisory committee. The church may already have such a committee or a personal ministries committee, but set out with transforming objectives. Staff it with members who are outgoing. Include your first elder, treasurer, and clerk. Inaugurate the committee with a consecration service centered around the baptism, dedicating it as a birthing chamber for new citizens of God's kingdom. Warn the resident "spiders"—whose "cobwebs" fill the seldom-used baptism—that their days are numbered because the baptism will be in regular use, at least once a month. As a group, lay plans for seeding, cultivating, and reaping your new territory. Include training events for lay Bible instructors and intercessory prayer warriors. Have

the outreach committee present the plans with the church board for input and approval; then share the plans with the church at large as a strategy to reach their neighborhoods and community. As the members respond, have a card for them to record their commitment. A public commissioning service (laying on of hands) will acknowledge the need of the Holy Spirit to empower them as soul winners. Have weekly testimonies in the church of what God is doing in people's lives. Have regular outreach committee meetings to keep the vision moving forward. We need more churches focused on the mission and mobilized for ministry.

2. Seek the lost to strengthen the saved (Matt. 28:18–20). Show that God sent you to this district "to seek and save the lost" in cooperation with Jesus. When more and more members become personally involved in sharing their faith, praying for the salvation of others, and winning souls, there is a growing strength in the entire congregation. Your outreach advisory committee can be a great ally in this. Try one (or more) of these steps during your first few months:

- Early in your ministry, end your sermon with an appeal for baptism, transfer of membership, and rededication to Jesus and the mission of the church.
- Schedule a baptism and potluck in three months and each month afterward. During the potluck, the new believer and their friendship triad are the guests of honor.

- Identify those closest to uniting with the church and arrange for a special Sabbath School class, preparing them for baptism. Involving an elder can help you team teach.
- Schedule your own evangelistic series or a prophecy seminar to take place six to eight months after your arrival. By scheduling it early, your members will still come to hear you preach and might bring friends. Better yet, involve one or two lay leaders as partners in presenting the series. They'll love you forever as everyone sees that soul winning is not just the job of professionals.
- Preach one of your first sermon series on the gospel commission, the lost sheep, coin, and son of Luke 15.
- Invite the entire congregation to begin praying for specific people they would like to see accept Jesus and embrace the Adventist message within the next six months.
- Study the mission of the church with your elders and/or church board, looking particularly at the book of Acts in the Bible, plus Ellen White's classics on soul winning, such as *Evangelism*, *Gospel Workers*, *Christian Service*, *Pastoral Ministry*, and *The Acts of the Apostles*.

3. Get involved with the community (Matt. 5:13, 14). You are a child of the King of kings and an ambassador to the communities you will be serving. Instead of seeing moving

chores (finding a house, updating your driver's license) as hassles, look at them as opportunities to get out into the community to meet people. As you rub shoulders with the real estate agent, the grocery store clerk, other clergy, government employees, and others, silently pray that each one will come to know, love, serve, and share Jesus. If possible, introduce yourself as the new Seventh-day Adventist pastor, and ask if they have any prayer requests. Invite them to church activities. Sometimes you will even be able to pray with them right then and leave them something inspiring to read. We need more Adventist believers who let their light shine, and you can model it in your new community.

4. *Follow a preaching schedule* (2 Tim. 4:1–5). Preaching schedules can empower. In consultation with your elders, set up one for the next six to twelve months. In the schedule, include a Sabbath every month for an elder, church board member, young person, or guest speaker to speak whether you are out of town or not. Those who have never preached before can tell their personal conversion story and share several texts that made a difference in their lives. Ask your elders for their take on the pressing needs of the congregation, and accommodate these in the schedule. You can almost be guaranteed to need a series on Home and Family, Christian Stewardship and Life Management, and Using Your Spiritual Gifts in Ministry. Preaching a series each year on the benefits of Adventist distinctives (e.g., the blessings of the Sabbath, sanctuary, salvation, spiritual gifts, stewardship, Scriptures, state of the dead, Second Coming, sin's annihilation) becomes very affirming and valuable. In your schedule, remember to include Sabbaths for Communion, special events (graduations, Mother's and Father's Days, and Christmas, for example) and baptisms. Your early sermons will probably be remembered better

than your later ones. So make sure the church is a safe place with truth preached from a heart of love, and where Jesus is always lifted up.

5. *Visit your members at home* (Acts 2:44–47). Set aside one to three days/nights and one afternoon per week for home, hospital, and jail visitation. Take an elder, deacon, church board member, young person, or new believer with you on a rotating basis. Thus you are developing future leaders for the church. One

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of the highest priorities is to visit any in-town visitors to your church by Monday evening. With member visitation (ask your clerk for a current list), consider getting into the homes of all attending members first, encouraging them in daily personal Bible study, family worship, and finding a ministry they enjoy. Visits can be brief—20 to 40 minutes—but should give you an opportunity to learn about their family and pray for any prayer requests they have. They will tell relatives, friends, and inactive members about your visit and maybe later go with you or others to see them. We need more in-home interaction among the body of Christ for it to function well, and you can help get it started through home visitation!

6. *Plan your board meetings* (1 Cor. 1:9, 10). Church board

meetings need not be boring; they can be instruments of leadership training and church development and growth. Begin your church board meetings with Bible reading, prayer, and faith-sharing experiences. Let your first agenda item address soul-winning activities and plans. When you do this, the rest of the meeting tends to go better. Other agenda items can be handled more effectively or postponed until next time. Board members are happier when they are

more focused on who is being saved than on how much is being saved. I like to designate one board meeting a quarter as a church business meeting to cast vision, hear reports, share spiritual victories, and vote necessary financial and membership items. Your church will grow spiritually if your leaders grow spiritually. At your first board meeting in the new district, challenge each person to spend an extra ten minutes a day in personal communion with God for the next month and be ready to talk about their experience at the next board meeting.

7. *Connect with the kids* (Titus 2:6–8). Find something to help you connect with the kids in the church, school, and community, especially during your first couple of months. You can open the door for kids at the school, or play with them during recess or physical education time. You can tell a story and share a Bible verse as a devotional at the Pathfinder Club meeting or go camping with them. You can help with transportation for a youth or school field trip. You can surprise them by remembering their names. You can involve children and youth on Sabbath morning individually (Scripture reading, special music, greeting, collecting offering, prayer, or preaching, for example) or as a group (school choir, Pathfinder or youth Sabbath, or greeting and ushering team one Sabbath a month, for instance). We need the next generation to be equipped by caring and loving adults

to become church leaders and soul winners, and you can model this to the congregation.¹

8. *Energize the church through small groups* (Heb. 10:23–25). Encourage lay-led, short-term (two to three months) small groups of all kinds where members can enjoy fellowship and Bible study and learn to minister to each other rather than be dependent entirely on the pastor or elders. Each group needs a leader, an assistant, and a host to get started. Groups can meet an hour a week any time of the day in homes, during lunch break, or after school. Focus these group sessions on Bible studies—characters of the Bible, books of the Bible, parables and miracles of the Bible, and others. Stay biblical. Make them contextual, and link them with weddings, baby dedications, funerals, or anointing services, for example. Small groups need to become a lifestyle, not just a program, of the church.²

9. *Care for family and wellness* (Heb. 11:6, 7; 12:1). Schedule and protect family time each week. Find what works for you at this stage in your family and life. For us, this includes a family activity each week that we take turns picking and planning, family worship each day, and supper together as often as

possible. We need more families in our churches that are strong, healthy, and committed, and you can model this for others.³ Schedule and protect fitness time each week, as well. I have found that a 30-minute walk by myself, or better yet, with my wife, can clear my mind, strengthen my energy, and invigorate my soul. Every so often, I do a self-check on which item of NEWSTART (Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in God's Power) needs the most attention in my life and ask God for help to improve. God wants to help us prolong our life and ministry. We need more church members who are healthy and happy, and you can model this as well.⁴

10. *Above all, retain personal fellowship with God as your Foundation* (Jer. 29:11–13). One of my favorite quotations comes from Ellen White's *The Great Controversy*: "It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for

ourselves before God."⁵ We all need personal communion with God every day. This is not time for sermon preparation, though lots of verses in the Bible will start crying out, "Preach me! Preach me!" I encourage you, in spite of (or maybe because of) all the new pressures of a new challenge, to carve out a regular time, place, and plan to meet each day with your Creator and Savior. During this treasured time, He will rewire your brain and priorities for that day, give you ideas that will save you hundreds of hours of mistakes, and remind you of His love and care for you and your family. He is the real Leader. This is His work and He will show you what part He wants you to play in it for that day.

Begin your new district move with these positive pointers, and you will find your ministry a blessing to the one who gives and to the one that receives. ■

- 1 For a collection of short articles on youth ministry, visit <http://npucnewsletter.wordpress.com/category/youth-ministry/>.
- 2 For a collection of short articles on small groups, visit <http://npucnewsletter.wordpress.com/category/small-groups/>.
- 3 For collection of short articles on family life for church leaders, visit <http://npucnewsletter.wordpress.com/category/family/>.
- 4 For a collection of short articles on health and fitness for church leaders, visit <http://npucnewsletter.wordpress.com/category/health-temperance/>.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), 598.

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RESOURCES

Help! I'm Being Followed: What to Do When You've Been Called to Lead, by Clinton A. Valley, Hagerstown, MD: Autumn House Publishing, 2008.

Leadership in concept and practice lies in tension as we make the journey from the modern to postmodern period in both the secular and the religious realms.

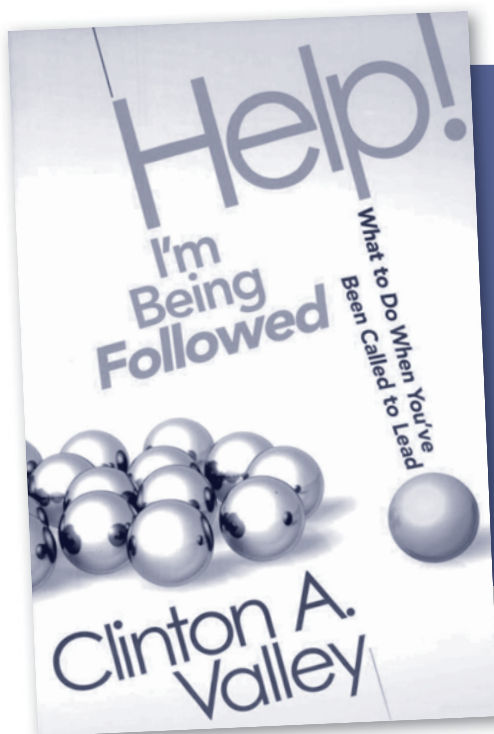
Contemporary theory and practice of leadership is moving toward a more relational and less directive model that impacts attitudes and behaviors in all sectors. In his book, *Help! I'm Being Followed: What to Do When You've Been Called to Lead*, Clinton Valley makes a contribution toward integrating these concepts into the life and function of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As the title indicates, the author views leadership in the church as an

interactive process (20) of community wherein leadership giftedness is not so much claimed by the individual (83) as acknowledged by way of affirmation and call from the body of believers. Valley challenges the traditional model of the heroic individualistic figure even further by suggesting that the spiritual leader remains accountable to the body subsequent to being called and may also be asked at the will of the body to step out of the position. This

Continued on page 28 ►





VALLEY APPEALS TO THE BIBLE AND THE LIFE AND LEADERSHIP OF THE MASTER AS OUR CENTER POST FOR GUIDING CHANGE IN OUR LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS.

intentional move away from a managed approach that emphasizes control to a model of empowerment that validates the giftedness and potential of every member. Management and administrative skills are competencies necessary for the support of a transformational leadership model but should remain subordinate to the function of leadership (53, 55).

Valley, gently but consistently, recommends structural and attitudinal changes needed to support this mandate of leadership development. Leadership attitudes and methodologies are embedded in culture and in many cases serve the self-needs of positional leaders and are not easily changed. Valley appeals to the Bible and the life and leadership of the Master as our center post for guiding change in our leadership behaviors.

Neal C. Wilson states in the foreword that “we may not all agree with or feel comfortable with every aspect of Valley’s leadership models,” which is likely true, but the author has succeeded in giving us a base for prayer and reflection on how God’s people might approach leadership.

—Reviewed by Stanley E. Patterson, PhD, associate professor of Christian Ministry, Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

Reaching the neighbors you can’t understand

How do we share the good news of salvation with every kindred, tongue, and people when many of them speak languages most of us neither speak nor understand?

Later this year, Adventist World Radio (AWR) will offer a free tool that is guaranteed to increase your evangelistic results. It’s simple:

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5. Or download a print-ready ad and place it in your local newspaper(s).

The invitation encourages your neighbors to visit AWR’s Web site. Arriving at the language page, they can choose the language of their choice, enabling them to either download programs or listen to them online.

If you or your church family speaks the language:

1. Place the invitation in your church bulletin. Not only will it offer your members a great outreach tool, it will also help them grow spiritually as they listen to these quality programs.
2. Offer the opportunity on your radio or TV program.
3. Place the information in your church newsletter.

AWR programs are culturally sensitive, assuring you of not only content quality but also embarrassment-free witnessing—and positive results!

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concept suggests that authority to lead becomes, not the property of the individual leader, but rather a gift of trust extended by the community of faith. It also challenges the top-down concept of hierarchy by placing authority with the body that calls members to serve in positions necessary to the process of leadership.

This book clearly identifies the Holy Spirit as the Source of spiritual leadership (46). The gifts of the Spirit provide the competency by which Christian leaders serve. Since all are gifted by the Spirit, Valley asserts that all should lead (18). This suggests that all members of the body of Christ are intended to serve a leadership function based upon their giftedness supported by a character consistent with that of the Master. The professional pastor and those called to full-time service in the church bear the responsibility of developing every member to effectively lead in the post of service appointed by the Spirit (89). This transformational focus on growing individuals as leaders requires an



Ministry in Pakistan

For the first two weeks in December 2008, **Janos Kovacs-Biro**, Seventh-day Adventist Church for Trans-European (TED) director for



evangelism, visited Pakistan, where he met with administrators, pastors, and other gospel workers. The main emphasis was on ministering to influential people-groups.

Approximately 60 participants attended—all of whom were eager to learn the principles and practices of outreach work. Additional training was given in the areas of teaching, evangelism, giving sermon appeals, and integrating community people

into church life. Church leaders and pastors have selected six cities from the northern part of the country and five cities from the southern part in which to begin work in 2009.

During the weekend, Pastor Kovacs-Biro and **Younis Noor**, president of the Adventist Church in Pakistan, dedicated four new church buildings that will serve as community centers and places of worship. *[Janos Kovacs-Biro]*

Prayer conference in the Philippines

The first prayer conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Central Luzon started February 20, 2009, in Silang, Cavite, Philippines. With the theme, “The Prayer Journey: A Divine Call to Revival and Reformation,” the event was organized to provide church members prayer-centered activities that will lead to a strengthened Christian life.

Central Luzon Conference (CLC) President **Carmelito Galang Jr.**,

explained how daily prayer is the hardest type of prayer and stressed how this condition can be solved through the Lord’s Prayer found in Matthew 6:9–13 as our model.

“But daily prayer is the hardest kind of all, and it’s a sad truth that when things are going smoothly, we often ignore our heavenly Father,” said Galang. “It takes just thirty seconds to learn how to establish a meaningful daily prayer life. Why thirty seconds? Because thirty seconds is the time it takes to repeat the Lord’s Prayer.”

Francisco Gayoba, the ministerial secretary for the Adventist Church in the northern Philippines, challenged the attendees to reclaim the church as the house of prayer, citing many New Testament examples of prayer during regular meetings, special meetings when choosing and appointing leaders and times of farewell, times of persecution, prayers for new converts, gospel workers, leaders, missionaries, and one another, and prayers for healing and wisdom. *[Armon Perez Tolentino]*





Visitation revisited

We pastors seldom visit too much. Only once did I know a pastor who *overvisited*—from first thing every morning until too late into the evening. His colleagues often repeated jokes about his reputation for visiting at such odd hours, calling him a “visiting fool.” His members called him something else—“our best pastor ever!”

Too often, our good intentions for visiting members collide with reality in the form of overcrowded schedules, urgencies trumping essentials, insufficient time for our own families, plus inadequate planning. These encroach to the point that our performance seldom matches the expectations our members have for us or even those we expect from ourselves.

Back in the day when pastors were *required* to list cumulative visits on the monthly conference report, I was shocked one time to learn that an intern had reported nearly 200 visits for a particular month. In fact, a quick review of his previous reports showed that he seldom reported less than 100 pastoral or evangelistic visits per month. Attempting to match these extraordinary reports to his ordinary behavior, I asked about his method for achieving such grand totals. “Oh, that’s easy,” he responded. “Each day I meet the parents as they collect their kids from school. In just a half hour, I make at least twenty spiritual visits.”

Even when members receive pastoral care, they sometimes fail to identify the spiritual nurture they have received because it may not match their expectations. A conference official once expressed frustration that his pastor had not visited his home in years except when his mother died. While this was a factual report, accuracy and reality should also indicate that this leader’s heavy travel, committee, and weekend schedule left him seldom at home

to receive visitation. Numbers of his colleagues, myself included, had come to his office to pray with him and encourage his effective leadership. But because these instances had not occurred at his house, he did not view such encounters as pastoral visitation. If this leader believed he had not received adequate pastoral care, imagine what members have concluded when they report, “We never see the pastor.”

Another leader, facing professional discipline for misconduct, widely complained that none of his colleagues had extended pastoral care in his hour of trauma despite the reality that he had declined counsel and care from several ministers including long-time friends.

Sometimes, people refuse to be pastored. Others may fail to recognize acts that we believe express sensitive care and appropriate concern.

Beyond regularly scheduled systematic visitation of your members, which should function best as an intentionally coordinated plan by the pastor and elders together, specific instances demand pastoral visitation with an essential and clearly expressed agenda.


Serious illness. Visit a dying person to share an assuring text of Scripture, inquire about their spiritual peace with God (“How do you feel about God’s assurance of personal love in your own life?”), encourage hope in Jesus’ soon return, and ask if they have specific prayer requests or if they would like to be anointed. Such visits accomplish much more if they are relatively brief rather than marathon sessions. Remember, Jesus assured salvation to the thief on the cross with just a dozen words.

Hospital. When visitation occurs at a medical facility, pastors should be sensitive to prioritize the busy schedule of physicians, technicians, and therapists, as well as noting the lack of privacy if other patients

share the same room. While you may appropriately offer to include another patient sharing the same room in prayer, you should anticipate that lack of privacy may make your parishioner uncomfortable with in-depth discussions of spiritual or physical issues. Always ask about a person’s requests for your prayer on their behalf. Don’t assume that you know. A young parent may be eager for healing and full restoration of

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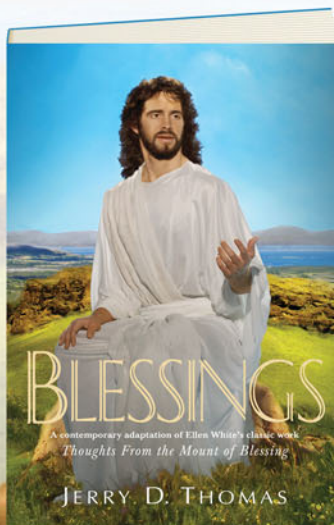
strength, while an older saint may be longing for a quick and peaceful end to life in confident assurance of Jesus’ return.

Grief. Simply being there with the family forms the most beneficial process of pastoral visitation at the time of death in a family. Your physical presence provides much more meaningful care than any words or exhortations you express. Sit quietly with the family and allow plenty of time for listening to their responses to your question, “Tell me about your loved one’s life . . .” Bible promises of Jesus’ return, our heavenly home, and God’s promised restoration of all good things are excellent ways to assure grief-stricken families of your pastoral care. The most meaningful pastoral care I received during the hour immediately following the news of my brother’s death came from a pastoral couple whom I had never met. They simply stood silently by my side, hands on my shoulder, while I made telephone calls and processed the impact of such a sudden loss. 

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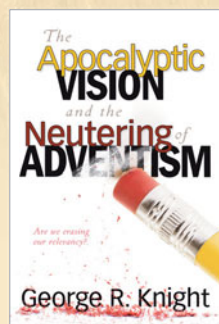
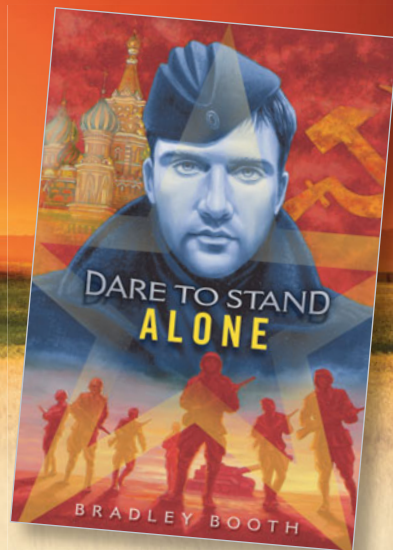
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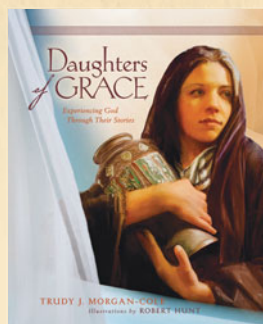
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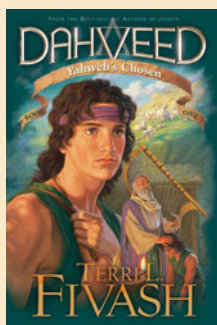
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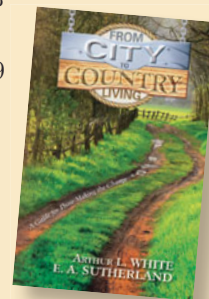
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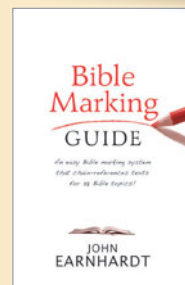
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