

# MINISTRY<sup>®</sup>

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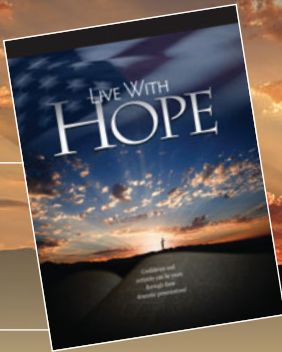
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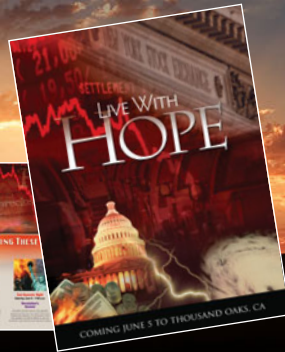
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- 06** **The gospel to all the world: An interview with Hope Channel**  
The focus of Hope Channel involves spreading the message of Jesus Christ, but it's not the technology that's important—it's the message.  
**Nikolaus Satelmajer and Willie E. Hucks II**
- 09** **Surrender: The neglected imperative in salvation**  
If justification and salvation are free, where do we place surrender, which seems to suggest the giving up of freedom?  
**Thomas A. Davis**
- 12** **Rediscovering public evangelism**  
The Great Commission of Matthew 28 has led pastors and churches around the world to designate 2009 as the Year of Evangelism throughout the world.  
**Bernadine Delafield and Gary Gibbs**
- 15** **The vacant parish: Managing a pastoral search process**  
How can a pastoral transition experience be a positive one for the pastor and congregation?  
**Skip Bell**
- 18** **Family systems in congregational settings**  
Read the four recommended strategies on restructuring the system so that the church family can handle conflict constructively.  
**Laundale Munroe**
- 21** **An Adventist approach to Islam**  
Is it possible that the remnant message capably serves as an end-time bridge between the Muslim world and Christianity?  
**Larry Owens**
- 24** **Reflections on the centennial celebration**  
From a small group of ten individuals in one area, the church in Zambia has grown to a current membership of more than 560,000 believers in 100 years.  
**Warren S. Simatele**
- 26** **When you are treated unfairly**  
Four suggestions on how to respond when you've been the victim of unjust treatment.  
**Ferdinand O. Regalado**

- 04** LETTERS
- 05** EDITORIAL
- 27** RESOURCES
- 29** DATELINE
- 30** PASTOR'S PASTOR

# MINISTRY

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# “WE CAN NO LONGER ASSUME THAT CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND THE TRINITY OR THAT THEY ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE CHURCH’S TEACHINGS ON IT.”

## Preaching through a storm

Charles A. Tapp’s article (“Preaching Through a Storm,” April 2009) was very honest and well written. It has helped me see that pastors are subject to the same ups and downs as are the rest of us. I also see how we must continue to “reach for the prize” and with God’s strength, not falter, no matter what this fallen world throws at us.

—Raul Hernandez, Dallas, Texas, United States

Two articles in the April 2009 magazine especially resonated with me. “Preaching Through a Storm” portrayed my own struggle through the years to lean on my church family in times of personal crisis. When I let them know my need, I find them to be more than supportive.

Thank you also for Dan Serns’s practical article (“When You Move to a New District”). On this subject, I have found the counsel of Ellen White to be of great profit. In writing to a “Brother K,” she instructed, “When you go to any place to labor, do not be dictatorial, do not be severe, do not be antagonistic. Preach the love of Christ, and this will melt and subdue hearts. Seek to be of one mind and of one judgment, coming close in harmony with your brethren.” *Selected Messages*, 1:181.

—Harold Kuebler, email

The article “Preaching Through a Storm” brought some tears of memories and also the three-part axiom I had to learn slowly and the hard way: “Life is short, life is not fair, but God is good!”

—Name withheld

## Pastoral families

With all due respect to every issue, the April 2009 issue was one of the best in a long time. I read every article. The two articles “Keeping PKs in the Church” and “Longing for an Ordinary Wife’s Life?” were special to me. I would love to have someone send a questionnaire to each of my children just to get their evaluations. I have already quizzed my wife as to her evaluations and memories on being an “ordinary wife,” and that was interesting and valuable, but not too many surprises and very few negatives.

Looking back, our family did everything together: skiing, swimming, biking, walking, games, and group outings with mutual family friends. How does one balance the demands of ministry with raising children through all of their developmental stages? One has an obligation to carry out their employment responsibilities and be a good spouse, parent, and employee at the same time. Where is the balance? What is too much, what is too little?

When I was president of the retirees’ organization for the Adventist Church in North America years ago, we always had a huge convocation with hundreds of people in attendance. At our Friday morning prayer breakfast, the immediate prayer requests were always for our children and grandchildren. So we take some comfort in that we are not alone or the only ones who grieve quietly and prayerfully. We also take great comfort in knowing that God is not through with them yet, and we claim that promise that He will save our children.

—Jack Harris, email

I was very pleased to see the article “Keeping PKs in the Church.” It is not just the pastor’s kid—it is all young people and even some more mature.

I am an 85-year-old retired Adventist pastor, and when the chance came to join with a new church plant, I was happy to go with them. The music is a little loud for me, but the mission and the love among the people, the nonjudgmental attitude, is a breath of fresh air.

May the Lord bless us as we learn to reach more people for God’s kingdom.

—Ellsworth Wellman, Yakima, Washington, United States

## Trinity

John C. Johnson’s article, “A Trinitarian View of the Cross” (February 2009) certainly deserves the merit of being a thorough study on the topic. It failed, however, to do a proper exegesis of the only passage that involves the Holy Spirit in the events at the cross. If the author had done such an exegesis, he might have come to a somewhat different conclusion. In Hebrews 9:14, the key words are *proferein* and *dia*.

The basic meaning of *proferein* is “to bring,” with the prefix *pros* giving it a sense of direction. Besides its ordinary “secular” meaning elsewhere, in Hebrews it seems to be the general technical term to describe the action of the sinner seeking atonement as well as the action of the priest making atonement (which is “bringing the animal to the altar” and “sprinkling the blood of the slaughtered animal”). The preposition *dia* is used to indicate

Continued on page 25 ▶



# Many avenues, one destination

In my role as associate editor of *Ministry*, I spend a fair amount of time traveling. But I did very little traveling my first year in this position; indeed, it was a wise approach to allow me some time to become accustomed to my new responsibilities. So, five days a week I made the 30-minute drive to my office, spent approximately ten hours a day there (less than that on Fridays), then returned home.

My daily routine, including the weekends, was predictable: driving to and from work for five days, completing all the work during evenings and Sundays that I couldn't complete while in the office, traveling to and from church on Sabbaths, and driving around the region on Sundays, visiting museums and other historical sites, learning about the place that I now call home. Of course, I didn't instinctively know how to get to all these places. I spent time studying a map that someone gave me.

Three months after starting this assignment, it was time for me to take my first trip on behalf of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists—a three-hour plane flight for a four-day meeting. I knew how to get to church; I knew how to get to work. But I now realized that I didn't know how to get to the airport. So I pulled out that same map and studied it in an effort to determine how to get to the airport. I quickly discovered several roads I could take.

Two nights before my flight, I called a friend who lives nearby and has also flown in and out of that same airport many times. I asked him what he thought was the best way to get from my house to the airport. He shared with me an approach that made sense and was shorter and more direct—but one I had never noticed when looking at the map.

Could I still take those other roads to get to the airport in Baltimore? Of course. But I chose to take the path that my friend suggested. Why? Because it worked best for me.

## Various methods of evangelism

Over the years, I have seen many approaches to conducting evangelism: tent meetings, prophecy seminars, and NET satellite evangelism. The popular form of public evangelism during my active pastoral ministry was the Daniel and Revelation seminar—a method that best suited my teaching style. But we must never forget that the most consistent form of evangelism takes place during the sermon each week—for if the sermon doesn't have an evangelistic focus, then the time spent speaking may well have been wasted.

This issue of *Ministry* focuses on evangelism in its various forms. The year 2009 has been designated as the Year of Evangelism for the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide. And to lend extra focus to that theme, Bernadine Delafield and Gary Gibbs give an update on how Share the Hope meetings are faring nationwide in various Adventist churches.

Of course, there are many ways to evangelize outside of the local church setting. Radio evangelism in Adventist circles dates back to H. M. S. Richards. I remember during my childhood being blessed while watching George Vandeman and C. D. Brooks on television. Adventist World Radio (AWR) has a global reach, sharing the good news of God's concern for humanity—mind, body, soul, and spirit.<sup>1</sup> What AWR is to radio, Hope Channel is increasingly becoming to TV, expanding its worldwide reach. This issue of *Ministry* also features an interview with Brad Thorp and Gary Gibbs of Hope Channel.

## Evangelism: Its personal dimensions

Not all evangelism is public in nature. Indeed, God's church has rapidly grown as a result of person-to-person contact—such interpersonal relationships serve as the fuel for reaping meetings that garner most of the attention. Reflecting back on my district pastoral ministry, most of my baptisms were the result of personal Bible studies by church members to their relatives, neighbors, and friends—and such would not have occurred had it not been for what is often called friendship evangelism.

There is another personal dimension to this outreach, although in some respects it is public in nature. The work of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is performed by many men and women who often labor out of sight of many church members. They are “faceless” laborers who spread seeds of good news.<sup>2</sup>

## Which way is the best way?

That is the wrong question. This is not an either-or. This is a both-and. The *destination* is sharing the gospel. But there are many *avenues* to accomplishing that task. Which way is the best way? Employing the gifts that the Holy Spirit has placed within each follower of Christ—whether those gifts are public or private, speaking or serving. And our job as ministers is to tap into our members' understanding of those gifts and empower them to serve Christ and their fellow humanity.

Just as there are various ways to reach a destination, there are various ways to evangelize. Which way will you choose? ❏

<sup>1</sup> For more on the ministry of AWR, see “Reaching the World One Person at a Time: An Interview With the Leaders of Adventist World Radio,” *Ministry*, (January 2008).

<sup>2</sup> For more on the ministry of ADRA, see “You Did Not Know Us, But You Loved Us: An Interview With ADRA,” *Ministry*, (March 2009).

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

**Nikolaus Satelmajer, DMin**, is editor of Ministry.  
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# The gospel to all the world:

## An interview with Hope Channel

*Editor's note: The Seventh-day Adventist Church for many decades has used technology as one way of carrying out its mission. Hope Channel is an important tool for pastors and congregations. During a recent interview with the editors, Hope Channel president Brad Thorp and vice president Gary Gibbs shared some of the latest developments of this television ministry.*

**Nikolaus Satelmajer (NS):** *What is the mission of Hope Channel?*

**Brad Thorp (BT):** Our mission is that everyone, everywhere, sees and hears and understands the wonderful messages of the Bible through Hope Channel. We are primarily an evangelistic ministry. The second purpose is discipleship and the third purpose is to provide resources for pastors and elders.

**NS:** *Why not use existing broadcast systems and buy time instead of having our own system?*

**BT:** First, to have our own system is a lot more cost effective. We can accomplish more with the same resources than if we were to buy time on various channels worldwide. In addition, our goal includes creating an Adventist radio and TV presence in every community worldwide.

**Gary Gibbs (GG):** The Adventist Church has been given the responsibility to carry the gospel to the entire world. If we're not using television,

we're derelict in our duty. We are to broadcast God's message twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, into everybody's homes, and to do that we need our own system.

**Willie Hucks (WH):** *How widespread is your audience?*

**BT:** We're global. We operate eight different full-time channels primarily intended for public broadcast. Additionally, we operate two church business channels for training and church events. We have two full-time channels in English, a channel in Portuguese, two channels in Spanish, one in German, and one in Romanian. We also broadcast in many other European languages. Not only do we have the current ten channels, we are in the process of developing more—in Russian, Arabic, one for China, and one for India. Those will be multi-language channels as well. Here in the U.S., we're in eighteen million homes via DIRECTV on channel 368. This is the largest media breakthrough for the church in North America. Forty-five to fifty million total individual viewers of DIRECTV will benefit from our programs. We're telling everyone, "Go DIRECTV to Hope!"

**GG:** Hope Channel is a powerful force in our church. In Africa, more than ninety million homes get Hope Channel. Our Romanian channel broadcasts on all of the major carriers in that country; and our German Hope Channel is on ASTRA, the largest direct-to-home service reaching

thirteen million German-speaking homes.

**WH:** *What type of programming do you provide? Does it vary depending on geography? Are there some constants?*

**BT:** Variations exist; that is primarily why we have different channels. We've developed the channels to differentiate our audiences. We have programming unique to each channel, but it's primarily of a regional nature. The constants are when we have a world church, General Conference-sponsored broadcast, such as Annual Council or some particular message that the world church needs to get—then these go to every channel. Also, in our programming production we have a department called Project Hope. We go to a particular area of the world and ask them, "What topics do you want to hear?" "Which presenters do you want?" "Who should be a participant?" and "What illustrations should you use?" We go there providing the technical expertise; the local field provides all of the contextualization.

**GG:** The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 begin with the gospel going to every kindred, nation, tongue, and people. That is the mission of Hope Channel—to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people in the languages and the cultural contexts of those groups. We do this through programs that present Bible teaching, healthy

living, nature, music, and sacred history using their local languages and stories.

**NS:** *What about Webcasting?*

**BT:** The Internet is one of our methods of distribution. We're primarily distributed by satellite, but we also have hundreds of cable distributions. If you go to our Web site, [www.HopeTV.org](http://www.HopeTV.org), you'll see on the left-hand side, where you can click



on every one of our channels, you can watch via streaming video any channel being broadcast worldwide. There also are links there that will take you to additional Internet channels such as Czech, Norwegian, and Chinese.

**NS:** *Over the years you've been involved in various evangelism broadcasts and meetings. How do you see that fitting into the mission of the church?*

**BT:** Since 1995, we've broadcast all the official NET programs. More than two million people have been baptized as a result. We see it as a complement to what the local churches do. In fact, Gary Gibbs is responsible for the development of the HopeNET projects.

**GG:** Hope Channel is the official broadcaster of all the NET programs. The church conducts about twelve to twenty of these a year, and about

two hundred thousand people a year are joining the Adventist Church through them. Also, because you always have people that you're studying with, and you don't always have the opportunity to bring in an evangelist, Hope Channel has a full-length series on its network every year so that people can show it to their friends at home or in the church. But we need more, which is why we have invested in what we call HopeNET. We've taken the term *NET*

that everybody's familiar with and we've turned it into an acronym for Network for Evangelism Training. We have put on the Internet free resources of some of the best-known evangelism trainers in the denomination worldwide, resources that will help people know how to prepare for a NET evangelistic meeting, or just a local evangelistic series. *How do you give a Bible study? How do you choose your venue? How do you preach an evangelistic series?*

*What's the best order of topics? How do you prepare and do follow-up?* You can find it all on [www.hopetv.net](http://www.hopetv.net). We also do training broadcasts on Hope Church Channel.

**NS:** Hope Church Channel?

**GG:** Yes, that's one of our two business channels for the church. Hope Church Channel is a supporting channel of the Hope Channel network and carries special event programming in North America only, such as the *Ministry Professional Growth Seminars* (also known as P.R.E.A.C.H.), training seminars, and camp meetings. Readers can get instructions on how to tune a satellite receiver to get Hope Church Channel, by calling 888-4-HOPE-TV (888-446-7388).

**WH:** *Please share a story of how Hope Channel has been a tool for evangelism.*

**GG:** There's a lady in South Africa of Indian descent. She had an Adventist friend; they worked together at one time. They used to discuss religion. She was settled in her religion, and she told this Adventist gentleman, "You Adventists are strange." They parted ways, but they kept in periodic contact. While on maternity leave, she was watching TV one day and discovered she had only one channel on her television. All of the other channels had been wiped out except Hope Channel. Irritated, she programmed all of the other channels back in. The next day she only had Hope Channel again; all of the other channels were wiped out. After three times, with the same results, she gave up and watched Hope Channel. She recognized it was Seventh-day Adventist, but that's the only thing she had to watch. She watched it for six months, then called her Adventist friend and said, "You won't believe what I'm getting ready to do. I'm getting ready to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church!"

**BT:** What we're finding is that it takes two to four years for the impact of Hope Channel to be made in the public. We're now getting a huge number of responses wherever we go. Somebody came to church, somebody's baptized ten people here, five people there, and so forth.

**NS:** *What are some of the challenges?*

**BT:** One of the biggest challenges we face is to have the church see how media can be a core evangelistic strategy. It's not *the* only strategy, of course, but it is a vital component. How can we show the church that we've got a resource where somebody can become familiar with the Adventist Church twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week!

**GG:** Anybody in almost any community around the world can access the Adventist message at any time. Churches can use this as a powerful tool. On every brochure put out in the church, every ad they put out, on their signs, marquees in the front of the church, they should put [www.HopeTV.org](http://www.HopeTV.org). I call this the *threshold effect*. There's a threshold at the doors of our churches that people have to cross over to come into the unknown environment of our church. How can we do away with the threshold effect? You put Adventist television, Hope Channel, directly in their homes. Then they can get acquainted with you without ever having to go through the uncomfortable experience of leaving the safety of their home, of crossing their own threshold. They can come into your environment in their own home.

**NS:** *Where do you see the partnership between Hope Channel and pastors?*

**GG:** Right now, many pastors are using Hope Channel effectively. Many are drawing spiritual nourishment

from watching Hope. But they're also finding creative ways to promote viewership in their communities. They are instructing their members to connect with family and neighbors and say, "Would you like to get some good Christian programming into your home? Watch my favorite network, Hope Channel, on DIRECTV, channel 368," or "You can switch from your cable TV service to DIRECTV and get Hope Channel." Think of it ... DIRECTV reaches eighteen million homes with more than forty-five million people—that's fifteen percent of the American public; and they're continuing to grow.

**BT:** To take that a step further, not only is this an evangelistic tool, it's a discipleship tool. In the typical models of giving a Bible study or having an individual come to church for three to four hours a week, there's relatively little time for the individual to become acquainted with the broad spectrum of Adventism. Thus, one of the most powerful ways to use Hope Channel is as a follow-up tool.

**GG:** With little effort, you can disciple and keep one of those new members within their newfound faith by directing them to Hope Channel. It makes a vast difference in their lives. Plus, it's witnessing to the nonbaptized members of their family as well. You've got the passive, unobtrusive witness of the television doing a very important job.

**WH:** *Do you have any closing comments?*

**BT:** I would remind readers, primarily pastors, of the resources of the *Ministry* (P.R.E.A.C.H.) Seminar. Hope Channel has broadcast that seminar, worldwide, from its inception. We're very grateful for the partnership of *Ministry* in providing



GARY GIBBS  
Photo Hearty Mayr

these seminars. We want to add a segment in our programming—which will be announced through *Ministry*—that will be targeted for pastors. This will be in the areas of theology, evangelism, counseling, practices, and so forth. I also would like to encourage pastors to recognize that Hope Channel, through its television as well as its Internet distribution, is a tool that they can use. We're here to help pastors. The focus of Hope Channel is spreading the message of Jesus Christ. It's not the technology that's important—it's the message. ❏

Tell us what you think about this article. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or write to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.



*Thomas A. Davis is a former editor in the Philippines, India, and at the Review and Herald Publishing Association. He is a retired Seventh-day Adventist minister, now residing in Canada.*



# Surrender: The neglected imperative in salvation

When I was preparing for the ministry, leaders highly recommended beginning pastors spend some time as colporteurs—later termed *literature evangelists*. They felt the experience of selling gospel books helped equip a person to sell the gospel as a pastor or evangelist.

Preachers, among other things, are salespersons. They sell salvation that comes “without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1, NKJV). Or does it? Could some of us Christians, of whatever calling, be mistakenly saying it comes free but that in actuality it costs a great deal?

I have listened to a number of sermons on justification in which it was emphasized that justification is free, unconditional. We are “justified freely by His grace” (Rom. 3:24, NKJV). And to that my heart responds with a fervent *Amen*.

I have also noted something else in some of those sermons. Somewhere along the line, preachers apparently felt that they should make a reference, in one way or another, to the necessity of self-surrender. So they mention it, in a sentence or two, sometimes almost apologetically, almost as though they felt that, while they had been talking about apples, they needed to mention oranges, although they were not quite sure that oranges had a place in the scheme of things at that point.

The uncertainty is understandable. Most of us acknowledge that surrender has a vital place in Christianity, and that surrender makes

immense claims upon us. But if salvation comes free, is it not contradictory to point out that actually we must pay a price, which is certainly the case in surrender? If justification and salvation are free, where do we place surrender, which seems to suggest the giving up of freedom?

Perhaps this identifies the reason why we do not often seem to hear much, in a definitive way, about surrender. We could call it “the neglected imperative.”

Of course, the word *surrender*, does not appear in most translations of the Bible. Nevertheless, the concept runs throughout Scripture.

## The call for surrender

Jesus made the demand for self-surrender unmistakably plain. “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24, RSV). He reiterated the unequivocal nature of this requirement in other words and ways: in His sermon on eating His flesh and drinking His blood (John 6), in His insistence that His disciples be willing to sever the hold that any possessions might have on them (Luke 14:33), and in His calling for unquestioning obedience to His requirements (John 15:14).

The fact that His followers called Him “Lord” indicates they acknowledged His authority and their need of complete submission to Him (Acts 10:36; Rom. 14:28; 1 Cor. 8:6; James 4:15).

The idea of obedience always carries a strong connotation of surrender. In the Christian, this surrender

will be a willing obedience “from the heart,” as a result of a loving commitment to God (Rom. 6:17, NKJV).

Paul and other New Testament writers use terms that carry the thoughts of surrender and submission. We are to yield ourselves to God and thus become slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:13, 18, 22, RSV). Paul speaks about the church submitting to Christ (Eph. 5:24). And James counsels his readers to “submit yourselves . . . to God” (James 4:7, KJV).

With surrender clearly a biblical imperative, this topic needs to be emphasized and plainly defined from the pulpit so that it may be understood by the people in the pews.

## What is surrender?

By way of definition, surrender may be characterized as a response to God’s convicting, wooing love so that He can shatter all of our inner resistance to His will, change our attitudes, motives, desires—the whole heart—so that our selfish “rights” are abandoned and His will continuously sought. This supernatural experience becomes possible only at the foot of the cross. In surrender, then, we recognize God’s claim upon every facet of our lives and willingly give Him the right to expect us to conform to His pattern in all respects (2 Cor. 5:17).

All this may be very well and acceptable, read with a quiet mind and tranquil spirit. But let an interpersonal confrontation stir to anger, retaliation, and resentment;

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let someone frustrate our wills, question our opinions, challenge our “rights,” or “let us down;” let someone seem to diminish our self-importance or fault our appetites, and the attitude may be quite different. When we become caught up in a situation in which we have to wrestle with surrendering resentment, anger, or whatever, we are struck by the abysmal sinfulness of our natures, the strength of sin, the price surrender demands, and our proclivity to resist surrendering to the Spirit. This may be a reason why we do not frequently examine surrender with the depth needed, for then we are forced to measure the depth of our own surrender to Christ.

We cannot expect, then, that the concept of surrender will be welcomed by all, once the thought becomes clearly explained. C. S. Lewis understood this. “As the real meaning of the Christian claim becomes apparent,” he writes, “its demands for total surrender, the sheer chasm between Nature and Supernature, men are increasingly ‘offended.’ . . . [N]one who will not give it what it asks (and it asks all) can endure it; all who are not with it are against it.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, let us return to the problem we introduced at the beginning of this discussion: that of the reception of justification, which is free, and of self-surrender, suggests paying a big price indeed. But let us approach the problem from another angle—forgiveness.

### **Forgiveness: Is anything required of us?**

Is anything required of the sinner to obtain forgiveness?

A number of texts come to mind. “If my people, . . . shall humble themselves, . . . and . . . turn from their wicked ways; then will I . . . forgive their sin” (2 Chron. 7:14, KJV); “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive [you]” (Matt. 6:15, KJV); “ ‘Repent. . . for the forgiveness of your sins’ ” (Acts 2:38, NIV); “If we confess our sins, he is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9, KJV).

There are requirements, then, that we must meet to receive God’s saving forgiveness, among which are humility, repentance, turning from sins, confession of sins, forgiveness of others, and so on. And each of these demands a certain denial, an abnegation of self which, as C. S. Lewis implies, extracts a price for the gift of forgiveness.

Let us ponder all this in the light of a statement in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*: “Paul rarely uses the term ‘forgiveness,’ but in its place prefers ‘justification.’ They are to his understanding practically synonymous.”<sup>2</sup> This is demonstrated by Romans 4:6–8, where Paul speaks of *justifying* the ungodly, then to prove his point, he quotes from Psalm 32:1, 2, which speaks of *forgiveness*.

Ellen White writes that “pardon [forgiveness] and justification are one and the same thing.”<sup>3</sup> This being the case, the requirements for justification would seem to be the same as for forgiveness. Thus, by substitution we may legitimately read Romans 3:24 as we are “*forgiven* freely by his grace.” But if, as we have seen, forgiveness actually has its price, justification, being synonymous with forgiveness, must then have the same price. That price is repentance, accompanied by surrender, the abandonment of our selfish “rights” and desires of any kind—the death to self.

We find the classic expression of this experience in Paul’s stirring words in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me. I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (NAB).

This salvation, of which justification is an integral part, cannot be called “unconditional,” or “free,” in the usual sense of the term, and may be seen in two of Jesus’ parables—the treasure hidden in a field, and the precious pearl (Matt. 13:44–46).

In the parable of the treasure, the finder obviously did not pay the equivalent value of the wealth. He did not have that kind of money. He did not pay for the treasure at all. He merely paid for the *land* where the treasure was hidden, so the treasure came free. But the purchase of that land drained all his resources.

Commenting on the precious pearl parable, Ellen White writes, "In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but *only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit to Him without reserve.*"<sup>4</sup> The same thing said of Christ must be said of salvation, justification. Receiving Christ is to receive justification.

### Without money, without price

How are we, then, to understand Isaiah's "without money and without price," (Isa 55:1, KJV) and Paul's "justified for nothing" (Rom. 3:24, Moffatt)? The context of both Isaiah and Romans tells us. Isaiah speaks to those who have tried to find the satisfaction they crave by putting their money and effort into material things which, they assumed, would satisfy their desires, but were not doing so. Paul makes this statement in the context of works of law. He writes of those who felt they could be justified by paying the price of conforming to law, as it were. So he says in effect, "Nothing at all that you can do by way of measuring up can bring you justification. So far as your attaining it is concerned, the only way it can be yours is as a free gift of God—which it is."

According to William Ramsey, there would be no sense of contradiction in Paul's first-century Jewish

mind with juxtaposing the idea that salvation comes as God's free gift, yet that, in a sense, must be paid for by man. So, in his book, *The Teachings of St. Paul in Terms of the Present Day*, Ramsey has a section entitled, "The Promise the Free Gift of God, Yet Earned by Man."<sup>5</sup> Ramsay does not, by any means, suggest that one can merit salvation, but that we must

CHRIST, THEN,  
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respond in certain ways to God's requirements in order to be able to receive His gifts.

In his book *Basic Christianity*, John R. W. Stott makes it plain that Jesus did not give the impression that the salvation He offered costs nothing. "Jesus never concealed the fact that his religion included a demand as well as an offer. Indeed, the demand was as total as the offer was free. If he offered men his salvation, he also demanded their submission."<sup>6</sup>

Christ, then, does not justify us on the basis of our surrender, but He cannot justify us *until* we surrender. Thus, although some might insist that we are justified without our paying a price—that we are simply required to have faith—we suggest

this is to misunderstand the fuller picture. We must pay a price for justification—that price is not in the good works we do or in the merits we have, but in our unreserved surrender to Jesus.

Perhaps a simple illustration will help in resolving "justified freely" and the idea that God demands for us to receive justification, forgiveness.

A certain manufacturer decides to give away a number of samples of a costly product free. But in order to qualify for one, you must have a coupon, which he distributes *gratis*.

Suppose you qualify for a gift. Would you claim the gift was not free because you had to surrender the coupon?

God, if you will, has given us a "coupon" which we must give back to Him for free justification. He has given us life, minds, reason, and wills. He says, "I want to justify you, forgive you, freely. I will give you salvation freely, but to show your sincerity, and in order that My salvation can transform you, you must return the 'coupon.' You just surrender your will, yourself, to Me."

It seems to me, therefore, that to teach or preach justification without also clearly showing the obligation to surrender self to Jesus, which makes justification possible, leaves the teacher or preacher open to the accusation of selling a cheap gospel. ❏

- 1 C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1972), 223.
- 2 G. B. Stevens, *Theology of the NT* (1902), 418, quoted in Geoffrey W. Bromily, editor, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 342.
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), 6:1070.
- 4 White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), 116; emphasis added.
- 5 William Ramsey, *The Teachings of Paul in Terms of the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 86, 87.
- 6 John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980), 107.

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**Gary Gibbs** is the vice president for Hope Channel.



# Rediscovering public evangelism

**P**ublic evangelism is dead!" It was a board meeting long to be remembered, or in this instance, hard to be forgotten. Several of our members wanted to reach out to the community through a public evangelistic meeting. But instead of finding enthusiastic support, they were served a smorgasbord of objections.

"It doesn't work."

"The new converts won't stay in the church."

"We've tried it before, and no one came."

"It's too expensive."

"We're too busy."

"It's not a good time to hold meetings."

When it comes to public evangelism, you don't have to go far to find an objection to it. There are as many reasons against holding meetings as there are demons who object to evangelism.

However, if you are looking for a reason to hold a meeting, all you need is to pick up a Bible: "'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'" (Matt. 28:19, NKJV). Certainly one way to fulfill this commission comes through public evangelism.

Jesus' command to give the gospel to lost men and women has led pastors and churches around the world to shrug off the naysayers and boldly designate 2009 as the Year of Evangelism throughout the world. In North America, for example, the theme for the year is Share the

Hope. The goal includes every pastor and church holding two evangelistic meetings in 2009 and thereby sharing the hope we have in Jesus with their communities.

## Evangelism— a lifestyle

Someone could rightly argue, "Every year is a year of evangelism." Vibrant Christians are always actively engaged in sharing their faith, whether through personal witnessing, helping others, giving Bible studies, or holding public meetings. Evangelism, in the real sense of the word, progresses to a lifestyle—an inner love for Jesus and lost souls, which motivates the believer to find ways to help the lost come to Jesus.

Nevertheless, many Christians who sincerely love Jesus have not gotten enthusiastic about evangelism. They still lose their courage at the suggestion that their church hold meetings—some of them for good cause. While the negative experiences are few, they are often remembered the longest.

Such was the case in Pastor Shane Anderson's church on the campus of Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Virginia. While the board was very supportive, other members openly questioned the idea of public meetings when he presented the concept to the church at large. According to some members, public evangelism had not worked well in the past. Consequently, the community had not been invited to a full-message series in over 20 years.

"Most of the members, while very positive about Adventism and anxious to share their faith, had pretty much written off public evangelism," said Anderson.

"This is the Year of Evangelism," he later shared with the members. "Every church in North America is being encouraged to hold two meetings, and it's great that we can participate."

Pastor Anderson volunteered to conduct the meetings himself. It was a bold move—as his public evangelism experience was quite limited. The church approved the meetings and preparations were made. Anderson gathered evangelistic sermons and graphics from experienced evangelists Jac Colon and Bill McClendon, mailed handbills, and then anxiously waited, along with the members, to see if anyone would attend from their tiny community.

The New Market Seventh-day Adventist Church should have seen success coming. They were doing the right things to prepare. For more than two years, they had built relationships in the community through their nine adventure groups. These small groups focused on activities that were interesting and easy for nonmembers to join. Each adventure group had a specialty that attracted people with similar interests. They included quilting, women's exercise, basketball, card making, and radio-controlled airplanes.

Prayer, the all-important spiritual component, was generally offered at every gathering. The goal included

creating lasting relationships so that when the time was right, friends would invite friends to a series of meetings.

And that is exactly what they experienced during their first evangelistic series in 20 years. Anderson describes the event: "Over 170 guests showed up during the course of the meetings, and about 50 of them attended all but one or two nights. This was a very encouraging response for our church. Morale is higher than it has been in years!"

Following the 16-night series, there have been regular baptisms. Nine have joined the church so far, while others are studying and preparing for that special day. Anderson expects that up to 20 more will make a decision for the Lord. He's praying that those who weren't able to make the commitment will be ready at the end of his next series.

Today, not only have the members been convinced that public evangelism can and does work, but Pastor Anderson has also caught a new vision for evangelism. He and his church are planning to hold two additional Share the Hope evangelistic meetings this year. By the end of 2009, Anderson will have held three meetings.

Where does he get the energy and focus? Anderson says it comes from the Holy Spirit and from seeing the miracles God performs in the lives of those who attend.

One couple, who had known of Adventism in the distant past but had never become members, commented that they appreciated the "firmness" of truth. They referred to the times in which we live when it is hard to count on anything. Although the economy appears very shaky and uncertain, they remain at peace, happy in the hope found in the promises of Scripture.

"The 170 guests exhibited a very positive feeling towards the messages, even when they didn't agree with everything I said," commented the pastor.

"They were genuinely pleased to be there. Many of them mentioned that the high level of Bible study was foreign to them, but very invigorating."

### Value of pastor/evangelist mentors

For pastors who have never held public meetings, to launch out on their own can be a bit daunting. Where do I get sermon material? What about graphics? Which handbill advertising works best? How can I get more people to attend? What are the keys to success, and how do I avoid failure? These and a multitude of other questions and concerns rise up to meet the pastor and lay person who vows to conduct a meeting.

Anderson found that it helped to have an evangelism mentor. He found two of them in the persons of Jac Colon and Bill McClendon. They shared numerous resources and insights that helped Anderson succeed.

Every pastor or lay person can follow this model in the 2009 Year of Evangelism. Wherever you live in the world, there are successful evangelists and effective pastor-evangelists that will be happy to coach you through the process of holding Spirit-filled meetings.



Pastor Shane Anderson (fourth from left) and newly baptized church members.

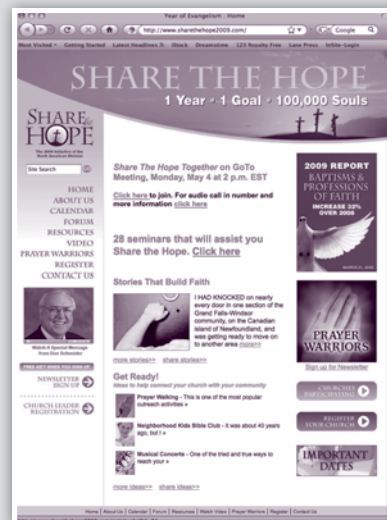
Also, a variety of resources provided by evangelistic ministries can be found on Hope Channel that recently launched a special Web site dedicated to evangelism training. Visitors to [www.HopeTV.net](http://www.HopeTV.net) will discover more than 200 evangelism training videos for free online viewing. The Web site covers every aspect of evangelism—including personal relationship building, how to give Bible studies, answering objections, and how to hold successful meetings.

This resource is part of Hope Channel's new Hope NET ministry. Adventists around the world are very familiar with the concept of NET evangelistic meetings. Up until now, the term *NET* has not been utilized as an acronym. This changed when Hope Channel went searching for a name for their new ministry.

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- Registration
- Resources for sowing and reaping including several options for sermons and study guides
- Manual for successful public meetings
- Print house suggestions
- Community event ideas
- Meeting locations
- Prayer Warriors
- Stories of faith



Church's satellite NET evangelistic meetings. The leadership of Hope Channel felt that more pre-meeting training was needed for pastors and members to be successful in evangelism, and the idea of creating the Network for Evangelism Training—NET—surfaced.

Through Hope NET, experienced evangelists, pastors, and lay people network together to share their secrets of evangelism success through video training classes and forums. Many of the videos have been recorded by Hope Channel and others have been contributed by a variety of church departments, supporting ministries, and individuals.

"Hope NET comprises an evangelism college online that anyone can access whenever they need it," says Mark Finley, a vice president for the world Adventist Church. Even nontraditional evangelism approaches to non-Christian religions are taught by some of the leading experts of the church.

Hope Channel also provides another coaching opportunity for those who want to hold their own evangelistic meetings. Hope Channel hosts regular evangelism coaching seminars called "Share the Hope Together." People around the world can follow Hope NET's

coaching conference online. Schedules and a link to the live coaching sessions can be found at [www.SharetheHope2009.com](http://www.SharetheHope2009.com) and [www.HopeTV.net](http://www.HopeTV.net).

During these monthly "Share the Hope Together" seminars, Gary Gibbs hosts a variety of evangelists to discuss the important items that need to be accomplished that month in preparation for an upcoming series. Experienced evangelists such as Mark Finley, C. D. Brooks, and James Cress present insights that have helped them experience God's blessing on their ministries.

Viewers may participate in the live programs by emailing their questions *before* and *during* the program. Their questions are then answered by the guest hosts on the air.


A very special date for the Year of Evangelism in North America is September 11, 2009. This date has been chosen to start fall evangelistic meetings all across the division. The "Share the Hope Together" programs will help pastors prepare for a fall series. In addition to this, a special series of "Share the Hope Together" weekly coaching sessions will begin on Monday, September 14, and continue every Monday for four weeks. These live weekly

"workers' meetings" will discuss what pastors and lay leaders should be doing that week during their evangelistic meetings.

The first week's "Share the Hope Together" program will look at how to build and maintain your audience. The second and third weeks will explore how to present testing truths and help people make decisions for Jesus. The fourth week will delve into helping people commit their lives to Christ in baptism and church membership. Each program will invite live interaction with the audience so that their questions and comments can be addressed.

A large number of additional evangelism resources are available at [www.SharetheHope2009.com](http://www.SharetheHope2009.com). Archives of past "Share the Hope" broadcasts are also available to view or for listening, with a forum posted for people to discuss their experiences, share resources, and ask questions.

During this Year of Evangelism, God's people will work together to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Are there reasons not to do evangelism? Sure. Dozens of them. But we only need one reason *to do* evangelism. And that reason is Jesus. In the light of the Cross, no reason exists to sit on the sidelines during the Year of Evangelism.

We might harbor fears of failure. Our schedules may be overloaded. Shane Anderson knows these feelings well, but when asked what advice he might extend to others who have been hesitant about holding an evangelistic meeting, Anderson said this: "Just do it. Commit to hold meetings. Take advantage of every evangelism training resource available. And most important, seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit to use you to lead the lost safely home to Jesus. God will bless your humble efforts, just like He did mine." 

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# The vacant parish: Managing a pastoral search process

The pastor just announced that soon he would be moving to another congregation. At once parishioners look at each other with a sense of anxiety and concern. Prayer for divine guidance accompanies conversations regarding just how the pastoral search process will proceed. Phone calls are made to conference leadership, and opinions are shared.

While the pastor's decision to move provides an opportunity for the congregation to express trust, unity, and dependence on God, it also introduces risk.

## How frequently do pastors move?

Congregations frequently confront pastoral transitions. Seventh-day Adventist pastors in North America, for example, move on an average of about every six years.<sup>1</sup> In 1992, Arnold Kurtz noted that short-term Adventist pastors move every two to three years.<sup>2</sup> Our research reveals a growing commitment of pastors to remain with the congregations they serve as they work through various issues toward a vision for evangelism and spiritual growth.

There are times when a pastoral move is well advised, and such transitions will remain inevitable. The purpose of this article is to describe a process that can make the transition experience a positive one for a congregation and affirm their relationship within a sisterhood of churches.

## What values are involved in pastoral placement processes?

A responsible pastoral placement process requires application of at least three core values. The first is *respect*. The professionalism of pastoral ministry should be carefully regarded in both process and dialogue. Pastors respond to God's calling and gifting, are equipped through considerable education and training, have accumulated experience in service, and are accountable for their own decisions in the calling process. Respect means a pastor's personal responsibility to process their response to a transition must not be usurped by organizational leadership except in the most unusual circumstances. Conference organizations that exercise this value do not press arbitrary decisions on pastors regarding their place of service.

Trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit within a local church body calls for similar respect and restraint. This respect and restraint emerges from *humility*, the second core value. Conference leaders should demonstrate their confidence in the leading of the Holy Spirit and their high regard for the congregation by seeking prayerful reflection during a pastoral transition. Christian leadership is exercised in humility, not in power or control. A pastoral placement process becomes a wonderful opportunity for Christian leadership to be demonstrated by organizational servants. Humility opens the hearts and minds of both parishioners and their conference leadership to

unite and participate together in the pastoral placement process.

*Community* is a third value expressed in a pastoral transition. As Adventists, we are committed to a vision of global mission that gives purpose to our worldwide organization. We carry forward evangelism and church growth more effectively as one world church rather than in isolation from one another. We maintain our essential message wherever the church is extended. In the nature of community, we find our value in relationship to the whole. Individual members of specific congregations who recognize this value will pray for God's guidance in the search for a new pastor within the perspective of the larger community. They will welcome organizational leaders to initiate and guide participatory pastoral placement because those leaders provide the involvement of the larger world church body.

## Accountability

Who employs the Seventh-day Adventist pastor? A more helpful question would be, *To whom are Adventist pastors accountable?*

An Adventist pastor is employed through the action of the executive committee for the conference of churches to which the congregation belongs. Conference leaders provide initiative in the placement procedures and carry out the decisions of an executive committee. They have no inherent authority to hire or terminate pastors. That is done by the executive committee of that conference.

A congregational pastor's accountability is to the executive committee of the local conference. It might seem the pastor is not accountable to the local congregation. Experienced pastors know otherwise. True, the local church does not hire or terminate a pastor's service. They do, however, give constant feedback, both formal and informal. They constantly let the pastor know how they are doing through numerous subtle, and sometimes less subtle, messages. The health of the congregation usually reflects pastoral leadership. The congregation provides the context for evaluation initiated by many pastors, and sometimes by the conference organization. Furthermore, the local conference actually comprises a constituency of local congregations in that conference. Executive committees of conferences are generally made up of a majority of lay members from various congregations and the others are denominational employees, some of whom are local pastors themselves. The local church

has many ways to hold pastors accountable.

### Congregations in a world church

The nature of the Adventist movement requires emphasis on our global vision. Our vision of a soon-coming Lord shapes our global mission for disciple making. Every local congregation holds accountability to the vision and mission our movement shares. The conference participation in the search processes helps the congregations actualize the concern for the global mission of the church.

To vigorously and meaningfully engage the local congregation in its pastoral placement process is important to the future of a world church movement. The vitality of our world church vision becomes damaged when local congregations retreat to parochial concerns, or committees or leaders of church organizations withdraw participation from the local congregation, thus depriving the local church of

the vision, mission, and strategy of the world church.

### Matching the local congregation

Mission is accomplished at the intersection of Christian believers and the lives of others in their neighborhoods, villages, cities, and workplaces. In the congregation, followers of Christ are encouraged, supported, and equipped in disciple-making activities. Pastors exercise and promote the building up of the church for service. It is evident then that the needs and context of a local congregation must be considered in the pastoral placement process, and a pastor must be well matched to the church.

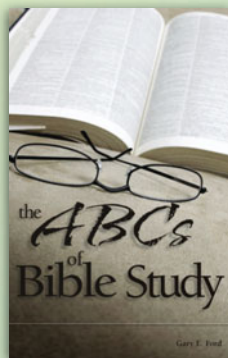
### Steps in the process

The pastoral placement process is complex and it involves both the conference and the local congregation leadership. There are several important aspects to this process. *Begin a conversation.* The local conference leaders should initiate a conversation with church elders regarding the pastor's decision to move after the pastor has expressed to the congregation their desire to move. A meeting should also be arranged to which other church members are invited. In the case of a multichurch district, members from all of the churches should be invited.

*Prayer is essential.* The placement process must be surrendered to God's will, and this initial dialogue becomes the right time to recognize the role of divine guidance in the search process. Both the church and the conference, therefore, must unite in a concert of prayer.

The initial meeting of conference leaders and parishioners must review the entire search process. Members of the churches should share in the work involved. It should be affirmed that the decision to move was undertaken by the pastor and their family with prayerful thought and reflection. Some members may cling to an

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outdated view that the organization somehow moved the pastor.

*Review the vision, mission, goals, and programs of the local church.* Conference leadership can form and pose questions empowering the members to share their perspectives. As members share their views and conference administration listens and lists them, initiative and ownership of the congregation and its mission are acknowledged. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation or district is essential to appropriately match a new pastor.

The congregation should describe the initiatives they feel are important for a new pastor to continue. When parishioners struggle with that issue, they frequently move the conversation to the level of their values. In the process of that reflection, they form a spiritually centered and mission-driven vision for the ministry of their pastor.

*Focus on the kind of pastor needed.* An important aspect of the search process defines what kind of pastor is needed. Church members should be encouraged to speak out on the qualities they seek in their future pastoral leader. It should be clear that a list of pastoral candidates is formed by the personnel committee serving the conference, but that members are invited to contribute names early in the process. No contact in any way should be made with potential candidates until the process is well advanced, since to do so could unsettle their ministry in their present place of service. Before any conversations take place with potential candidates, permission should be obtained from the pastor's current employer.

*Appoint a local search committee.* Many parts of the world have followed the practice of having congregational search committees that work closely with conference administration. This committee can be very valuable in the search process, but it does need

to remember that the authority for appointment of a pastor is with the conference executive committee.

The search committee should prayerfully reflect on the qualities and experience of candidates provided by the conference personnel committee or surfaced in their own deliberation. They need to act within agreed time frames, submit deliberations to the conference personnel committee, and may possibly be reconvened to process names added later by the conference personnel committee. That conference personnel committee will make their final recommendations to the executive committee of the conference.

Conferences that facilitate the option of a local search committee should provide written guidelines describing how the search process functions and the role of each group. It is important that the role of each group is understood so that the process will move forward in an orderly manner.

*Share findings.* Once the conference personnel committee has prepared a qualified list of candidates, possibly with the inclusion of deliberations from a local church search committee, the conference should arrange a meeting with the church or district membership. This meeting is to review the names prayerfully and welcome feedback from members.

*Prepare a recommendation.* By now, the conference personnel committee should be ready for a recommendation to the executive committee. Once a decision is made by the conference executive committee, an official request should be made for the candidate to consider the potential call.

*Meeting with the candidate.* If the candidate responds positively to the conversation, it is advisable to arrange for a meeting with the candidate and the church or churches. Consultation with the local church is completed with a meeting

introducing the pastoral candidate, and, in some cases, their spouse. The candidate should guide the core conversation on vision, mission, goals, and programs. They should listen and share their own history. The conference representative should ask the candidate to leave the room for a few moments following the conversation and receive feedback from the gathered members. In rare cases, there may be negative feedback. If handled properly, this process would negate that potential, and provide a positive environment to respond should concerns occur. If there is, for an unforeseen reason, a broad consensus that it is not a good match, this is the time for that decision. The call to the candidate should only be finalized after this introductory meeting.

*Installation.* Once the invitation is finalized, a service of celebration and affirmation should be planned. Usually installation happens during the pastor's first worship service at the new church. With the members, church leaders, and conference representatives present, the service affirms the pastor in his pastoral ministry and helps the pastor launch his ministry in the context of the world mission of the church.

The journey of the church in the placement process with both local church and conference leadership having served important and prayerful roles demonstrates submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The world mission of the church can thus be pursued with joy and mutual thanksgiving. ❏

1 A random study of 200 pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America conducted in 2008 by the author reveals pastors moved from their last pastoral assignment after nearly six years.

2 In his article "Short-term Pastorates" in *Ministry*, January 1980, Arnold Kurtz noted research among American Lutheran pastors indicating that 20 percent to 25 percent move each year. His personal observation, relevant in 1980, was that Adventist pastors move every two to three years.

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# Family systems in congregational settings

**W**e often refer to the church, especially on the local level, as a family. And we do so for a variety of reasons: we call each other “brother” and “sister,” we spend time with one another during times of both joy and sorrow, and we even squabble occasionally.

Therefore, can a family systems theory be applied in a church setting?

## Family systems theory

The family systems theory originated in the 1950s. Therapists viewed a client’s anomalies and troubles in the context of family mores. Unhealth in a person represented wider unhealth in the family system.<sup>1</sup> Given this, the family systems theory was developed.

*System* may be defined as “ ‘an organized method or procedure for accomplishing something’ ” and as “ ‘a set of interrelated parts, working independently and jointly, in pursuit of common objectives of the whole, within a complex environment.’ ”<sup>2</sup> Systems are not just heaps, lumps, or parts. They are characterized by relationships, logical connections, order, and pattern.

What are the implications of this? Our culture shapes us. Moreover, the subculture or subsystem of our biological family diligently trains us in “anomalies” that become ingrained habits. To this end, organizations and therapists are now taking systems theory seriously.<sup>3</sup> Such can be applied to church life as well.

## Biblical basis for family system theory

Among the foremost to use the image of the family in describing the workings of the church is the apostle Paul (Gal. 6:10; 1 Cor. 3:4-15; 1 Thess. 2:7; Rom. 16:5; Philem. 2; 1 Pet. 4:17; 1 Tim. 3:15), who regards himself as a “father” to the congregations he established (1 Cor. 4:15). He applies maternal imagery to the church (Gal. 4:19, TLB) and includes other leaders, both men and women, in the parental role (1 Thess. 2:11; Philem. 10; Rom. 16:1, 2, 7).

In the early church, believers met in homes, which explains why Paul often greeted the congregations that met in various “households” in the manner he did (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 1:11; Col. 4:15). The outgrowth of such home experiences was similar to the natural family cohesiveness and fellowship experienced by literal and functional families. No wonder Paul encouraged believers to be hospitable to all, especially to the family of believers (Gal. 6:10).

At times, the first century believers had issues similar to modern-day families, leading Paul to lament the subsystems at war (1 Cor. 1:11, 12).

Early believers, then, thought of themselves in familylike terms long before Paul applied such nomenclature to them. Thus, we recognize him as the promoter, not the originator, of kinship language.

Opportunities and strengths to realize “ideals” for the church lie within our grasp as we apply family therapy to congregational settings. Observe Cosgrove and Hatfield: “In

making the congregation a spiritual family, the Spirit calls it to reform its natural family life in accord with the new humanity in Christ.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed we are to more closely align ourselves to the prayer of Christ that we all may be one (John 17:21).

## The informal family structure in the church

An informal structure can shape interpersonal and congregational relationships in churches in negative ways. “Behind the official systems of the local church (its offices, boards, committees, etc.) there is another system, a familylike system, which greatly shapes the way church members relate to one another, do business together, care for one another, and fight with one another.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, understanding the church’s informal structure assists in conflict resolution. For instance, the one who has authority easily settles in secular organizations. Not so in church.

This happens because the church is a volunteer organization. Members are important stakeholders in this organization and feel they “own” the church. As such, they feel they have a right to be in charge. Norman Shawchuck notes: “Conflict erupts . . . when one or two people or a particular group believe they should be in charge. A hotbed for trouble exists when 25 or 100 people feel they own the programs and personnel of the church.”<sup>6</sup>

Every church, in its informal structure, assigns members various roles. This informal structure is best

interpreted through the metaphor of the family, according to Cosgrove and Hatfield. The roles assigned to individuals have nothing to do with age, maturity, or even official responsibility given in the church. These roles center around the position of power attained by the individual in the informal structure and then becomes the church's perception of and the respect naturally given to individuals.

For example, the pastor of the church is the designated leader; however, the functioning or recognized leader may be Grandfather Jones who wields great influence in the church. With the leader assigned the parental role, the pastor could actually be considered a child in the system.

As it relates to the informal structure, we need to define these terms: *parent*, *child*, *independent child*, and *parental child*. The "parent" enjoys informal authority. As in many Western families, "parents" in church are the major decision makers. Whether or not they are part of officialdom does not matter. This person enjoys almost unlimited power unless others attained parity status (there can be other "parents" in the congregation).

What makes the difference between "parents" and "children" can be summarized in one word: *deference*. Children defer to parents. In a sense, children assume the role of followers, and some people are comfortable with that role. They do not want to bear the responsibilities of leadership.

Like older siblings entrusted with the care of younger children in literal families, *parental children* bear similar responsibilities in the informal structure. They enjoy limited measures of authority. In other words, others defer to them. Unlike independent children, parental children recognize and defer to the parents in the congregational family system; but they are not the decision

makers. Like *independent children*, who have no parental responsibilities or obligations to any other "babies," some parental children eventually become parents.

Alongside the roles congregations assign individuals, ministers need to recognize the unspoken rules of their congregations if they are to deal effectively with the congregational system. One of the unspoken rules in church is tolerating "troublemakers." They are symptomatic of the wider unhealth in the congregational system. What happens in the system that gives rise to these "problem people"? Are there times when they are beneficial? Could this be

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the reason churches tolerate them? "Systems tolerate troublemakers not only to avoid open conflict but also because the group perceives that it derives some benefit from the offending persons and perhaps from their 'unacceptable' behavior."<sup>7</sup>

Take the case of the Sable Valley Community Church.<sup>8</sup> From the beginning, Pastor Peter Wells was warned by many parishioners about the couple, John and Jane Reeve. They had literally blocked and frustrated the ministries of former pastors. At first glance, the congregation did not find their behavior acceptable.

Yet, three years later, after prayerfully and carefully applying Matthew 18:15–20, Pastor Wells found his and the church board's recommendation voted down by the church family.

Why did the church not deal with this couple? Overtly, the parents in Sable Valley Community Church claimed that they believed in evangelism and growth in membership. Realistically, they did not.

## Mapping

If Pastor Wells was familiar with the family systems theory, he would not have gone blindly into battle with this couple. He would have known that the "parents" aren't the church board. Hence, they could not effectively influence the church's decision. We can avoid such pitfalls by applying mapping—a strategic intervention tool in the family systems theory.

*Mapping* provides clear pictures of the rules (games) of congregations and the assigned status of congregants. It is the barometer of the informal church structure, giving a description of this structure at a particular time. "Spiritual mapping is nothing more ethereal than creating a spiritual profile of a community based on careful research," writes Art Moore, who quotes George Otis Jr., president of the Sentinel Group.<sup>9</sup> Often the ones we think are "parents" in the informal system may not necessarily be so. Keep in mind that parental children take orders from parents yet enjoy measures of authority in the church.

Church leaders are encouraged to map. To begin, one must take a conflict event, covert or overt, and re-create the event, recalling all events leading up to it. Human beings are complex and not always consistent in their actions. It means, therefore, to frequently consult our maps to update and properly read the congregational system. We want

to correctly identify congregants' status.

## Restructuring the system

In carefully profiling members, ministers' energies are concentrated in areas most needed. They can carefully strategize to deal with the unofficial structure in the church. Our overall objective concentrates on restructuring the system so that the church family can handle conflict constructively. Here are four recommended strategies:

The first is *affiliation*. "Affiliation means identifying oneself positively with a subsystem, whether a person or a group."<sup>10</sup> Influencing a tyrannical parent in the informal structure may mean that you affirm their good work. Affiliation is played out in one of three ways: affirmation, sympathy, and identification with the objective to retrain members and move from enmity to amity.

Another strategy to employ is *unbalancing tactics*. Again, the systems theory informs us that every system seeks balance. When a church is thrown into disequilibrium, it will do everything to "fix" the problem—to maintain balance.<sup>11</sup> Unbalancing tactics is, however, an opportunity to change—to restructure the system.

One such unbalancing tactic is coalition. "As a pastoral strategy, the aim of such a coalition is to unbalance the system so that it can restructure itself in a way that eliminates the warfare between the two subsystems."<sup>12</sup> For instance, an "undesirable" in a group now enjoys greater levels of acceptance because a strong "desirable" aligns to such a one. The system has changed; it seeks "balance," because the stronger helps the weaker.

In board meetings, I have engaged the more silent members. At times, prior to such meetings, I have assisted them in determining what to say. And the more vocal ones, the parents, have a brand-new respect for them.

A third strategy to employ in the informal structure is called *marking boundaries*. This theory suggests that in the formative period of human interaction, patterns of leadership and exchanges are developed. Conflict situations develop because unfair boundaries (unfair roles) are assigned to individuals: unchecked and unchallenged, they feel inadequate. Therefore, gifts that God has endowed are not effectively used.

Parents in the informal structure often invite another to be a child. In his first week in his new pastorate, Pastor Larry Daniels<sup>13</sup> was asked by a church member to return a Christian movie to the local movie store. He responded to the situation, immediately and appropriately, by declining to do so. He first commended the member (who was acting the part of a parent giving out an assignment), who had left that note on his desk, and then clarified roles. Clearly, ministers and parishioners have different roles to play. Early on, Pastor Daniels marked the boundaries. In effect, he was saying, "I am not a child—I will not accept the invitation to be one."

*Joining* is the final strategy. Pastors who are marginalized and hindered in their ministry, should make this strategic intervention a priority in order to rightly "join" the family. Joining, as interpreted through the eyes of affiliation, involves at least two things: *affirmation* and *identification*. Cosgrove and Hatfield state: "Affirmation means expressing appreciation and praise to others for the things we value about them. Identification means discovering and matching similarities between ourselves and others. As a strategy of joining, identification also means adopting the ways of the family."<sup>14</sup>

Adopting the ways of the family is the basis for my participation in church social events such as birthday parties and church family fun day. I participate, having adapted to the ways of the family, wanting to

be a family member and an effective servant-leader.

Although it takes hard work, these strategies can be employed in the informal structure to foster more wholesome relations.

## Conclusion

The challenge of the body of Christ is to allow the Lord to make it the head and not the tail (Deut. 28:13). As the world experiences a paradigm shift in thinking and practice, we are not to be lingering. System thinking is becoming standard practice for care providers. Christ's body can ill afford conflicts, especially major and debilitating ones, without interventions. Mandated to peacekeeping, God's people must, in proactive fashion, interweave into their daily experiences and contacts all the truths into which the Holy Spirit guides. Shall we not then embrace family systems approaches? ■

1 Charles Cosgrove and Dennis Hatfield, *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind Fights* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 20.

2 William A. Shrode and Dan Voich Jr., *Organization and Management: Basic Systems Concepts* (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1974), 122, quoted in "Governance and conflict management/resolution systems," *Developing and Sustaining Conflict Management Systems as Instruments of Governance*, 2001, p. 1 of 11; prepared by CDR Associates, et. al, in cooperation with The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Governance and Public Administration Branch; available from <http://upan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNUPAN006645.pdf>, accessed November 30, 2005.

3 Mac Dominick, "Outcome-Based Religions: Purpose-Driven Apostasy," *Outcome-Based Religion: Purpose, Apostasy, & The New Paradigm Church*, quoted in "General Systems Theory," *Church Growth and Management*, available from <http://www.crossroad.to/glossary/church-growth-mission.htm>, accessed November 30, 2005.

4 Cosgrove and Hatfield, 19.

5 *Ibid.*, 5.

6 Norman Shawchuck, "Staying Cool When the Heat's On: Causes and Cures for Conflict," available from [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200502/200502\\_030\\_cool.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200502/200502_030_cool.cfm), accessed November 30, 2005.

7 Cosgrove and Hatfield, 96.

8 *Ibid.*, 95–99. Names are pseudonyms.

9 Art Moore, "Church Growth: Spiritual Mapping Gains Credibility Among Leaders," *Christianity Today*, January 12, 1998, quoted in "Spiritual mapping," *Church Growth and Management*, available from <http://www.crossroad.to/glossary/church-growth-mission.htm>, accessed November 30, 2005.

10 Cosgrove and Hatfield, 133.

11 *Ibid.*, 137.

12 *Ibid.*

13 A Pseudonym.

14 Cosgrove and Hatfield, 179.

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# An Adventist approach to Islam

It was the first day of our ten-week stay in the Palestinian section of Jerusalem. Every spring the school where I taught offered a study tour to the Middle East. The school where we were to stay was housed in a nice compound just five minutes from the Damascus Gate into the Old City. This was my first trip to this part of the world, and I was excited.

As the tour guide, I took my position in the jump seat at the front of the bus in close proximity to the driver, a genial and efficient Palestinian Muslim. We made our way over the hills east of Jerusalem and headed down the Jericho Road toward the Dead Sea. Along the way, the driver and I talked about the Bedouin tents we passed, the extreme dryness of the landscape, the story of the good Samaritan, and the observations that he had made from years of driving groups to Masada, Qumran (location where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found), and Jericho. He was bemused at my interest in photographing Palestinian police (Palestinian self-rule had just begun in Jericho) and, because I had requested it, he drove us by Yassir Arafat's house.

At the end of the day, as the bus groaned its way back up the Jericho Road, he stunned me with a question that I didn't see coming.

"Are you really an American?"

"Yes," I responded, wondering why he asked.

"Then how come you are not a Christian?"

At first, I was offended. How could he say such a thing?

I protested his judgment, but he brushed me off.

"There is nothing Christian about you," he said. "You are a better Muslim than I am."

Soon after that, we arrived at the guest center in East Jerusalem and we, unfortunately, were unable to continue the conversation.

In the weeks that followed, I had many similar experiences. I never spent an hour with any Muslim without getting that same pair of questions:

"You're an American, aren't you?"

"Then how come you are not a Christian?"

## The markers

Over time, I began to understand why they drew this conclusion. In the Middle East, there are several markers that distinguish Muslims and Christians from each other. These markers are universally accepted by both sides and clearly define each group.

The first of these markers? Alcohol. If you enter a grocery store in an Arab area and they sell alcohol, the store is Christian; if there is no alcohol, it is Muslim.

A second key marker? Pork. Good Muslims in the Middle East won't eat it. In fact, if a Muslim converts to Christianity, the way to convincingly demonstrate that change to family and friends includes drinking a glass of wine and eating a piece of pork in front of them.

A third key marker? Dress. If you walk into an Arab travel agency and the women are dressed in the

latest Western fashions, you know the agency as Christian; if the women dress much more modestly, you can identify the travel agency as Muslim.

Now, one might argue that these differences are relatively trivial, but that attitude reveals our Western bias. Trust me, these are not trivial issues in the Middle East. They are carefully considered markers, widely recognized and accepted. Christians and Muslims are well aware of them and watch carefully to see which side you are on.

## Common ground

Thus, because I am an Adventist, I can now see why some Muslims would be confused about me. Indeed, I have learned that the common elements between Muslims and Adventists run a lot deeper than just these issues. I am beginning to believe that God carefully designed the remnant message as an end-time bridge between the Muslim world and the West.

Let me give you an important example.

What do you consider of value at the end of life? When you are at death's door and look back on your life, what will really matter? Will you wish you had played more video games? Will you regret that you did not watch more comedy shows? Will you regret that you chose not to use alcohol or drugs? Will you wish you had spent more time following the lives of the rich and famous?

At the end of your life, death provides a keen focus on what truly matters. All the glitz, glamor, and

trivia appear to be just that, and life's true meaning and priorities come into focus. As the end of life approaches, lesser things fall away, and two main things appear clearer than ever: The first is God and the relationship (or lack of it) that one may have had with Him. The second is a review of what you have done with your life, choices you have made, and the kind of character you have developed and displayed.

Interestingly, these two points are at the core of Islamic faith. In the Christian West, Islam often seems an oppressive, outdated, violent form of thinly veiled paganism. Yet Islam is a

Recently, an Islamic government requested that an Adventist institution organize a conference on spiritual life and wholeness as pertaining to the practice of medicine in Islamic countries. The request engendered a great deal of nervousness on the part of the leadership of the institution. How could they approach the issues of the Adventist faith in a country closed to evangelism? Should they hide their faith to some degree in order to carry out the request?

A Muslim physician who was born and raised in that particular country and now resides near the institution was invited to be part of

experiences with you, will resonate deeply with Muslims anywhere. We need the wholeness perspective that you will bring to us."

Sure, there are significant points of difference between Adventists and Muslims. We all know that. But when Adventists approach Muslims at the point of common spiritual need, the encounter can lead both parties to a deeper appreciation of what matters in life before God. Adventists become excited to discover that others find some of their peculiar views spiritually uplifting and are often inspired by the devotion to duty and spiritual discipline

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deeply spiritual faith that has provided meaning and purpose for millions. More so, a strong correlation exists between the core values of Islam and of Seventh-day Adventism.


Both the Adventist and Muslim faiths are end-time oriented. We live life in the consciousness of final judgment and accountability for every thought and act. We are both aware of the centrality of God in a great cosmic conflict and that character is the one thing we can carry with us into eternity. In their essences, Adventists and Muslims share a common perspective regarding the ultimate meaning of life.

### **Be yourselves**

the planning committee. As he listened to the concerns, he remained quiet, feeling his way through an unfamiliar situation. But after about 45 minutes of discussion, he raised his hand to speak.

"I really don't think you need to worry about these issues," he said. "Every Muslim familiar with Seventh-day Adventists knows that, of all the other religions, Adventism is the closest to Islam. You are like spiritual cousins to us. Go ahead and plan this conference as you would any other. Just be yourselves and you will be welcome in my country. The Adventist values that this university stands for, values that I know from my own

seen in many Muslims. Muslims, in turn, feel affirmed that their core beliefs resonate with people in a Western context and are encouraged by the assurance Adventists find in Jesus as they prepare for the day of judgment.

If you give it half a chance, such spiritual affinity can be the basis of a beautiful friendship, which itself can open the door to witness. So, the next time a Muslim asks me if I am a Christian, I won't be offended. I will take it as a great opportunity to share my faith with someone who already shares some of it with me. 

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# MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors

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  - b. Historical studies
  - c. Theological studies (including ethics)
  - d. Ministry (preaching, leadership, counseling, evangelism, etc.)
  - e. World missions
2. **All submissions must follow the Writer's Guidelines as to length, endnotes, style, and other features of the manuscript. Please carefully read the guidelines found at [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org).**
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The evaluation panel will determine if all prizes will be awarded. The decisions of this panel are final.

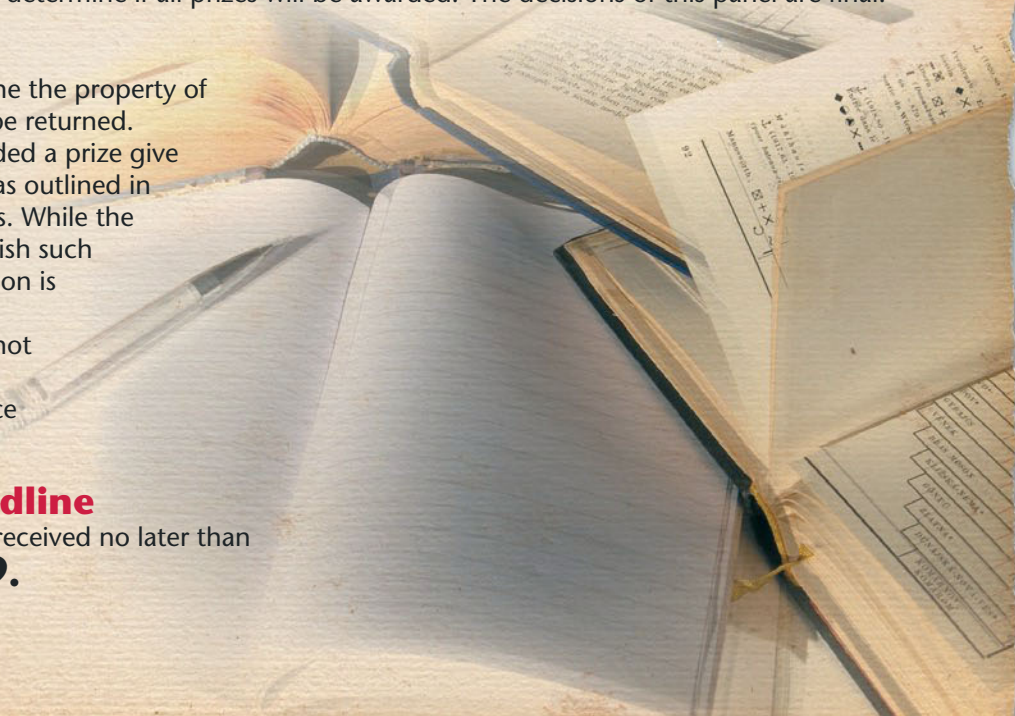
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### Submission deadline

All submissions must be received no later than

**JUNE 30, 2009.**



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# Reflections on the centennial celebration

It has been four years since the Adventist Church in Zambia celebrated its first centennial (May 6, 7, 2005). I was privileged to witness and participate in the celebration. Rusangu Mission, once dubbed the “Mother of Adventist Missions” in Zambia, hosted the event. The celebration featured music, sermons, and a skit by young people who portrayed scenes from the life of the first Adventist missionary to Zambia, William H. Anderson.

The celebration aroused many memories of the early work in Zambia. In the theme of “Never Give Up,” we all caught the spirit of sacrifice that propelled the pioneers as we sought to recapture for ourselves their vision.

As we carefully reflect on the historic event and what it meant for the church in Zambia, several lessons for the Adventist Church today can be taken from our experience.

## Looking to the future

First, this event ushered in a new dawn—the beginning of another century of commitment to the work of spreading the gospel. The centennial not only focused on past achievements and commemoration of the pioneers’ great sacrifices, but it also celebrated the arrival of a new term of work. The event pointed the church in Zambia to the unfinished task ahead of us and gave freshness and a renewed sense of urgency to our task of spreading the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6–12.

## Starting small

Second, the celebration placed Rusangu Mission Station in its proper historic perspective as the “Mother of Adventist Missions” in Zambia. Here the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia started with a small band of believers led by W. H. Anderson. Beginning with ten pupils in 1905, the Adventist family at Rusangu increased to 38 students two years later. From this humble center, several outstations among the Tonga-speaking people were opened in distant places. In later years, missionary activities spread to other provinces of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). For example, Samuel Konigsmacher left Rusangu Mission Station and opened Musofu in 1917, Chimpempe in 1921 in northern Zambia, and in 1928, Liumba Hill Mission in western Zambia.

Since then, hundreds of local churches and several educational and healthcare institutions have been established in Zambia. From one mission field, the church grew to three fields and later realigned into six fields in 1988, two of which are now conferences. By the third quarter of 2007, the total membership of Zambia Union stood at more than 560,000.

From such small beginnings, the work flourished. Our job includes being faithful to the tasks before us, wherever we are in the world. In many places, pioneer missionaries start out small; the Lord alone knows what fruits will follow.

## Reaffirmation

Third, the celebration deepened the faith and confidence of delegates

in the Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy. Each presenter assured delegates that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had “not followed cunningly devised fables” (2 Pet. 1:6),\* but Bible-based truth first handed down to the patriarchs and prophets, and later to the apostles of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1–11; 1 John 1:1–4). Kwabena Donkor, an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, stressed our need to *know* and *understand for ourselves* Seventh-day Adventist eschatology, in particular Revelation 13. Volumes of seditious literature from splinter movements are distributed to unsuspecting believers and, as a consequence, many Adventist believers have left us. Only a personal knowledge of the Word of God can shield us individually from error. Though we have great confidence in Ellen G. White’s ministry, instrumental in shaping our church, and her writings continue to be a blessing to us today, we must stand firm on the Word of God as the foundation of our beliefs.

## The promise of Christ’s return

Fourth, the centennial celebration also reaffirmed our faith in the return of Jesus. The event reminded delegates that the Lord was one hundred years nearer to coming than He was when W. H. Anderson and his team pitched their tents and began to preach the *Parousia* among



Tonga-speaking people of southern Zambia. Over the years, thousands of our citizens have believed in the Lord and the message of His return. The rapid spread of the gospel and the readiness with which hearts are receiving it everyday is unprecedented, and clearly points to a soon-coming Savior.

### Call to unity

Fifth, and finally, the celebration called delegates to theological and doctrinal unity. In recent years, the Adventist Church in many places around the world has experienced a crisis in unity; it has been called “the fragmenting of Adventism.” The nature of the crisis is largely theological, centering on various issues like the role of women in the church, the nature of the prophetic gift, and Creation.

Whatever the reason for the dissonance among us, the centennial celebration called for unity—unity in faith, doctrine, and practice. One church leader explained the difference between *unity* and *oneness*. He argued that it was possible to appear united, without being “one.” He said some people were united in matrimony but were not truly one in

purpose, plans, and action. Similarly, the church may unite in songs, worship, or work even when they are not “one” in faith, doctrine, or practice.


Oneness, he stressed, went deeper than unity. Oneness was a conscious effort that involved the will, emotions, strength, and mind. Jesus prayed that the disciples “may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:22). It was only when the early church had attained oneness that Pentecost occurred (Acts 2:1, 2). Because they were one, it was easy for them to share. Oneness in church shows evidence of discipleship.

Finally, wherever unity exists, God recognizes it by pouring His Spirit on the people concerned. Not limited to any age or race, the gift is available to all the faithful followers of Jesus. When the Holy Spirit falls upon the church, broken relationships are mended, trust replaces suspicion and faultfinding, and routine formalities in worship come alive with meaning and purpose.

### Conclusion

No doubt our centennial celebration was a special event for the church in Zambia reminding us of the importance of establishing

small groups for worship, as well as educational facilities and healthcare institutions. As mentioned earlier, from a small group of ten individuals in one area, the church in Zambia grew to a current membership of more than 560,000 believers.

The challenges discussed there reflect, in many ways, the challenges our church faces all over the world. Yes, we can marvel at where the Lord has brought us so far, but much more needs to be done. Whether in Zambia or Iceland, in Peru or Japan, we must continue to spread the good news of Christ to the entire world. 

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#### ENDNOTES

- \* All Scriptures are taken from the King James Version.

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## LETTERS

Continued from page 4 




a means or an intermediate agent. Acts 2:23, for example, says that “you crucified and killed [him] by *[dia]* the hands of those outside the law” [NRSV]. Here “you” is the ultimate agent and “the hands of those outside the law” the intermediate agent who acts on behalf of the ultimate agent. (See also, for example, in the Greek text Matthew 11:2; Mark 6:2; John 1:17; Acts 1:2, 16; 5:12).

If we apply this grammatical pattern to Hebrews 9:14, then Jesus brought Himself as a sacrifice but

used the Holy Spirit as an agent to carry out the action of *prosferein*. This is a rather strange idea that is worth deeper investigation. To me it looks more like a mediating role of the Holy Spirit between Father and Son instead of an empowering one. If I were to put it in very simple terms, I would say it this way: the Holy Spirit made clear to the Father that after [Jesus’] sacrificial death there is no longer any reason to be angry at His Son.

—Torsten Bretschneider, Schwerin, Germany

I very much appreciated the articles on the Trinity and feel that the church needs to stay on top of this doctrine, because if we don’t, we will see serious trouble from those who oppose it. We can no longer assume that Christians understand the Trinity or that they are in agreement with the church’s teachings on it.

—Jim Gale, Banning, California, United States 



# When you are treated unfairly

Have you been underpaid, treated unfairly, or exploited by those in power? Has your ordination been deferred due to unfounded rumors? Have you been removed from office, or assigned to another line of work, without due process? In brief, were you treated unfairly?

Indeed, pastors may, at times, experience unjust treatment or what they deem as unfair. Either in the church or the ministerial work, where injustices are the least expected, pastors may find themselves victims of injustice either by their own local church board, by colleagues, or even by their local conference.

If you have experienced unfairness, here are a few suggestions on how to respond.

## Talking it through

Talk to the person or committee whom you think treated you unfairly. Follow Matthew 18:15. Talk gently and privately. Let them know what happened and how you felt. Engage in a dialogue with the idea of finding an equitable solution. By your talking, doubts may be removed. You may also be able to see things from another perspective and understand the reasons behind the decision. Misinterpretation or negative thoughts about the decision

of a committee, for instance, might even be put to rest and go a long way in easing resentment on your part.

Oftentimes we get second-hand information, which can be misquoted and misinterpreted about those who, supposedly, spoke against us; thus, talking to the individuals

and talk to one of the leaders. But I finally took the step, spoke to him, and came away realizing that the seemingly unjust decision was actually right.

## Going the extra distance

Do your best to rectify the wrong, to make the unjust decision just. Go the extra distance to work it all out. Talk to the proper authorities if the person or committee that rendered the unfair verdict cannot be persuaded. Your goal is to rectify a wrong, not make the decision suit your own selfish purposes. But if you did everything possible and nothing happened, then give it to God. God has a better plan for you. " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' " (Jer. 29:11, NIV). You may not be able to fully understand God's plans for you, especially when you are still hurting, but trust Him anyway. He has a plan far better than what you can think of or imagine. In one incident, a teacher was transferred to another job

without even being consulted—a change she didn't want. Though she was bitter, the transfer to what seemed to be an undesirable place paved the way to her meeting the man whom, later, she married.

LEARN FROM JESUS, WHO ALSO EXPERIENCED INJUSTICE. JESUS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TREATED AS A CRIMINAL AND HANGED ON THE CROSS. BUT, IN SPITE OF THE INJUSTICE, HE DID NOT RETALIATE.

involved becomes the best way to seek reconciliation.

One time, my wife and I thought that the decision of the committee concerning a situation with her was unfair. I was hesitant to approach

## Stopping the cycle

Paul records another important principle in Romans 12:21: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (NIV). You can stop the cycle of unjust treatment in the church or in society by making sure you act fairly and justly toward others. Change may start with you. This principle is well illustrated in the life of Nelson Mandela, former political prisoner in South Africa. Right after being released from prison, Mandela—who later became the president of South Africa—sought to end the steady stream of injustices in his country by not retaliating against his former enemies. He paid back

the injustices he had experienced by extending the hand of reconciliation and love throughout the former apartheid-ruled South Africa.

## Learning from Jesus

Learn from Jesus, who also experienced injustice. Jesus should not have been treated as a criminal and hanged on the cross. But, in spite of the injustice, He did not retaliate. Instead, He entrusted everything into the hands of His Father, the righteous Judge.

Looking to Jesus can provide sufficient comfort to us during our trials. We live in an unjust world and sometimes even in an unjust

church. But amidst injustices, we know Someone who can relate to us. We may not get justice in this unfair world now, but we are assured to have it in the end from the One who will execute His fair judgment in favor of those who endured injustice here on earth.

We are sure to find comfort and wisdom in Jesus’ act of entrusting His case into the hands of our Father, for *Jesus* “did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly” (1 Pet. 2:23, NLT).

My advice? Go and do likewise. ❏

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## RESOURCES

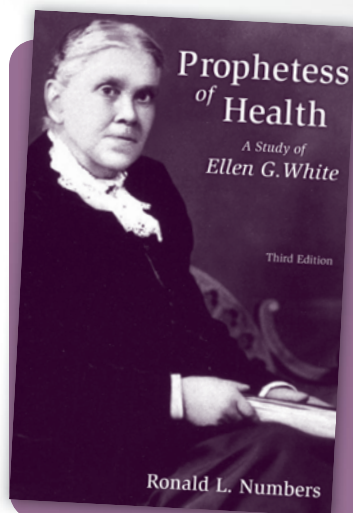


### ***Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White,***

by Ronald L. Numbers, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.

As part of its expanding Library of Religious Biography, Eerdmans has reprinted Ronald Numbers’s *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, in recognition of her role as one of America’s “important religious figures.” The Library also includes a new biography of William Miller, by David L. Rowe, entitled, *God’s Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World*.

Originally published in 1976 and revised in 1992, this third edition of Numbers’s work includes a new preface and two new appendices: “The Trial of Elder I. Dammon” and “The Secret 1919 Bible Conferences.” There are no revisions to the book’s chapters, although endnotes in the



IT IS REGRETTABLE THE NEW MATTER PREPARED FOR THIS THIRD EDITION CONTAINS AT LEAST ONE EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF MISREPRESENTATIONS NOTED IN THE WHITE ESTATE’S CRITIQUE OF THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATION.

previous editions have been relocated as footnotes, resulting in new pagination throughout the volume.

Adventists who have followed the stream of Ellen White studies since the 1970s recognize Numbers’s original publication as groundbreaking in at least two respects. First, being published by Harper & Row, it placed Ellen White alongside other

notable personages in the biography shelves of secular bookstores. Second, by documenting Ellen White’s indebtedness to contemporary health reformers, Numbers caused many Adventists to test their own assumptions about inspiration and the authority of Ellen White’s writings. He also “parted company”

Continued on page 28 ►



with previous Adventist scholars by purposely ruling out divine inspiration as an historical explanation for her life and teachings.

It is regrettable the new matter prepared for this third edition contains at least one example of the kind of misrepresentations noted in the White Estate's critique of the original publication. Commenting on the Israel Dammon meeting, Numbers describes Ellen Harmon as being "caught up in the very 'fanaticism' that she would later

denounce: kissing, touching, crawling, and shouting" (xiii). In actuality, the observer's abridged report (inaccurately called a "transcript" by Numbers) does not describe young Ellen, though present, as participating in any of those fanatical activities.

Today's Adventists—especially pastors—who may be discovering Numbers's book for the first time or anticipating questions from church members will do well to peruse the aforementioned 127-page critique prepared by the White Estate (also

published in 1976) that challenged his assumptions, omissions, and conclusions. Hard copies of the response are available from the White Estate or its research centers, and an online version may be accessed on the Estate's Web site: <http://www.WhiteEstate.org/issues/prophets-of-health.pdf>. Pagination corresponding to the third edition is found in brackets in the online edition.

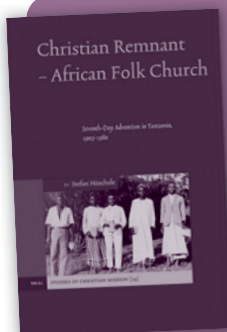
—Reviewed by Tim Poirier, vice director, Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

**Christian Remnant—  
African Folk Church  
Seventh-day Adventism  
in Tanzania 1903–1980,**  
by Stefan Hoeschele, Leiden:  
Brill Academic Pub., 2007.

Stefan Hoeschele's volume deals with the history and theological/ecclesiological development of the Seventh-day Adventist mission and church in Tanzania 1903–1980.

Christians on the African continent belong roughly to three main groups: Roman Catholics, Protestant/Evangelicals, and African Independent Churches. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, with some 400,000 out of a population of 40 million, is assigned to the Protestant group.

The author explored a major but generally neglected issue in missions. He went about his chosen challenge with great energy, courage, painstaking honesty, and missiological zeal. With a German background, six years of service as theology lecturer at the Tanzanian Adventist College, and fluent in Swahili, his choice of subject was inevitable. The 600-page volume has a well-organized bibliography and includes about 100 interviews. Issues and topics are thoroughly examined. He delved into the biblical



THE AUTHOR EXPLORED A MAJOR BUT GENERALLY NEGLECTED ISSUE IN MISSIONS. HE WENT ABOUT HIS CHOSEN CHALLENGE WITH GREAT ENERGY, COURAGE, PAINSTAKING HONESTY, AND MISSIONOLOGICAL ZEAL.

theology of missions, missionary anthropology, Tanzanian and German history, church history, social sciences, government regulations, mission administration manuals and correspondence, articles in periodicals, and personal interviews.

The main theme of the volume is mapping the various tensions that take place as a missionary-led group of new believers grows into an established church fellowship, and what happens when missionary leadership is taken over by national pastors.

Doctrines such as Sabbath keeping and healthful living are considered in great detail. They are put into local settings as they are understood, interpreted, and influenced by exposure to African culture and customs.

Hoeschele lists a number of these influences, ranging from outside relationships with tribal leaders, local administrations, and authorities, to ecumenism and cooperation (or lack thereof) with competing mission societies. He also deals with issues in local church settings such as church ordinances and authority, liturgy, rituals and worship forms, and Christian stewardship. On the personal level there are questions on morality and ethics, family relationships, lifestyle, and acceptance or rejection of local customs.

The author has succeeded in the difficult attempt to draw a fine line between theologies and folk church concepts.

—Reviewed by Borge Schantz. 



## Health and lifestyle conference

**Geneva, Switzerland**—The University of Geneva will be the venue for a gathering of people interested in global health issues and individual lifestyle, July 6–11, 2009. For the first time, the World Health Organization is partnering with the Seventh-day Adventist Health Ministries department in working on a program that will present global priorities and lifestyle determinants of health and disease in an attempt to align objectives for faith-based health delivery services. The conference also seeks to function as a cross-fertilizing forum where ideas, collaboration, and cooperative action can be fostered.

The conference will feature speakers from several disciplines in health delivery, including for the purpose of strategic planning, administrative leadership. This leadership track will emphasize the need for visioning at the institutional board level to address not only the day-to-day operation but the future response to the issues of health in the respective locations of the institutions.

At a primary care level, the conference will offer seminars that cover many global issues ranging from mental health to nutrition and lifestyle. For specific groups of health professionals, there will be individualized tracks so that nurses, dentists, physicians, and public health and allied health professionals will have their own forum. The National Council of Churches in the United States recently found more than 75 percent of congregations offer some form of health ministry outreach to their community, and there is a need for laity interested in health ministry to become informed of the wider opportunities available to them as health care advocates.

For more information, go to [www.healthlifestyleconf.com](http://www.healthlifestyleconf.com). [Allan Handysides]

## Seminars give birth to new initiatives

**Estonia/Latvia/Lithuania**—Training seminars organized by the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (TED) were held in the cities of Tartu, Estonia, Riga, Latvia, and Kaunas, Lithuania, February 16–26, 2009. More than 120 pastors, Bible workers, and lay members from Adventist churches in the Baltic Union Conference (BAUC) renewed their commitment to evangelism and explored new ways to evangelize to unchurched people in their territory.


During the seminars, participants came up with interesting, new ideas for evangelism. In Estonia, social networking ideas received the most support. The idea of inflatable and portable churches won the most support in Latvia, while the participants from Lithuania forwarded the idea of contacting local bakeries for advertising the Adventist Church on their bread labels. The next step is for church members to refine these ideas and turn them into projects.

**Bertold Hibner**, president of the Adventist Church in Lithuania, said, “This was a well-timed seminar. I believe that this training seminar has helped people to crystallize what they have been thinking and praying about. I feel that people are very encouraged to become actively involved in evangelism by receiving practical training and being genuinely supported by the church leadership. I expect that church members will boldly take on their responsibility and share their faith with their friends.”

“As I cherish close personal relationships with my friends, I was happy to hear that seventy-six percent of people who are coming to church are doing that thanks to the close friendly relationships,” said Pastor **Toivo Kaasik**, who pastors two small churches in the center of Estonia. “A friend, relative, or a neighbor who doesn’t believe in God [is] the first one whom we should invite to study the Bible with us, [and] with whom we should talk and lead on the path to Christ.”

“This seminar was very productive. It was a great opportunity to refresh our commitment to evangelism and think about new strategies,” said **Viesturs Rekis**, president of the Adventist Church in Latvia. [G. Bukalders & L. Beekmann/TED News Staff/TED News]

## Ministry editors teach classes

As a part of their responsibilities with the General Conference Ministerial Association, the editors of *Ministry*, **Nikolaus Satelmajer** and **Willie E. Hucks II**, engage in pastoral training from time to time. Satelmajer taught an ethics class at Zaoksky Adventist University in the Russian Federation, February 12–16, 2009, and Hucks taught a course in homiletics for the extension school of Middle East University in Arua, Uganda, March 8–15, 2009. 



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# Looking at the next six months: A progress report

During the course of a grading period, students receive periodic assessments from their teachers. These progress reports accomplish two purposes: they tell the students what they've accomplished thus far, and they help the students to see what they need to do in order to make or maintain a good grade. Such assessments can come at various times during the quarter or semester—perhaps weekly or perhaps halfway through the grading period.

As we approach the halfway point of 2009, I think this is a good time for us, as ministers, to administer self-evaluations. Taking an honest look at ourselves helps us to see what we're doing well and, if needed, develop a plan to address those areas where we could do better.

So what items comprise this progress report?

## Spiritual formation

Indispensable weapons in the pastor's arsenal include prayer and Bible study. Paul speaks of the importance of the Word of God when he refers to it as the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17, KJV). Without consistent study of God's Word, we are powerless against the assaults of Satan.

As for prayer, maintaining those open lines of communication with God can be evaluated as better than just communicating with our own spouse, as important as that should be considered. And those of us who are married know that good communication with our spouse greatly enhances the relationship. God loves to hear us talk to Him too, but talking to Him isn't just about us telling Him what we're thinking or what we want. In talking to Him, we open ourselves both to understanding Him better and understanding *ourselves* better.

How are you doing in relation to spiritual formation?

## Family

While we probably do not even need to emphasize that the most important relationship is our vertical relationship with God, the most important horizontal relationship is that which we have with our families. For those of us who are married, our spouse stands second in importance—behind God. Pastors also owe to their children all the love and nurture they can possibly give them. This sharing and communicating is particularly critical during the early and teen years.

Yet another element relating to family must not be overlooked—we must never overlook or neglect our parents, especially as they age. There was a time when we greatly depended upon them. The time comes when they greatly depend upon us.

How are you doing as you relate to family?

## Support of colleagues

While pastors often gather together in associations based on laboring in the same city or a particular denomination, pastors, nevertheless, spend a lot of time isolated from one another. The demands placed upon pastors can make it difficult to make time to call or visit other pastors. This becomes especially true if the pastor has more than one church in the district.

But what greater source of encouragement can there be than for a pastor to pick up the phone and call another pastor while sharing a thoughtful word or prayer? Who better understands what pastors experience on a daily basis than other pastors?

How are you doing in relation to supporting your fellow pastors?

## Evangelism

I have written this column and have thus far avoided any mention of what pastors *do*. The reason? Before we can labor we must spend time with Christ as we nurture ourselves.

The disciples of Jesus first spent time with Him before going forth to minister (cf. Mark 3:14).

The year 2009 has been designated the Year of Evangelism for the Adventist Church worldwide. Many of you have already conducted at least one evangelistic series this year and are planning at least one more. Others of you are constantly engaged in evangelistic projects all year-round.

When we conduct evangelism, we are reminded that we are building on the foundation that the pastors who preceded us have already laid. Success does not belong to one person; rather, success is a team effort—and that team includes both pastor and church members. Indeed, no pastor can succeed without strong local church leadership and involvement. And, all our labors are successful because of Christ—He's ultimately responsible for church growth (cf. 1 Cor. 3:7).

How are you doing in relation to evangelism?

## Preaching

Always preach the great themes of Scripture. Among them: the love of God; Christ's life, death, and resurrection; the power of God to deliver us from sin's penalty and power; and the second coming of Christ. Life-giving power comes to us when we preach Christ and Him crucified. That power invigorates those who hear us preach, but it first invigorates us *before* and *while* we preach.

How are you doing in relation to preaching?

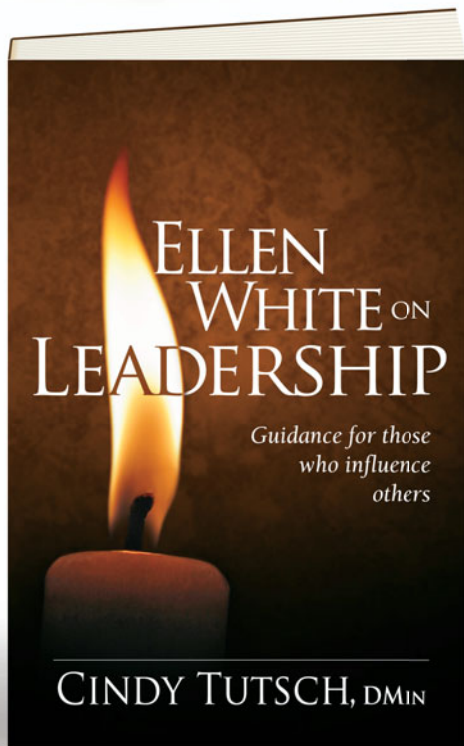
## Conclusion

There are many other topics I could discuss, but these are just a few that we can use as measuring devices to determine where we are and where we are going. May God bless us as we strive onward and upward in service to Him and others. ❏

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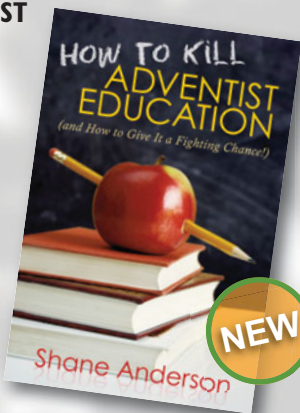
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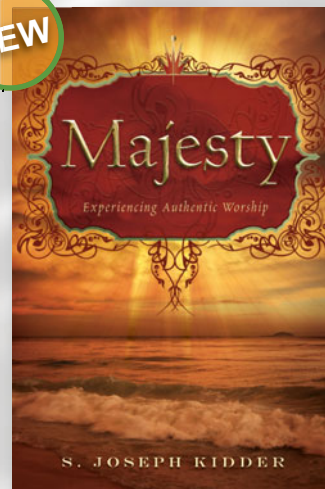
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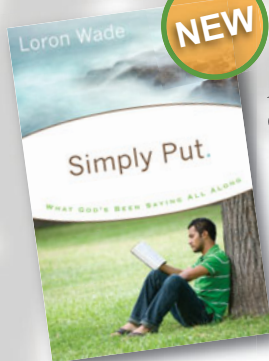


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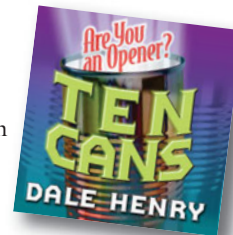


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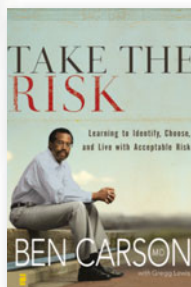
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