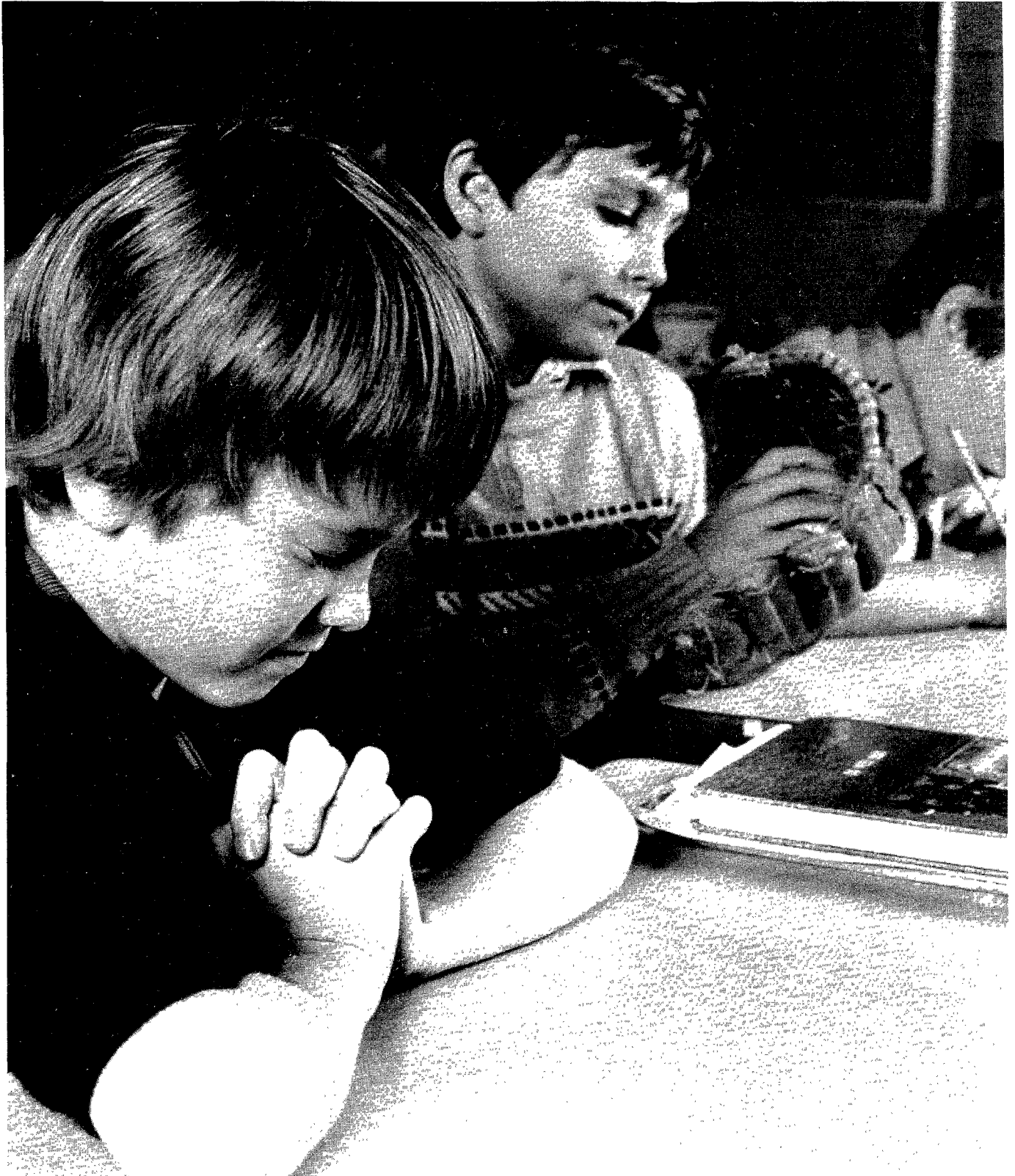


Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/November 1983



Court Axes Prayer at Little Axe

Letters

Refreshing, not nauseating

Congratulations on the clear scriptural stand taken by Mr. Bennett's article "Security in Christ" (July, 1983). Some of the statements I hear on the radio concerning the security of the believer are nauseating. Your article was refreshing.—Church of God, Congregational, New Jersey.

Another gospel

The July, 1983, issue plainly reveals your denial of grace salvation. I despise the attempt to hide "another gospel" under the pretense of being Christian. Any person whose salvation is dependent upon himself ("We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves"), as the article "Security in Christ" asserts, knows nothing of the salvation taught in Scripture.—Baptist Church, California.

Not all Baptists would agree. Christians through the centuries have ranged themselves on both sides of this question, but most have been willing to recognize each other as Christians.—Editors.

Valuable service

I have been receiving MINISTRY for years and have found each issue useful. I thought it was time to say Thank you. You are providing a valuable service to pastors and to the whole body of Christ. The work of Jesus is being strengthened, and the workers are being encouraged.—Community Bible Church, California.

Enclosed is my check to be used in the ministry of MINISTRY. I have been reading the magazine for several years, and although I have not written or contributed before, it has been a help and inspiration to me worth far more than the contribution I'm making. I never throw away an issue even though I don't always agree one hundred percent with everything I read in it (who does?). I invariably find something to sharpen and refine my thinking and to renew my appreciation of our Lord. I especially appreciate the sweet spirit of brother-

hood and true Christian love with which this most valuable magazine is made available to us of other denominations. Its contribution to God's kingdom is beyond calculation.—Advent Christian Church, Connecticut.

Thank you for the scholarly theological insights. MINISTRY is penetrating and incisive; it is needed so very much today.—Minnesota.

I find your magazine useful in my course on pastoral ministry, which I teach to senior students at our Bible college.—Texas.

I read every line in MINISTRY. It helps me, and I am growing spiritually. Please keep it coming.—Ohio.

Please discontinue sending MINISTRY to me. I am not a member of the clergy—my first name just happens to be "Pastor."—California.

More on diet

Count me among the readers who fully appreciate your publication; I read MINISTRY regularly. In addition to past articles on good exercise and diet habits, it occurs to me that it might be most appropriate for you to share further information on dietary principles with those of us who are not members of your denomination.—The American Grey-Friars, New York.

Fasting for children

Few articles have had the impact on my life and thinking that James C. Dobson's "Ultimate Priorities" (May, 1983) has had. Mail is often extremely slow here, but by chance the May issue came through in record time. I want to thank Marie Spangler for including this article in the Shepherdess section.

The forces of iniquity are so prevalent and all-absorbing in these days that one's children are exposed to these inroads in spite of all one can do and has done. In reviewing the past four decades during which our three children grew up, I have struggled with the thought: What would

we do differently if we could have gone back? This article has answered my question. Though religion has been part and parcel of our living, the intensity has too often been lacking. We have prayed much and tried to set an example. We have often fasted, but not specifically for our children. Now, like the author, I have decided to make every Tuesday a day of prayer and fasting for our children and six grandchildren.—Kenneth Oster, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Communicating the message

It is Sunday morning, August 14, 1983. I have just read the article by Eldred Johnston entitled "The View From the Pew" (July, 1983). I have outlined the author's points and instructions. If I can follow these later this morning, I'm sure I will communicate more effectively the message of Jesus Christ and God's love. This year marks 25 years of preaching for me. Please let the author know how much this article means to so many of us who preach.—Church of God, South Carolina.

If you're receiving MINISTRY bi-monthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928, MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too.

We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy; requests should be on church letterhead.

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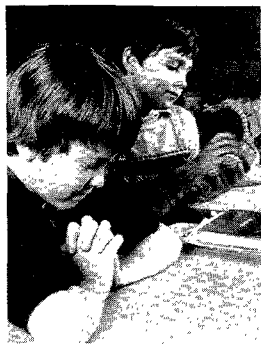
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Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/November 1983/Volume 56/Number 11



COVER: DAVE SHERWIN

Court Axes Prayer at Little Axe/4. On March 11, 1983, Judge Ralph G. Thompson of Oklahoma City's U.S. District Court ruled on the constitutionality of the Son Shine Club of the rural Little Axe school system. Author Tim Ponder, reporting this case, broadens our perspectives on both sides of the issue of religion and the public schools.

Jesus: the Indispensable Center/8. Arnold V. Wallenkampf. We cannot love ideas as we can love a person. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ has been the motivating factor behind Christianity—and must be so for our own ministry.

Is the Ministry Getting You Down?/10. John S. C. Hsuen, a minister and a medical doctor, identifies some of the elements of pastoring that lead to stress and then points to resources that can turn stress from a destructive to a productive force.

Grief Recovery—2/13. Larry Yeagley continues the series describing his program for providing support to those who are grieving. This article describes in detail, from the leader's viewpoint, the five sessions of a Grief Recovery Seminar.

"Pastor, I Love You"/16. Stephen A. Grunlan points out five elements common to the ministry that tend to be romantically attractive to the other sex. The pastor aware of them can deal more objectively with situations potentially ruinous to the parishioner and himself.

The Sermon on the Amount/18. Churches are looking for ways to make giving easier for those contributing to them. William F. Willoughby takes a lighthearted, yet pertinent, look at church fund-raising methods.

Betting Is No Bargain/19. Leo R. Van Dolson.

WCC Meets in Vancouver/22. Douglas Devnich. A report on and reaction to the recent meeting of the World Council of Churches.

A Sinner by Any Other Name/25. B. Russell Holt.

Busyness/26. Charles R. Swindoll. What can you do to slow the pace of your life, to preserve time for the really important things?

Can Archeology Really Prove the Bible?/28. Lawrence T. Geraty.

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Court axes prayer at Little Axe

A small rural Oklahoma community seems an unlikely setting for a major constitutional battle over the First Amendment's religious establishment clause. But in Little Axe, people take religion seriously no matter which side they are on. As the war is waged in Oklahoma City's U.S. District Court, the author, a minister of the gospel, recounts his feelings, and finds that there is more to school-prayer cases than meets the eye. The struggle is not between the godly and the ungodly; it is between religious people who differ, but who believe together that a faith worth having is worth defending.

□ by Tim Ponder



t's early December, 1982. I'm watching American justice operate as junior high school kids take the witness stand in Oklahoma City's U.S. District Court to testify regarding the Son Shine Club, a weekly prayer, singing, and testimony service organized almost a year earlier by students in the rural Little Axe,

Oklahoma, school system.

When students brought the idea of a time for Bible study and prayer to Rebecca Ernest, a sixth-grade teacher, she approved and so did school board officials. The sessions, open to students beginning in the third grade, were to be voluntary and strictly nonsectarian. Four months later, two mothers, Joann Bell and Lucille McCord, filed suit against the Little Axe school board to halt the religious programs conducted in Mrs. Blackwell's home ec room. The American Civil Liberties Union came to their legal aid. Beyond these basic facts,

Tim Ponder is pastor of the Yukon, El Reno, and Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, Seventh-day Adventist churches.

the two sides find little to agree on.

Little Axe, a small community east of Norman, Oklahoma, is an unlikely scene for a major constitutional battle over the First Amendment's religious establishment clause. Hardly large enough to qualify as a town, it has a small church, a convenience store, an American Legion hall, and the nine-grade public school. Homes are spaced widely apart on narrow, bumpy country roads. The people are typically churchgoing and industrious. They would also probably characterize themselves as friendly.

But despite appearances, all is not well in Little Axe. For several years longtime residents and urban escapees from Oklahoma City (a forty-minute commute up the highway) have been trying to tug the

community in different directions. Not only do the commuters tend to be more liberal than their longer-established neighbors, but their sheer numbers are changing the community. Fourteen years ago the school had four teachers and eighty students. Today there are 51 teachers and 750 students. These underlying tensions become evident in the school controversy.

My feelings are ambivalent this December afternoon as I sit in the visitors' gallery of the courtroom. A Christian and a minister of the gospel, I find it strange to see youngsters having to defend in court such things as prayer and Bible study. Murderers, rapists, armed robbers, and kidnappers have been tried from the same bench! Like some others

Trying to take prayer out of public school is not a popular endeavor, especially in the heart of the Bible Belt. Lucille McCord and Joann Bell were about as welcome in Little Axe as a return of the dust bowl.

in the courtroom, I wonder what all the fuss is about. A reporter is overheard during a recess delivering his opinion that the trial is "irrelevant and a waste of time." The People's Court (a televised small-claims court) could, he feels, wrap up the case in its usual thirty minutes. Other spectators seem bewildered or amused.

But as I talk with Shirley Barry, executive director of the ACLU of Oklahoma, I discover the case isn't as simple as I might have first supposed. The ACLU often supports causes that anger many Christians: the removal of Nativity scenes and other Christian symbols from public buildings; prohibitions against teaching creationism in public schools; even ending a minute of silent meditation as practiced in New Jersey schools. Why is her organization involved in the Little Axe trial, I ask?

For an answer she quotes the comments of a judge in a similar case: "It is no defense to urge that the religious practices here may be relatively minor encroachments on the First Amendment. The breach of neutrality that is today a trickling stream may all too soon become a raging torrent; and in the words of Madison: 'It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties.'" She feels the issue in this case is the wall of separation between church and state, and the ACLU is determined that there be no holes in that wall even in this "Bible Belt" bastion.

Other dimensions to the case emerge as I talk to individuals and listen to testimony. According to Barry, the real force behind the school prayer sessions was not the students, but a local pastor who used them to proselytize young people for his church.

I strike up a conversation with a Little Axe resident in the visitors' gallery. He tells me that several teachers became quite involved in the Thursday morning programs. They attended with the students and helped them make banners and posters publicizing the weekly meeting. "I'd feel differently about these meetings if only students were allowed," he declares. "But the presence of the teachers gives credence to what goes on. They're authority figures, and their endorsement helps coerce the kids into going."

Nearly all the students in Little Axe come to school on the bus, arriving some thirty minutes before classes begin. But only students who participate in the prayer-and-sharing sessions are allowed to enter the school building before 8:30 A.M.—a fact not lost on students (or parents) on cold Oklahoma mornings.

Lucille McCord and Joann Bell, plaintiffs in the Little Axe school prayer trial, stand with their children outside U.S. District Court in Oklahoma City. (Photo by Jim Beckel, copyright 1982, The Oklahoma Publishing Co. From the Sunday Oklahoman, Dec. 5, 1982.)



During the Iranian hostage crisis," he tells me, "an Iranian came to the ninth-grade class to defend the position of the Khomeini government. You can just imagine the trouble that stirred up!"

Some prayer club members persist in trying to persuade friends and acquaintances to attend the Thursday meetings. Robbie McCord, whose mother later joined forces with Joann Bell in filing the Federal lawsuit seeking an end to the prayer sessions, is called a devil worshiper because he will not attend the meetings, and a cross is hung upside down on his locker. Nonattenders brand those who do as "teacher's pets."

Trying to take prayer and the Bible out of the public school is not a popular endeavor, especially in the heart of the Bible Belt. The decision to go to court to stop the religious school programs made Lucille McCord and Joann Bell about as welcome in Little Axe as a return of the dust bowl. Both attended local churches and believed in giving their children religious training. The school, however, was not the place for that to happen, they felt. "I believe that we have a freedom of religion and a freedom from religion," Mrs. McCord testifies at the trial. "My main complaint is that the church has no place in school, and that the school has no place in the church."

Little Axe, by and large, does not agree. Says Lucille McCord: "After the lawsuit was filed, things began to happen to my children and myself. My son was left out of the sports banquet. This was his sixth year of perfect attendance in school, but he was not given his award. I received between one hundred and two hundred threatening or insulting phone calls. I was called an atheist and a Communist. One phone caller told me, 'If you don't drop the lawsuit, you will get it.' I received my own obituary column in the mail. Finally our family moved to another community because we feared for our personal safety." Contending that her children have developed health problems and psychological damage because of their ordeal, Mrs. McCord seeks actual damages in the trial to pay for her children's psychiatric help.

Joann Bell's story is similar. On May 14, 1981, soon after the lawsuit was filed (and the last time the Son Shine Club met during that school year), a bomb threat was phoned in to the school. With

other concerned parents, Joann Bell hurried to the school to check on her children. A cafeteria worker came out to her car, accused her of phoning in the bomb threat, and then began to smash her head repeatedly against the car's door frame. (Mrs. Bell later won a judgment against her attacker.)

A school board member, in a newspaper interview, said of those suing the school board: "If people play with fire, they will get burned." The Bells' trailer burned to the ground on September 18, 1981, while the family was attending a football game. After the fire Mrs. Bell received a sympathy card in the mail on which was written: "Ha! ha!" Although several people in the community offered assistance, she no longer trusted anyone. (In January, 1983, the State fire marshal's office declared that the Bells' fire had been intentionally set. The guilty party or parties have still not been apprehended.)

When the trial actually convenes, eighteen months after the filing of the suit, it is evident to me that the anger and distrust on both sides still exist. The pretrial charges, answers, motions, countermotions, depositions, orders, affidavits and other documents have run to more than eight hundred pages and created a nine-pound file in the clerk's office!

I watch as Judge Ralph G. Thompson's Federal courtroom in Oklahoma City becomes the battleground between two First Amendment clauses of the U.S. Constitution: the clause prohibiting the establishment of religion and the clause affirming the right to free speech. Michael Salem, ACLU lawyer and counsel for the plaintiffs, argues: "The State should not act to undermine parental authority, to control and direct children's religious heritage and activities. . . . The public grade school is not a public forum where religious views may be freely aired." The defense attorney, William Graves (who as a State legislator authored Oklahoma's 1980 "Voluntary Prayer Law," which authorized prayer in State school districts), focuses on the issue of free speech. "Prayer," he

insists, "is a form of religious speech protected by the Oklahoma and the United States constitutions."

Both attorneys got less from the judge in the way of concessions than they hoped. Graves had asked the judge in pretrial briefs to overturn past Supreme Court rulings concerning prayer in public schools. Thompson, however, made it clear that he had no intention of creating a new law. "Whether prayer should be allowed in public schools is not the question before this court," he ruled. "The issue is whether the activities at Little Axe School are permitted or are not permitted. It is not the function of this court either to determine what the law should be or to attempt to overrule the decisions of the Supreme Court."

Salem, on the other hand, hoped to overturn the State's voluntary prayer law and have it, along with the Little Axe prayer sessions, declared unconstitutional. Ultimately, the 1980 Voluntary Prayer Law was left untouched by the judge's decision.

According to trial testimony, the Little Axe school policy is quite broad regarding use of school facilities by nonschool-sponsored activities. Provided such activities are voluntary and not officially sponsored by teachers (although they should be present to supervise), the policy prohibits only meetings that are "immoral, violent (or advocate violence), or interfere with the educational process." Superintendent Paul Pettigrew testifies that school officials, under the policy, would have to include extremist groups that are non-disruptive. (According to my local resident acquaintance in the visitors' gallery, such a position is not merely theoretical. "During the Iranian hostage crisis," he tells me, "an Iranian came to the ninth-grade class to defend the position of the Khomeini government. You can just imagine the trouble that stirred up!")

Attorneys for the plaintiffs and the defense begin sparring, through their witnesses, over several key issues. John Rushdoony, executive director of the Chalcedon Foundation, author of

Asked what he would do if a non-Christian cult were permitted to promote its beliefs to his daughter in her school, one witness replies, "I would probably do what the plaintiffs are doing here."

numerous books, and a witness for the school board, defends the students' right to meet in a voluntary, school-club setting for religious purposes. "The ability to meet with peers to express religious faith is important psychologically to the students," he argues. "Meetings such as the Little Axe sessions provide Christian role models to the students. . . . To deny a handful of students the right to develop a system of Christian values and role models would be a travesty of freedom."

The other perspective is given when the son of an Assembly of God minister and father of a Little Axe student takes the stand for the plaintiffs. "When it comes to religious upbringing, I feel it's my role, and mine alone, to determine my children's religious education." Although he had kept his son from attending the Son Shine Club, he felt its presence in the school was taking that right from him.

Would it make any difference to those supporting the Son Shine Club, wonders attorney Salem aloud, if a non-Christian religious cult should form a similar organization at the Little Axe School? If Bible Belt Christianity is being allowed to function within the school, can the Hare Krishnas be far behind? Asked what he would do if a non-Christian cult were permitted to promote its beliefs to his daughter in her school, one witness replies, "I would probably do what the plaintiffs are doing here today."

But the Son Shine Club was *voluntary*. No one had to attend. Thomas Berndt, a University of Oklahoma psychology professor, is not so sure when he testifies on the second day of the trial. His research on peer pressure among children causes him to believe that "religious meetings sanctioned by school officials tend to take on the appearance of endorsement by authorities." In his opinion, Berndt testifies, a fifth- or sixth-grade student, given the choice of attending a religious meeting at school or not attending, could not make that choice free from undue influence. "A clear state of uncertainty and probably discomfort would exist in the child's

mind if his parents told him not to take part in worship services permitted by the school."

Dr. Vernon Enlow, a clinical psychologist, agrees. "Prayer meetings at public schools tend to polarize children into factions—those who go and those who don't. They automatically create a 'right and wrong situation' because the children have to choose whether or not to attend."

Yet Dr. Paul Schmidt, another clinical psychologist, differs with his colleagues. In his view, religious sessions such as those held at Little Axe "contribute to the educational atmosphere." In fact, banning such meetings would lead to a "combative, charged atmosphere . . . not conducive to learning. . . . God would be seen as an impotent, irrelevant figure. He doesn't have the power to come to school."

So goes the debate between expert witnesses with no clear winner in sight.

Nor is a clear winner apparent when the trial comes to a close Thursday afternoon, December 9. Both sides are predicting victory; both are confident that their concept of religious freedom and civil liberties will prevail. Judge Thompson gives the two attorneys thirty days to submit final briefs, promising to hand down a decision after that time. In his closing remarks, he states: "I'm well aware of the strength with which these conflicting views are held . . . I'm well aware of the effect it's had on this small community. I am equally concerned that these important issues be given thoughtful, searching consideration before a judgment is made."

Not until March 11, 1983, does Judge Thompson rule on the case. Apparently "thoughtful, searching consideration" takes longer than he expected. His decision? The Son Shine Club at Little Axe School is unconstitutional in its present form. A twenty-seven-page memorandum opinion accompanies his permanent injunction order. In this he calls the prayer sessions "wholesome, beneficial, and positive," but unconstitutional. The Thursday morning meetings could be legally held on school

property, he declares, if they are held *after* the school day has ended—under Oklahoma law the school day is considered to end when the students have boarded buses and left the school. His opinion includes the finding that the Oklahoma Voluntary Prayer Law of 1980 is within the bounds of the U.S. Constitution.

Both sides in the Little Axe case go away feeling they have won at least a partial victory. Yet both sides have since appealed the decision. The ACLU is still seeking to overturn the Voluntary Prayer Law and have the school's policy regarding religious meetings declared illegal. The school board is appealing in order to escape the considerable legal fees it is obligated to pay if the decision stands.

Summing up his opinion, Judge Thompson writes: "That this form of separation of church and state is presently a matter of political debate is acknowledged. But unless and until the Constitution of the United States is amended, or the Supreme Court reverses its long line of controlling decisions on these issues, this ruling is inescapable and follows, as this court is sworn to do, the present law of the land."

One further development in the Little Axe case: On June 16, 1983, Joann Bell received the Elliott-Black International Ethical Award from the American Ethical Union at the organization's national assembly in Andover, New Jersey. The award was given "in recognition of her firm stand supporting separation of church and state, despite extreme persecution she suffered as a result of her position."

Another new school year is now under way at the Little Axe School. The school and the quiet little community surrounding it has returned to its usual routine. In the school, mathematics, social studies, science, and English grammar are taught with competence. But spoken prayer, testimony, and religious singing are no longer heard in Mrs. Blackwell's home ec room.

Whether that is a good or a bad thing is the issue still to be decided.

Jesus: the indispensable center

What lay behind the dynamic power of the early Christians? What enabled them to sound the gospel proclamation to all the then-known world in barely thirty years? Priests and people alike knew the secret—"They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

□ by Arnold V. Wallenkampf



bold speaker stood in a marketplace of ancient Jerusalem as thousands of people, out-of-town visitors and residents alike, jostled one another and strained to hear. Only some two months earlier he had cowered before a mere servant girl in Pilate's judgment hall. This morning fear was unknown to him. Intrepid,

he stood in the midst of the surging crowds and rebuked them for having crucified Jesus, the Prince of glory, whom he asserted that "God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24).

Under the impelling power of Peter's Pentecost presentation of a Saviour who had been crucified and resurrected, 3,000 men and women accepted Jesus—the beginning of an onward sweep of the gospel, symbolized in Revelation as a rider on a white horse who "went forth conquering, and to conquer" (chap. 6:2). As a result, the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote about thirty years later that the gospel had been "preached to every creature

which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23) in the then-known world.

What lay behind the dynamic power of the early Christians? What enabled them to sound the gospel proclamation to all the then-known world in barely thirty years? The people had expected to see the disciples confused and disheartened after the crucifixion of their Master. Instead they saw them filled with gladness and a spirit of triumph. The priests marveled at their boldness, "and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Thus the religious leaders of Judaism put their finger on the reason for the irrepressible power of nascent Christianity. Correctly they ascribed the fearless witness of the apostles to their acquaintanceship with Jesus. A knowledge of Jesus—friendship with Him—was the source of the gospel's vitality in the early church.

The apostles enjoyed a living relationship with Jesus. This was in keeping with His own will for them. When He was still among them He had queried, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. 22:42). He

did not ask, "What do you think of My doctrine?" but rather "What do you think of Me?" Likewise He told them, "I am . . . the truth" (John 14:6), not "I am teaching you what is right." Jesus Himself was, and still is, the answer to all religious questions.

In His parting promise to His disciples He assured them, "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28:20). He did not say, "I have told you what you ought to do and how you ought to live." Rather, He vowed to be with them through His Representative, the Holy Spirit. Even after His ascension He wanted to sustain a personal relationship with His followers. Peter's crusading zeal after the resurrection was embedded in such a personal fellowship with Jesus. In the same way Jesus wants us who lead His church today to know and follow Him. Thus He invites, "Come unto me. . . . Learn of me" (chap. 11:28, 29).

When Paul joined the apostles he too did so through a personal meeting with Jesus. The greatest apostle of the Christian church did not rest his faith in Jesus

Before his retirement Arnold V. Wallenkampf was an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute, Washington, D.C. He writes now from Adelphi, Maryland.

The greatest need of the church today is a rediscovery of Christianity as a vital relationship with Jesus as a personal Friend and Saviour. The indispensable center of Christianity is still Jesus.

in hearsay or in a mere intellectual understanding of His doctrines. Rather, the apostle Paul's faith was anchored in a personal acquaintance with his Saviour. On the Damascus road Saul was brought directly into the presence of Christ. Throughout his ministry he gloried in this personal acquaintanceship with Jesus and exclaimed, "For I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). He did not say, "I know *what* I have believed." That is the normal phrase we use as Christians: "I know what I believe." But can we, like Paul, declare that we know *whom* we believe? That we know Jesus? In Galatians 1:11, 12 Paul confidently proclaimed that he had received the gospel in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The greatest need of the church today is a rediscovery of Christianity as a vital relationship with Jesus as a personal Friend and Saviour. The indispensable center of Christianity is still Jesus. We impair our Christian experience and rob it of real meaning if we center it in anything but Jesus Himself. The early church became unfaithful to its trust and mission when it substituted a system of doctrinal definitions and propositional truths for a personal relationship with Jesus.

Stated beliefs, even if they are correct, can never be a substitute for a personal relationship with Jesus. Doctrines should be but reflections of the personal relationship we sustain to Him. They should be but articulations of the character and will of Jesus and God, whom we know as personal friends. Christianity is a friendship relationship. For living Christians this personal knowledge of God must be primary. After this we begin to describe His character and desires for us in words. In this way we formulate doctrines, but their essence is Jesus.

In the words of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, "Christianity does not exist for a moment apart from Christ." And

the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard declared, "All other religions are oblique; Christianity alone is direct." He was referring to the fact that other religious leaders stand back and point to someone else. Jesus, on the other hand, directs the attention of His followers to Himself, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Sometimes when we discuss our Christianity we almost give the impression that our faith is only a compendium of ethical advice or an amalgam of certain virtues that one can accept or reject at will. Christianity is much more than that. When we reject Biblical teachings we reject Jesus. When we accept and approve them we accept and approve of Jesus. He is the center and life of our beliefs.

It is difficult for most of us to love ideas as such. Even those who are engaged in intellectual pursuits and schooled in abstract thinking are not very adept at loving mere ideas. We find it difficult to love purity, goodness, thoughtfulness, and kindness as abstract principles. But the composite of these virtues becomes intriguingly interesting and fascinating when they are found in one's wife or husband or children. Then they are no longer abstract, but tangible. Likewise the principles of our Christian doctrines need to be based in the person of Jesus, whom we know as a friend.

But the dynamic power of the apostles and the enthusiasm of early Christians consisted not merely in knowing Jesus as a person who had walked with them over the hills and through the valleys of Galilee and Judea, but in knowing Him as the divine Son of God, who truly had been crucified for their sins, who had risen from the dead, and who was now seated at the right hand of God in the heavens, interceding for them. Knowing Jesus as the risen Saviour and as Victor over death gave a fearless quality to their faith and preaching.

Before they learned of His resurrection they had been crushed by despondency, grief, and despair. They stayed together in the upper chamber, with doors closed and fastened, fearing that the fate of

their beloved Teacher might be theirs. Their courage was gone, because they thought Jesus was dead. But the resurrection changed all that. As the disciples returned from the scene of the ascension the people of Jerusalem expected to see expressions of sorrow, confusion, and defeat on their faces. They saw, instead, gladness and triumph. Disappointed hopes were forgotten; they had seen the risen Saviour, and the words of His parting promise echoed in their ears. It was the risen Saviour, victorious over death, whom the apostles knew. Acquaintance with this living Saviour made Peter bold, even before those who had crucified his Master.

It was Paul's intimate connection with the risen Saviour that gave him invincibility amid hardships and made him triumphantly exclaim: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? . . . It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:31-39). Paul knew that through his Friend, Jesus, he was more than a conqueror. He insisted, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

It was a living Saviour whom John saw on the Isle of Patmos. Jesus assured him: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17, 18). Though on a penal

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Is the ministry getting you down?

Handling the stress of life is like handling a bank account. The Creator has deposited a certain amount of "adaptation energy" within us at birth, enough to last a lifetime. If we withdraw from that account excessively, we may one day discover that the account, which cannot be replenished, is overdrawn. □ by John S. C. Hsuen



ergy are particularly vulnerable to stress. First of all, a minister, by the very nature of his calling, is to be a man of God, the spiritual leader to whom the congregation looks for its example. His every word and action is carefully watched. Naturally, this puts great pressure on him to uphold the image his congregation

has of him. So, at no small cost in emotional strain, he controls his normal feelings and reactions in order to meet the expectation that he be something just short of a spiritual superman. (Incidentally, this high level of expectation applies not just to the minister, but to his family as well.)

Second, the clergy are the spiritual guardians of the congregation. The members turn to their minister for

counseling and help. He is expected to deal with the multitudinous problems of his people—marriage difficulties, personality clashes, problem teen-agers, et cetera. These tension-charged problems deliver a double blow; the minister not only carries them on his heart, but he also faces guilt feelings for being emotionally drained by them.

Third, a minister has no regular office hours. He is on duty virtually twenty-four hours a day. As the shepherd of his flock, he responds to their needs no matter when they arise, day or night. The sick must be visited, the dying must be spiritually supported in their last hours, the bereaved must be comforted, small and large crises in the church demand his immediate attention. All

this in addition to his routine pastoral responsibilities. It's no wonder he feels emotionally and physically exhausted by the end of the day! There is no rest for him even on the Sabbath. In fact, the worship services and other religious activities of his congregation probably make this day even busier than others!

Having pointed out how vulnerable clergy are to stress, I hasten to add that stress is an inevitable part of life. Not all stress is harmful. In fact, some stress is necessary for human productivity. However, when stress becomes continuous and relentless, it turns destructive.

What actually happens within your body when you are under stress? If someone should suddenly shout, "Fire! Fire!" your body would immediately

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Stress is an inevitable part of life. Not all stress is harmful. In fact, some stress is necessary for human productivity. But when stress becomes continuous and relentless, it turns destructive.

respond with a built-in physiological defense mechanism. The heart would begin to beat faster, speeding up the delivery of nutrients and oxygen to the muscles in arms and legs. Breathing would become deeper and faster, increasing the oxygen supply to cells. More glucose would be poured into the blood by the liver, providing fuel for immediate energy. The body would quickly divert a greater circulation of blood to muscles involved with movement, with a relative decrease in blood supply to the inner organs. The pupils would become dilated, allowing clearer vision. These physiological changes are triggered by the hormone adrenalin, secreted by the adrenal gland. With this altered physiological state, we are now better able to cope with the emergency. The body can take these physiological changes for a short while without deleterious effect. However, if they persist, they will cause a breakdown of life forces.

Medical doctors cite stress as a direct cause of one third of all diseases and claim that another third is indirectly aggravated by stress. Some of the well-known diseases that are caused by emotional distress include: duodenal ulcer, heart disease, high blood pressure, bronchial asthma, bowel disorders, and a host of skin diseases.

The late Dr. Hans Selye, who spent a lifetime studying stress and who became the world's foremost scholar on the subject, has said that an individual at birth is equipped with enough of what he calls "adaptation energy" to last a lifetime. This pool of energy can only be depleted; it cannot be replenished. It is very much like fueling a conventional airplane. Once it takes off, it cannot have its fuel replenished; it is expected to carry enough fuel to last the entire trip with some in reserve. Under normal circumstances the adaptation energy that man is given at birth should last his entire lifetime. However, this pool of energy is drawn upon more heavily when the body is under stress, and therefore may run out prematurely. In other words, stress causes the living machinery to develop problems and to break down

sooner than it should. Those who are subject to a great deal of stress, as are clergy, risk having their effectiveness decreased and their usefulness cut short.

Strictly speaking, it is not stress itself that hurts us, but how we react to that stress. If we allow ourselves to react adversely, we suffer the consequences. On the other hand, if we react to stress in the right way, we can come off unhurt. It is like having good shock absorbers in your car. You hardly feel the discomfort as your car goes over a bump in the road. What are some of the "shock absorbers" that can protect your emotional well-being from the bumps of stress?

1. *Good health.* When you are in good physical health, you are better able to cope with stress. Our emotions and our bodies are not in separate compartments; they are intimately connected, one

less inclined to engage in serious Bible study. Your ability to concentrate is weakened, and your attention span is shortened. All these things happen because you have not had the needed sleep the night before! The importance of maintaining excellent physical health cannot be overemphasized. Doctors don't invent the laws of health; doctors discover them. These are laws that the Creator has built into every cell and fiber of our being. They are as much God's law as is the moral law, the Ten Commandments. Notice these three basic principles of good health.

A balanced diet. We are literally what we eat. Not only is the *quantity* of food that the body requires important, but also the *quality* of food the body needs for optimal health. Temperance in eating is crucial. Temperance has been defined as

The late Dr. Hans Selye, who spent a lifetime studying stress, has said that an individual at birth is equipped with enough of what he calls "adaptation energy" to last a lifetime.

affecting the other. Not only can emotions cause physical diseases, as was mentioned earlier; the reverse is also true. Poor physical health can interfere with the emotional well-being. Our mind, source of our emotions, is housed in this physical body. Its proper function depends on the support systems of the body. Your mind and your emotions cannot function at their best if the support systems are faulty.

For example, you have experienced nights in which, for one reason or another, you have not slept well. The next day not only do you find yourself physically tired, but you discover that your level of tolerance for stress is appreciably lower. It is much harder to exercise the Christian graces. You are more irritable and impatient. Things that normally do not bother you now disturb you greatly. At such times you are

"the total abstinence from that which is harmful and the judicious use of that which is good." Overeating, even of good food, can clog the digestive system. It makes us overweight and brings with it all the health problems associated with obesity. It also causes mental sluggishness.

Regular exercise. Activity is the basic condition of life; inactivity brings about decay and degeneration. Exercise is a very important part of maintaining good health. A recent Japanese Government survey on the physical condition of people in that country is very revealing. According to this research, the Japanese reach their peak in physical strength at the age of 15 for females and 17 for males, and start losing it around the age of 20 for both sexes. Among other findings: If the physical power of males is rated as 100 percent at 17 years, it

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declines, on an average, to 97 percent at age 20, to 90 percent at age 29, and to 75 percent in the late 40s. But those who have regular exercise (three or more times a week) maintain their physical power at a level 15 to 20 percent above these levels at all ages. This means the physical strength of a Japanese male in his late 40s who exercises regularly will be, not the statistically expected 75 percent, but 90 to 95 percent, which is the normal physical power of someone in the 20-to-29 age bracket!

Besides its benefit to physical health, exercise relieves tension. In our bodies, the nerve of motion is balanced against the nerve of emotion. Exercise, by working through the nerve of motion, can unwind the tightened nerve of emotion. This has been well recognized by physicians. For example, people who jog find that the tension that they had when they began leaves them as they run. Physical exercise is therapeutic to the relief of stress and tension.

Rest. We need adequate amounts of sleep to allow our body to recuperate from the efforts of the day and for the wear and tear to be repaired. Not only do we need physical rest, but we also need emotional rest. It is important for the minister to take his mind off his spiritual ministry one day a week. Obviously he cannot do this on the Sabbath, when his congregation rests from daily toil. The minister, then, must organize his work in such a way that he has one day during the week totally free from pastoral responsibilities, a day he can devote to doing something different. It may be profitably spent with his family, his spouse and his children. It may be difficult to find such a day, but the minister must insist on having such a day for himself and his family and jealously guard it. He will be a better minister if he does. Remember our Lord's invitation to His disciples after their first successful evangelistic mission: "Come apart and rest awhile." As ministers of the gospel, you will be better able to cope with stress if you will take time—one day a week—to break away from your church responsibilities.

2. *Supportive family.* Blessed are those

clergy who have spouses and relatives who are supportive of them. It is amazing what love and support from our family and relatives can do to our flagging spirits. Spouses of the clergy play no small role in helping the minister cope with the stresses of his calling. A minister can have a supportive family by taking time to cultivate its friendship. All such relationships are built on a quality, two-way communication. Effort and time spent here will prove a real blessing.

3. *Spiritual resources.* Living as a spiritual superman is a source of stress. Be yourself. I am not suggesting that clergy compromise principle and live carelessly. But I do maintain that a minister can be himself, with his faults and failings, and still command the respect of his congregation if they see in his life, in the long run, a dedicated man of God who is sincerely and earnestly endeavoring to fulfill his mission. You don't have to be on guard all the time lest telltale evidence of your true self be seen. You don't have to pretend to be perfect. Realizing this will help you be more relaxed and protect you from the tension and stress of trying to be what you are not.

Capitalize on the power in prayer. When I am worried and distressed over some problem or difficulty, I remember these words: "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." I then look for a quiet corner where on my knees I can pour out my worries to God. As a result, I find peace in my heart. During prayer, any number of things can happen that will bring peace to my heart. Sometimes the Lord shows me the way to solve the problem. Sometimes He helps me define the problem and shows me that my worry is unfounded. Sometimes He simply strengthens me to face the issue head-on instead of trying to dodge it. Sometimes He assures me that if I commit this problem to Him, He will take care of it in

the best possible way. So, when I rise from my knees, I find that the tension and stress have left me. He has fulfilled His promise "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Take time to feed your own soul. It is possible for a baker to go hungry handling hundreds of loaves of bread because he fails to take time to feed on the bread himself. It is possible for the minister to be so busy ministering to the spiritual needs of his flock that he fails to feed his own soul. The cause of Christ needs Marthas with their energy, promptness, and diligence, but they must first come and sit with Mary at Jesus' feet so that their energy, promptness, and diligence may be sanctified by His grace, and that they may be an unconquerable power for good. You must spend a great deal of time with the Word of God in the preparation of sermons that you preach to your congregations. You must spend hours praying for your congregation. This, however, does not take the place of time spent for your own personal spiritual needs, or the time spent in prayer for your own spiritual strength. If you maintain a vital connection with the Lord and make sure that the battery of your inner strength is recharged as a result of a meaningful, quality communion with Him, you will then be able to go forth, braced for the challenges of the day, conscious of the ability to meet every rightful demand and having strength equal to the task. You will be able to go through the day conscious of His abiding presence.

Clergy need to recognize their vulnerability to stress yet understand that destruction comes, not from stress itself, but from an adverse reaction to it. In spite of the stress that is built into ministry, the shock absorbers provided by good health, a supportive family, and spiritual resources can enable us to live productive, satisfying lives that will confess the beauty of God's peace.

Grief Recovery—2

We sometimes avoid spending much time ministering to the bereaved and grieving because we are afraid of becoming too emotionally involved or that our own inner feelings will “hang out” for others to see. This second article, describing the five sessions of a Grief Recovery Seminar, may help us get a handle on those fears.

□ by Larry Yeagley



Grief Recovery is a five-week support program that utilizes audio-visuals, group dynamics, didactics, and assignments to bring the lives of hurting people back into focus. The first article in this series described the need for Grief Recovery and how a pastor (or other professional) can get started in this program.

This second article will describe in detail the five sessions of a Grief Recovery Seminar.

The first session

My first task as one who leads out in helping people deal with grief is to develop a level of trust. I have learned that this is absolutely vital to the success of the program. To build this trust level, I clarify the following guidelines at the first session: (1) The presenter will not lecture on theology; (2) no confrontive group therapy techniques will be used; (3) nobody will be forced to share; (4) judgment will not be passed on anybody's feelings; (5) the presenter will facilitate the expression of feelings only when a person desires to express feelings; (6) gentleness is the key to all interaction; (7) there will be no charge for the program.

I start by giving persons in the group a chance to talk about why it is difficult for them to grieve. I jot their reasons on the chalkboard. This usually leads to a discussion of the insensitivities of indi-

viduals or society in general. It is a safe and nonthreatening type of sharing.

The most common problem in grief is not knowing what reactions to expect from oneself. For this reason I use a three-step approach to develop a picture of normal grief reactions: I ask the group, first, to help me construct a list of the reactions portrayed in “Soon There Will Be No More Me” (Churchill Films, 662 North Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90069). This is a very nonthreatening exercise, and the group produces a long list after viewing the film. The second activity is more threatening. I ask them to share the feelings *they had* as they watched the film. I add these to the list on the chalkboard. The third request is totally voluntary, but much more threatening. I ask them to add their reactions, not to a film, but to their most recent loss. I emphasize that a wide range of emotions is normal and healthy, and I urge the group to allow grief to happen instead of damming it up inside.

By now the group has experienced the arousal of painful feelings. They have also had a chance to let some of those feelings come out into the open. There are four goals that I encourage the group members to accept at this point: (1)

Believe that the loss really happened; (2) allow yourself to experience the pain of losing; (3) gradually become accustomed to familiar environments associated with the lost relationship; (4) say goodbye to the relationship as it once existed but can no longer exist.

To accomplish these goals, I give the following general assignment to be followed during the entire five weeks of the seminar and beyond.

1. Think. Deliberately take memory trips to places and events connected to your relationship with the person now gone. Think through every facet of the relationship.

2. Write. Keep a journal in which you write your feelings and thoughts about the lost relationship.

3. Talk. Share your feelings with a person you trust. Be sure the person will listen nonjudgmentally.

4. Weep. Do not hold back tears. Weeping alone is not as therapeutic as weeping with another person.

The last twenty minutes of this first ninety-minute session is devoted to introductions. This is entirely voluntary. I invite each group member to give his name and to share his most recent loss. I encourage each to be brief so that everybody can share if he wishes.

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Grief makes people very tense; it is a highly stressful experience. For this reason I decided to include principles and techniques of stress management and relaxation exercises in this third session.

This is the most threatening part of the first session, but it provides one more opportunity to get inner feelings out into the open where they can heal. As one man put it, "I felt so much better after I got some of the pressure off."

In conclusion, I assure the group that the first night is the most painful. The next day I send each person a letter encouraging him to attend the following session.

The second session

The second session begins with a review of the normal range of grief reactions. I sometimes show a short filmstrip that depicts the emotions of grief. ("When Disaster Strikes—Coping With Loss, Grief, and Rejection, Part Two," Human Relations Media, 175 Tompkins Ave., Pleasantville, New York 10570.)

The largest part of this session is used for group sharing. I strongly encourage members of the group to share their experiences with the assignment of thinking, writing, talking, and weeping. A few will be anxious to tell how doing the assignment brought easing of the pain. There will be questions and comments totally unrelated to the assignment. Those who are attending for the first time are encouraged to share their loss with the group.

I let the discussion flow freely. The role of the presenter during this free exchange is to gently enable people to identify, own, and express their feelings. Sometimes this is done by a few short comments. Perhaps a question or two is all that is needed.

Take the case of Mary. She came to the second session with a tightly controlled expression on her face. During the discussion she told the group that she was the strong person in the family. She thought she was doing well because she wasn't crying and had not cried since the death. As she told this, she had a smile on her face, and an occasional nervous chuckle came out. Very quietly I said, "Mary, let me see if I can help you put your finger on how you are feeling right now. Can I interpret the tense smile and



the occasional chuckle as happy feelings?" That's all that was needed. Mary shook her head No as the tears came to her eyes. I knew she couldn't say more at that point. I simply said, "Mary is saying that her smiles cover the real feelings of anger and sorrow. Have any of the rest of you had this experience?" At that point others spoke about how they covered their real feelings. Eventually, Mary was able to put her feelings into words.

During the sharing time of this second session there will be many opportunities for the presenter to emphasize, or reemphasize, a key point about the nature of grief or the need for achieving the goals set during the first session.

Let me illustrate. Jack told the group that after his memory trips and journal exercises were completed he was troubled by thinking he heard his wife coming into the house. Several times he thought he heard her voice. He asked whether something was wrong with him. A few other people said they had had the same experiences a few times.

At this juncture I went to the board and drew a horizontal line. At the left end of the line I drew an X to denote the intellectual acceptance of the loss. At the right end, I drew an O to denote acceptance on all levels. Just above the horizontal line I drew a wavy line between the X and the O. Then I said, "Your question about whether this experience is normal is a good one. I don't think you need to worry. Nearly 50

percent of those who lose an important relationship experience hallucinations during the early months of grief. Intellectually, you know the person is gone, but until that loss is accepted on all levels, that person will be with you emotionally. This wavy line represents the presence that remains because of the searching and pining still taking place. Thinking you hear or see the person is common. That will no longer occur once you reach the goals we set last week."

During the last twenty minutes I explain the assignment for the second week. I draw two interlocking circles. Then I erase one circle and everything within it, leaving the remaining circle with a crescent missing. I ask, "Can anyone interpret what I have done?" A variety of answers are given: "When someone dies, there is a part of you missing." "After somebody you love is gone, you feel less than whole." "You may feel like something is missing, but there is a lot of you left." "There's an empty space that nothing can fill in just the same way."

I respond, "All of these interpretations may be true, depending on the person. One thing is certain—losing puts a real dent in your self-esteem, doesn't it? These are real feelings. They are common and to be expected. Even though we don't feel like it, it is true that all of us still have the capacity to live and love creatively. You may not be able to believe this right now, but I want you to do something this week that will gently nudge you beyond your grief. It will help you to realize that there is still a purpose for your life."

The assignment I then give builds self-esteem. I ask them to list their personal assets and to set short- and long-term goals for using them. They are also to list personal liabilities and goals to improve them.

The third session

This meeting begins on a little lighter note. I ask group members to share their assets and goals. There is usually some laughter and bantering about sharing personal qualities. At times the laughter

In the group we discover that loss of faith during grief is very common and very temporary. Group members usually share experiences of how they handle their temporary loss of faith.

is a reflection of joy, but laughter is also a way of expressing pain. Burl Ives sang a song in which he called tears a "funny way of laughing." Laughing may be a funny way of crying during parts of Grief Recovery.

The value of this exercise has proven to be greater than I originally estimated. An example is Arlene. She had always been very dependent on her husband. She never worked outside the home. When her husband died, she was a helpless person who despaired of being able to survive. During this discussion she told the group that she believed herself resourceful, even though she had become too dependent on her husband. Her short-term goal was to learn to drive a car. Her long-term goal was to get a job outside the home. About six months later Arlene wrote me that she was the proud owner of a driver's license and a new job! It was the assets-liabilities assignment that motivated her new way of life.

A major portion of the third session is devoted to group discussion of problems people face in grief. This is stimulated by showing an eleven-minute film entitled "Harriet" (Mass Media Ministries, Inc., 2116 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218). The problems depicted include: anger that is displaced or turned inward; guilt that is crippling the forward movement of life; estrangement and isolation; avoidance of the pain of grief; return to usual activities too soon; shrine building; expecting more from a supporting relationship than can be given by one person; perpetuation of grief in an effort to perpetuate the secondary benefits; loss of identity.

The secret of this discussion is to allow the group to arrive at solutions. The presenter should share solutions, but only after the group has exhausted its ideas.

Grief makes people very tense; it is a highly stressful experience. For this reason I decided to include principles and techniques of stress management and relaxation exercises in this third session.

Stress management includes discus-



sion of ways to cope and ways of altering life spaces to conserve the expenditure of energy. Relaxation techniques are not tightly woven into any particular religion. Group members are encouraged to adapt the method to their own religious philosophy. Along with relaxation I suggest that group members practice meditation in keeping with their particular faith. The assignment for the week is to do something good for yourself. This is an effort to build self-esteem and to create relaxation.

A second part of the assignment is designed to lower the denial level that prevents people from believing that their loss really happened. It also is designed to give them a realistic view of how well they are adjusting to their loss. This portion of the assignment asks the person to list all the losses he has had from childhood to the present and to describe the nature of the lost relationships. He is to indicate when he first realized that death was a possibility for himself personally. Finally, he is to write down how he handled his feelings about losing the people on his list and how he handles feelings in general.

This is a big assignment, but I emphasize to the group the importance of doing it faithfully.

The fourth session

The fourth session begins with a close look at the assignment given the previous week. Group members share with

each other what they did to be good to themselves. Some report buying a dress or a suit. One lady went to dinner with a longtime male friend. It made her feel "just a little more whole," she said. A member of one group went to the beach with her small children. A middle-aged woman refrained from the daily grave visit and spent three days with a friend in another State. Many go to the beauty salon for a new hairdo. An elderly gentleman went to the lake and walked the beaches. He enjoyed the solitude and the chance to tell God some important feelings.

This exercise puts people in touch with themselves again. It helps them to sense once again that they are important.

The loss-history assignment is an important part of this fourth session. I ask for a few volunteers to share their history with the group. Their losses, facts about the relationship, the manner of adjustment, and the usual way of handling feelings are all recorded on the chalkboard.

From these case studies we discover why persons are having difficulty adjusting. Some discover that too many losses have occurred too close together for adjustment to come easily. Others realize that they have a history of bottling strong feelings inside. Sometimes both of these situations exist for the same person.

By the fourth session most people are not denying the reality of their loss; they are going through some of the pain. But the majority are not yet willing to say goodbye to the relationship.

Saying goodbye to a lost relationship is essential to real healing. For this reason I do not apologize for urging group members to begin this process. I emphasize that I do *not* want them to say goodbye to the person, to the memories, or to the hopes of future reunion. But they must say goodbye to the relationship as it was and can be no longer. Knowing it is not possible to do this in a single step at one time, I encourage them to do it in bits and pieces. I ask them to think through

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"Pastor, I love you"

You are ministering to a member of the opposite sex having marriage difficulties. You are showing love, care, concern, and understanding. You are a Christian leader, but you don't want to end up leading someone on. How do you prevent it? □ by Stephen A. Grunlan



An attractive homemaker in her late 20s attempts to seduce her pastor during a counseling session in his office.

At their first appointment she complains that her husband doesn't meet her needs. A few sessions later, she wishes aloud that he were a "strong leader" like her pastor. More overt signals

follow. The pastor, almost twenty years her senior, overweight, and balding, is flattered, tempted, and in danger of responding to these advances.

How do we explain an attractive young woman's romantic interest in an older, less attractive man? Some might speculate that she is looking for a "father figure." However, a simpler explanation may account for her interest in her pastor and for the romantic involvements of many pastors and other Christian leaders.

Physical attractiveness is an obvious basis for romantic interest, but several other less recognized factors are at work as well. Together, these make up the total effect we have on others romantically. Social scientists Gary Belkin and Norman Goodman (*Marriage, Family, and Intimate Relationships* [Chicago: Rand McNally, 1980]) label this effect the Sexual Stimulus Valve and argue that it is composed of five key characteristics in addition to physical attractiveness. Looking at each of these can help us see why intimate involvement with parishioners is virtually an occupational hazard for clergy.

1. *Self-confidence.* Confidence is not conceit. Confidence says, "I'm OK"; conceit says, "I'm better than you." Conceit repels others, but confidence attracts. When a person feels good about himself, others are more likely to feel good about him as well. Self-confident people generally make it easier for others to feel good about *themselves* too.

Not all pastors and Christian leaders feel self-confident, of course, but they generally appear confident, especially to lay people. Most people believe it takes a great deal of confidence to speak in front of a group. Many of the pastor's public responsibilities are activities generally associated with confidence. Regardless of how he feels inside, the pastor is perceived as being self-confident.

2. *Power.* People are attracted not only to power but also to powerful people. For example, ex-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, although not particularly attractive physically, seemed to be constantly in the company of beautiful women, dating many actresses and socialites. Persons in positions of power, regardless of their physical attractiveness, frequently find members of the opposite sex attracted to them.

The pastor is usually a powerful person, at least within his church or organization. He is the leader, the

authority figure. A pastor is also seen as a powerful person because he speaks with authority—the authority that derives from the Word of God. In liturgical churches the vestments and rituals can also add to this perception of power. The pastor may not see himself as powerful, but again, it is the perception of others that matters.

3. *Public recognition.* Belkin and Goodman write, "Fame is an aphrodisiac." Public recognition can turn even repulsive persons into romantically attractive ones. While serving a life sentence for murdering eight student nurses in Chicago, Richard Speck has received dozens of marriage proposals. The mail Charles Manson receives from teen-age fans is greater than the combined mail of his fellow inmates. Tiny Tim, a rock star of the past generation, was a strange-looking, rather pathetic person—the butt of jokes in school. He liked girls, but couldn't get dates. When he became a celebrity, however, female fans pursued him so passionately he had to hire two security guards.

Pastors and Christian leaders also have recognition. They enjoy "celebrity" status, at least among their constituencies. Because confidence, power, and public recognition are not generally associated with romantic attractiveness, people often cannot explain why they

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Gentleness is a romantic quality. It is also a stock in trade for ministers. The very gentleness that is meant for comfort and support may draw the individual to the pastor in a romantic attraction.

are romantically interested in a pastor.

4. *Showing interest and concern.* We are all attracted to attentive, interested, and responsive listeners, those who show a real interest in us and to whom we can talk freely. Such concern and listening sets the stage for intimate sharing verbally, and it is often only a short step from intimate communication to intimate behavior.

By the very nature of their work, pastors frequently have occasion to show interest in others and listen to their intimate problems. They are taught to be attentive, empathic, and responsive listeners—the very behaviors and attitudes that make them attractive to members of the opposite sex.

5. *Gentleness.* Belkin and Goodman write, “No matter what one’s public image is . . . the quality of gentleness shows strength and confidence: it shows a willingness to give to another. . . . When we encounter gentleness in another, it may actually produce a physical effect.”

Gentleness is a romantic quality. It is also a stock in trade for ministers. The pastor often comes into one’s life as a comforter and caregiver; he reaches out to people in tenderness. Yet the very gentleness that is meant to comfort and support may draw the individual to the pastor in a romantic attraction.

All five of Belkin and Goodman’s characteristics that contribute to the Sexual Stimulus Valve are typical of many pastors and Christian leaders. This means that without even being aware of our effect, many of us can become romantic and fantasy objects. What can we do about this?

Simply understanding how our position and behavior may affect some persons will go a long way toward helping us to perceive and deal with any romantic attractions that may develop. Obviously we don’t need to suspect every member of the opposite sex who smiles at us or comes for counseling. Just as obviously, we do need to be sensitive to the fact that our office and calling give us additional attractive characteristics that we would not ordinarily have.

How to avoid being a casualty

The problem described in this article is more widespread than many in the church would care to admit. The following suggestions won’t guarantee that you can successfully avoid such predicaments, but they can stack the odds significantly in your favor.

1. *Be passionately in love with your spouse.* One of the greatest safeguards against indiscretions and infidelity is a solid marriage. Work to make your home relationship one that includes not only a satisfying sex life but also mutual affection, understanding, friendship, and trust. The grass doesn’t always look greener on the other side of the fence when you water the lawn at home!

2. *Minimize the risk.* Try to have your secretary in the outer office when counseling with young, attractive women (or even with older, less attractive ones). You don’t have a secretary? Or an outer office? Then perhaps you can set the appointment for a time when others will be in the church building—the janitor, a choir rehearsal, et cetera. At the very least, tell your spouse of your appointment. This violates no confidentiality since you are merely giving information of the fact of a counseling session, not its details, and it will certainly inhibit the possibility of the session turning into something it was not planned to be.

Some pastors insist on having a small pane of glass in their office door. With the door shut, they can have privacy—but not too much privacy.

3. *Realize your limitations.* Even if you aren’t past 40 and balding, the attention of an attractive woman is so pleasant you

can easily let things drift awhile without any conscious decision to do so. Of course, you intend to nip the situation in the bud before it really develops into anything significant. Meanwhile, it’s fun to watch—in a bemused, spectator sort of way—and a tremendous boost for the ego!

Just remember: According to Proverbs 6:27-29, you’re going to be burned if you play with matches. Among former pastors are a number who said, “It could never happen to me.” The truth of the matter is that it could and did, and it will happen to you, too, if you think you can toy with it and remain unscathed. The only safe solution is to short-circuit such a relationship at the first symptom. You may need to refer the individual to someone else for counseling (the problems may clear up from this alone), or if warranted, discuss the problem candidly.

4. *Be perceptive.* Some pastors are caught up in these situations because naively they suspect nothing until it blows up in their face, and they yield to a sudden temptation. Had they seen it coming, they would have been better able to handle it. There’s no need to be paranoid or suspicious, but maintain a balanced awareness both of what is going on and of your own vulnerability.

Recognize, too, that you aren’t always dealing with a scheming seductress. Often you’re facing an individual who is hurting, whose self-esteem has been assaulted and who therefore is drawn to the one who listens and counsels. Be alert to the effect of signals you may be unwittingly projecting.

5. *Keep your spiritual resistance high.* A healthy relationship with the Lord can help you repeat Joseph’s exclamation: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9). In fact, it wouldn’t hurt periodically to reread Joseph’s experience in Genesis 39. In a world that views sexual promiscuity as lightly as does ours, some of the disease is bound to infect even the clergy unless we consciously inoculate ourselves with a strong faith and reliance on God.

The sermon on the amount

Godly gambling in the form of bingo, raffles, lotteries, bazaars, et cetera, has had a long history in some segments of the church as a means of financing the work of the parish. But other churches, says the author, get by year after year with scarcely a bake sale or a church dinner. How do they do it?

□ by William F. Willoughby



I'm hard-pressed to figure out what the apostle Paul might prefer in the way of making his tithe and offering payments to his local church if he were around today. Would he use American Express or Master Charge? Or would he rather have some kind of checkomatic system in which his churchly obligations would be

taken out of his checking account automatically? No fuss. No muss.

Knowing that Paul usually was pretty practical in his thinking, I'm fairly certain he'd opt for the checkomatic program simply because he was a man who was out of town a lot. That still wouldn't deter him from sneaking a folded dollar bill into the offering plate of the church he happened to be visiting. A fellow can keep up a pretty good appearance that way.

One reason I feel Paul would choose the checkomatic way to pay is that the credit card companies have the right to charge an arm and a leg in annual interest rates on held-over balances. Miss sending in the payment for a couple of months, and you've bought the farm.

Besides, Paul was a stickler for keeping corrupting influences out of the church. I can see some of the more letter-of-the-law churchmen deducting the 18 percent (or more) interest charges from the 10 percent tithe and not thinking a thing about it. In these days, not even God can afford to be shortchanged by 18 percent.

William F. Willoughby writes for *Religion Today*, Washington, D.C. This column appeared in the December 14-20, 1980, issue. Used by permission.

Besides, with the checkomatic plan, Paul would have, in the form of the canceled checks, plenty of evidence to support the claims on his Internal Revenue Service forms.

What triggered this bit of whimsy in me is three things: First, news releases come in steadily telling of budgetary problems in the denominations; second, the air is full of everything these days savoring of churches raising money for this and for that, trying everything from bazaars to booze to bingo; and third—well, let's save that for the next paragraph.

Third: I recently read an item that several mainline denominations are experimenting with ways to make it easier for members to contribute tithes and offerings.

Something like the checkomatic program is being tried in half a dozen metropolitan areas to see if it is any more effective than the catch-as-catch-can method generally followed by churches.

It's a neat, clean, easy, almost painless way to see that one's church is taken care of, whether one makes the service every week or not. Denominational promoters of the idea have a sneaking suspicion that this plan will result in them reaping more of those green things.

Besides, it's a whole lot quicker. If there's anything I hate, it is to get behind someone in a drugstore line who is using a credit card instead of cash. It takes forever and a day to extract \$1.49 from such a person. Imagine what problems might result when the ushers came down the aisles and they had to stop for the credit card transactions in church. Hard way to pick up a buck.

Some people probably would object to the credit card approach on the ground that it takes all the personal element out of giving. Maybe so, but it's not half as bad as a firm that is working on computerized confession responses.

Punch the button(s) for what your sin(s) might have been for the week and get the appropriate response(s) automatically. Saves time and wear and tear on priests, and the data self-destructs.

Another firm is developing a dial-the-sermon-of-your-choice service for worshipers. Maybe if you don't like what you're hearing, you can get your money back. Did you ever try to get your dollar back if you didn't like the sermon you heard at church?

There's really a fourth reason my typewriter is clicking off this spiel. With October past and November upon us, parishioners have heard more sermons

Betting is no bargain

preached on giving than at any other time of the church year. Psychologically it's understandable. After the summer slump in church life, finances run behind. But with the air crisp, everyone is psyched up to get in there and pitch in.

Time for the Sermon on the Amount.

Mind you, I enjoy bazaars and church dinners (canned peas and all) and festivals of all kinds. But I come from a tradition—and I think a sound one—that frowns on using such things to support the programs of the churches. But read the next paragraph.

Bingo and booze for Jesus. Somehow I have about every conceivable reason in the world to recoil at churches using this method to bolster the spreading of the gospel of God.

I contrast this with the Mormons. They take care of their own and have plenty left over for others. And they never build until they've got all the money in hand for it—even their imposing temple here in the Washington suburbs.

Part of the reason is that they, like a few other denominations that never have real shortages, tithe. Systematically, regularly, and without exception. I'll dare say there probably haven't been a dozen bake sales in the past fifty years among the entire lot of the Seventh-day Adventists, the Evangelical Free Church, the Assemblies of God, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They prosper because people give.

Is it that they are holier than others? They well could be, but that isn't the answer. Tithing is. The Bible has a lot to say on that subject.

All I'm really saying is that it seems very clear that the more preaching and practicing of the real dynamics of the Sermon on the Mount there is, the less emphasis there has to be on the Sermon on the Amount.

Even if it does cut down on the number of those delightful for-profit church dinners.

Oh, by the way, Paul just informed me he'd pay for his church dinner with his Diner's Club card when he comes to town.

Some Christians argue that gambling is not wrong because the Bible does not speak out against it specifically. But the question that must be faced is whether gambling—even the gambling that has been brought into the church—is compatible with principles of Christian stewardship.

□ by Leo Van Dolson



America is on a gambling binge. Some estimates indicate that the volume of bets in the United States equals about one third of the gross national product¹ and that two thirds of the American population participate in either legal or illegal gambling. Because gambling has become so popular, many charitable organizations, including churches, are attempting to cash in on the betting boom. Church bingo parties have become such a profitable enterprise that greedy organizations of all kinds now compete for the bingo billions.

Gambling has a long history. It may date back to the time of Noah when millions of people "gambled" that it would never rain, and lost. Or perhaps even before that, to Eve, who "gambled" that eating the fruit would not hurt her, and lost big, not just for herself, but for all of us who have suffered the results of her impulsive act. Certainly one of the grossest instances of gambling recorded in the Bible took place when the Roman

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The gambling tables aren't the only places that are booming in Atlantic City. The social and religious agencies are working overtime too. Atlantic City's rescue mission has had to quadruple its bed capacity.

soldiers "rolled dice" for Christ's seamless coat at the very time He was dying on the cross for the sins of the world.

Lady Luck is no lady—she is a seducer, and certainly Christian churches, of all institutions, need to take a strong position against all forms of gambling, including church-sponsored gambling. Most States have now turned to lotteries as a means of increasing State funds, but gambling revenue is regressive in that it hits hardest those who can least afford it. It also promotes crime, poverty, and all forms of corruption, as well as a get-rich-quick philosophy that is contrary to the principles of Christian stewardship. Gambling may be big business, but it's bad business, and fosters bad morals.

The gambling tables aren't the only places that are booming in Atlantic City. The social and religious agencies there are working overtime too. Atlantic City's rescue mission has had to quadruple its bed capacity. Before the casinos opened, there were an estimated dozen prostitutes in Atlantic City; more than a hundred were counted a few weeks after the casinos began operating. Behind the glitter and the glamour associated with gambling lies the destruction of both the highest values of society and the mental health of the compulsive gambler.

In July of 1979, *Psychology Today* reported that heavy gamblers were as psychologically happy as nongamblers ("The Social Risks of Casino Gambling"). But reports from Johns Hopkins University in Maryland have brought about a drastic change in outlook. In 1980, pathological gambling was certified as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. One of the most active contributors to this change in perception has been the Johns Hopkins University Compulsive Gambling Counseling Center, opened in October of 1979. To date, the center has treated four hundred people. As a result, the staff has gained valuable insights into why people become pathological gamblers.

Johnny Greene, reporting on the center's research and clinical programs in the September, 1982, issue of *Psychol-*

ogy Today, illustrates what happens to compulsive gamblers with the story of a patient, Charlie K.

"Forty-year-old Charlie hasn't written a bad check or placed a bet on the horses since he first visited the center. But when he arrived in December of 1980, he owed more than \$60,000 because of gambling. While a college student, Charlie watched a friend win \$18,000 at the track one afternoon, and he never forgot that 'big win.' Subsequently everything in his life became secondary to gambling. He married and divorced twice. He neglected his work in broadcasting, and lost and found jobs so frequently that he often had difficulty remembering where he worked. His behavior so alarmed and disgusted his father that he was disinherited, cut off from any access to his father's modest fortune.

the feelings of others matter? When he walked into a delicatessen, Charlie would order a \$2 sandwich, tell the owner that he'd dashed out of the office without his wallet, and pay for the sandwich with a worthless \$10 personal check. Leaving the deli, he would toss the sandwich into the nearest wastebasket, pocket the change from the check, and then repeat the scam a dozen times.

... "There's not a major street I didn't hit with a bad check," says Charlie. ...

"Just before he bottomed out, Charlie's check scam at the delicatessens had become inseparable in his mind from watching the race results and odds flash on the racetrack scoreboard. To him, as to other pathological gamblers, the exhilaration of pulling off his scam had become as powerful as the gratification he experienced when he tapped out. The

Every patient interviewed so far at the Johns Hopkins center has had an early-win episode. Greene points out that initial light gambling is not as harmless as it might seem to be.

"The only place Charlie wanted to be was at the racetrack. But unlike the 'railbirds,' who leaned on the fences and at least acknowledged the horses when they dashed past, he was bored by the animals and entertained only by the scoreboards that announced the odds for the coming race. Over the course of twenty years his whole being became focused on 'the chase' to get the funds for gambling action.

"One of Charlie's favorite scams when he ran out of cash for his racetrack addiction was hitting a series of delicatessens. A disarming man, reared in the upper-middle-class world of his parents, he always wore a suit and tie for his delicatessen. While growing up, Charlie remembers, his material desires were always satisfied, but his emotional needs were ignored. If his own emotions had never been of consequence, why should

chase had finally wedded all facets of his life to the action of gambling."²

Charlie's gambling career is instructive when it comes to understanding what leads a person to become a chronic gambler.

1. *Poor self-image.* As a youngster, Charlie consistently failed to win the attention and affection of his perfectionistic father. Somewhere along the line Charlie decided to get even by destroying himself. Twice he attempted suicide.

2. *Early-win episode.* Every patient interviewed so far at the Johns Hopkins center has had an early-win episode. Commenting on this, Johnny Greene points out that initial light gambling is not as harmless as it might seem to be. Also, it demonstrates the fragile psychological makeup of a person who glories in and attributes unwarranted significance

Gambling can become just as psychologically addictive or intoxicating as alcohol or drug use. The existence of organizations such as Gamblers Anonymous testifies to that fact.

to such a win for years afterward. Such people develop a "chosen-to-win" philosophy that becomes the central theme of their fantasy life.

3. *Decision to get even.* When compulsive gamblers lose heavily, they feel betrayed and cannot be satisfied until they "win back" what they have lost. They lose their ability to make rational judgments.

4. *Distraction from normal life.* The constant titillation of gambling becomes an addiction or intoxication. Their minds become so taken up with this obsession that home, job, financial responsibility, and all such normal concerns no longer matter.

5. *Turn to illegal means of supporting their habit.* Huge gambling debts and financial crises often lead to criminal action such as embezzlement and writing bad checks (as Charlie did).

Most gamblers who do seek treatment demonstrate abnormally acute anxiety levels and other psychologically abnormal side effects. But Tor Meeland, director of research for the National Foundation for Study and Treatment of Pathological Gamblers, says, "These people are not strung out. They're bright, they're producers."³ Often they come from a middle-class or upper-middle-class background, with IQs that usually range from the 120s on up. Because most are first exposed to gambling by family members, they do not attach the same amount of social stigma to engaging in gambling as do those whose background differs. This indicates that gambling will become an even greater problem to them in the years to come.

Already adolescent gambling is being recognized as symptomatic of emotional problems among teen-agers. Researchers from the Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, New Jersey, reported that of 238 students they questioned, 122, or 51 percent, admitted that they gambled. Bets of more than \$10 were fairly common, with 6.6 percent of the sampling saying that they wagered more than \$50 on a single sporting event or gambling activity. The researchers are

concerned that this form of "risk-taking" behavior may signal other problems. Also noted was the fact that teen-agers who gamble are twice as likely to have a parent who gambles as are nongambling students.⁴

Gambling can become just as psychologically addictive or intoxicating as alcohol or drug use. The existence of organizations such as Gamblers Anonymous testifies to that fact. But many in the field are confident that gambling is on its way to becoming the most curable of all addictions. The Johns Hopkins center reports that 82 percent of those who remained with the treatment program there have abstained from gambling.⁵

However, prevention is more effective than treatment, particularly if we take into account the high social cost of gambling to families of gamblers and to

self-hate and more neurotic behavior. This vicious cycle must be interrupted and new attitudes and beliefs adopted that lead to vibrant health and real living.

Obsession with money and material goods needs to be replaced with a clear understanding of Christian stewardship and spiritual values that do not ignore materialistic blessings, but rather assign them to their proper place, as the Bible suggests in Matthew 6:31-33. There we find Jesus setting our priorities straight with these words: "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

To this we might add Jesus' soul-

Undoubtedly we do more harm than good by attacking the habits of those engaged in vice of any kind. The most successful approach is to offer them something better.

their communities as a whole. But how can we prevent people from gambling when they see so many of their fellow citizens engaged in the attempt to get something for little if anything?

Undoubtedly we do more harm than good by attacking the habits of those engaged in vice of any kind. The most successful approach is to offer them something better. Here the Bible perspective becomes a necessity. Those who gamble because of their poor self-image need to realize the thrill of self-fulfillment that comes from being accepted as a son or daughter of God. Feelings of guilt that accompany antisocial behavior can be alleviated by finding forgiveness and overcoming power in Jesus Christ.

The problem with neurotic traits is that they lead to neurotic symptoms such as gambling and alcoholism, which in turn lead those involved to greater

searching question: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (chap. 16:26).

The cold, hard fact is that 90 percent of those who gamble lose.⁶ But the warm assurance of Jesus is that 100 percent of those who "bet" their lives on Him will have a better life in this world and eternal life in the world to come. He challenges us to put all that we have into winning the game of life. With His help, doing so will be no gamble, but a sure thing.

¹ "Dateline Tomorrow," *Christian Herald*, July-August, 1983, pp. 6, 7.

² Johnny Greene, "The Gambling Trap," *Psychology Today*, September, 1982, pp. 52, 53.

³ Johnny Greene, "Screening the Heavy Gambler," *Psychology Today*, September, 1982, p. 52.

⁴ "Stakes Are High for Teen-age Gamblers," *Medical World News*, Jan. 5, 1981, p. 64.

⁵ Greene, "The Gambling Trap," *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

WCC meets in Vancouver

Thirty-five years ago the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches met in Amsterdam; this year it held its sixth such gathering. Here is a firsthand analysis of the WCC's concerns, commitments, and future plans through the eyes of an accredited observer to the Vancouver meeting.

□ by Douglas Devnich



Despite exaggerated media reports of fundamentalist harassment, the World Council of Churches convened in concord July 24 to August 10 on the peaceful and verdant campus of the University of British Columbia. Nine hundred delegates, plus more than two thousand observers, accredited visitors, and media reporters

made up the daily assemblage at the 1983 Sixth Assembly of the council.

Those in attendance could not help being immediately confronted with the burden on the minds of these churchmen and churchwomen of the world. Through prayers, hymns, and expositions, it became abundantly clear that the WCC is committed to combating today's increasing militarism; relieving the pain and suffering of poverty; healing divisions between races; eliminating discrimination on the basis of sex; and condemning violence.

The vision set out in the First Assembly of the WCC in 1948 obviously has not been realized. The moderator for the Vancouver meeting highlighted his report with a direct reference to that earlier vision. Archbishop Ted Scott, primate of the Anglican Church in Canada and Central Committee moderator for the WCC, reminded those attending in 1983 of the 1948 Amsterdam decision to say "No" to all that flouts the love of Christ, to every system, every program, and every person that

treates any man as though he were an irresponsible thing or means of profit, to the defenders of injustice in the name of order, to those who sow the seeds of war or urge war as inevitable." On the contrary, the urgent appeal was to say "Yes" to all that conforms to the love of Christ, to all who seek for justice, to the peacemakers, to all who hope, fight, and suffer for the cause of man, to all who, even without knowing it, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwell eth righteousness."

Added to this was Scott's recollection that the Nairobi assembly in 1976 called for the continuing growth of member churches toward "a truly ecumenical conciliar fellowship," and "a common understanding of the gospel and the tradition, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to make possible a fuller common witness."

While "unity and faith" remains a primary purpose of the WCC, the 1983 Vancouver experience seemed to subsume all else under an overriding concern for global peace and justice, now. Moderator Scott was not hesitant to urge an immediate commitment by the church to break out of its current "cultural captivity." Realizing that the world faces the real possibility of the

destruction, not only of civilization as we know it, but also of life on this planet, the church must be prepared to accomplish things that seem impossible.

Dr. Philip Potter, general secretary of the WCC, echoed Scott's concerns by emphasizing that the world suffers under a dark cloud of fear and despair. In the context of confrontation between East and West and between North and South, as well as within countries, between sexes, races, classes, and religions, Potter declared, "The very survival of the human race is daily threatened." His call to the assembly was that member churches must meet the emergency by becoming actively involved in a fellowship of confessing, learning, participating, sharing, healing, reconciliation, unity, and expectancy. His development of this challenge set the pace for the worship periods, study groups, and plenary sessions that were long on rhetoric, and that could easily remind one that the church today is eloquent in social ideals but weak in declaring that the "kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31).^{*} Seventh-day Adventists, notwithstanding their world service record, would do well to answer more fully the crying needs of a suffering world both philosophically and practically. But it

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The concerns of the WCC in 1983 are most noble. A Christian, regardless of denomination, would have difficulty opposing the objectives of making the world and mankind more humane.

would be equally refreshing to hear and see the WCC in session emphasize the centrality of the Word of God, and with evangelistic fervor, inspire hope as found only in the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Perhaps the most recurring criticism that the WCC faces today is the question of the propriety of the Christian church's involvement in the world's sociopolitical morass. Should not the church reaffirm the safety of being unentangled with state affairs? Could the WCC subscribe to Bishop Desmond Tutu's concept that in matters of injustice such as South African apartheid, "violence may need to be met by a corresponding violence"? Tutu is the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

Archbishop Robert Runcie, of the Church of England, in a media interview justified the WCC's emphasis on matters of sociopolitical concern. He insisted that the Christian faith must generate a "passionate coolness" (meaning a fervor without radicalism) in working for the whole of humanity's needs.

Whatever one's view may be respecting the church's role in the modern world, the concerns of the WCC in 1983 are most noble. A Christian, regardless of denomination, would have difficulty opposing the objectives of making the world and mankind more humane. From the standpoint of an observer, the WCC is not to be faulted on what it endeavors to do. But it may be worthwhile to discuss what it could do, but fails to do.

A disturbing element in the format of the WCC is that a certain syncretism prevails in the name of international brotherhood and sisterhood. It would be impossible to deal with sociopolitical matters in the Near East without relating to the Jewish and Islamic faiths. It would be difficult to address life in the Orient without understanding Buddhism and Hinduism. The WCC endeavors to be faithful in this. However, it becomes incongruous that at a Christian-based council, non-Christian entities claim that differences of belief are not significant as long as all consider themselves to

be on the "common pathway of life" and affirm the "sanctity of life." Or, as a Hindu spokesman in his address proclaimed, "Instead of the unity of the kingdom of God, we have innumerable separate egos affiliating themselves with a race, a particular language, sex, class, or nation, splintering the basic unity. Even in the field of religion, instead of approaching a universal experience, we experience only further separation. The Vedas acknowledge that 'the truth is the same, but may be expressed or realized in different ways.'"

The resounding consideration here is this: Did Jesus Christ come to this earth to live and die merely to proclaim the unity of humanity based on a common sense of respect for life, despite religious differences? Did He not come to present Himself as "the way, and the truth, and the life," and that "no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6)? It would seem that in the light of the gospel, it is the World Council's commission, as it is the commission of all who believe, to affirm that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The minimal emphasis on the power of the gospel to change hearts and lives was surprisingly conspicuous at the Sixth

Assembly. Vancouver could have been the unprecedented place for the World Council of Churches to assume itself to be a great agency to declare Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures as the one pathway of recovery for a world that is lost in sin. Christian service and the relief of hunger and pain in the world is worthy and Christlike, but is it not futile when Christians fail to call men, women, boys, and girls to Jesus Christ—the Bread of Life, the Great Physician? Is not the Word of God the revelation of God's will for human life? If men and women would follow it thoroughly, would they not find restoration of soul and body? It is not enough to deliver human beings from the clutches of a hell on earth and yet allow them, without the Word of life, to die the second death.

What then of the imminent end of all things—that sense of urgency concerning the inevitable as expressed even at the World Council of Churches? The call comes out of Vancouver in 1983 for a new world order. Openly, serious-minded men and women have cried out that the present world order must be changed or replaced. How significant it is to remember that even the prophets of old saw that the present world order is doomed. They never had in mind that

Women had a prominent role at Vancouver. A Russian Orthodox nun in a discussion group at a preassembly women's meeting.



We must remind ourselves again that Jesus Christ is essential not only in the establishment of God's kingdom of grace but in the establishment of His kingdom of glory as well!

the order of things in the last days would be changed by the scholasticism of earlier centuries or by the church's social activism in the twentieth century. They "looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Jesus Christ is the answer to the world's dilemma. We must remind ourselves again that Jesus Christ is essential not only in the establishment of God's kingdom of grace but in the establishment of His kingdom of glory as well!

Being at the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches revived in me a new realization that the world does not need more declarations from a coalesced body of good citizens who aim to transform the world by calling for, or trying to enforce, peace and justice. Never before has the world been in greater need of divine intervention over and beyond human intervention. On behalf of the indigenous peoples of Third World countries, scores of impassioned appeals were made to the council to consider the rights and needs of the masses back home. With the intensity of the appeals came an unspoken but forceful realization that Jesus Christ must come soon to relieve our misery in sin. Unless the world shall turn to God in Christ, the plight of humanity is irreversible.

Such a stark portrayal of my thinking may call for an answer to the objection of some who would accuse me of "other-worldliness," or of a certain escapism from reality, or an irresponsibility toward suffering humanity. Let us affirm that it is absolutely Biblical that the Christian be a faithful steward in relieving the oppressive needs of fellow humans. Jesus said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40). It is in this sense that the historical work of the WCC and its intended efforts must be commended. My point is that the WCC, as the most powerful Christian social agency, may well be the world's answer to idealize as well as to apply the social ministry of Jesus Christ. But it must go much further in presenting the Word of God as man's

center of life, it must do more than give "lip service" about conversion to Christ; it must proclaim that the hope of the world in these last days is not in social renewal alone (as inviting an idea as that may be) but in the cataclysmic destruction of sin in the present order and in the

establishment of the literal kingdom of God ushered in by the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ.

*All Biblical references in this article are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

Jesus: the indispensable center

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island, John did not fear what his captors could do to him; the living Lord was in contact with him.

We today may also know Jesus as our constant companion. "We have the companionship of the divine Jesus, and as we realize His presence, our thoughts are brought into captivity to Him. Our experience in divine things will be in proportion to the vividness of our sense of His companionship. Enoch walked with God in this way; and Christ dwells in our hearts by faith when we appreciate what He is to us."—E. G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 3, 1896. Our victory in Christian living will be in direct proportion to our awareness of a living Saviour by our side. This was the secret of Moses' victory, "for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). God was real to him, ever present in his thoughts.

This was also the kind of experience Paul had with Jesus. After Paul came face to face with Him on the Damascus road, the image of the Saviour was imprinted forever upon his consciousness. Jesus was constantly in the apostle's thoughts. His Epistles bear testimony to this. They abound in such expressions as "to live is Christ," "the power of Christ," "riches of Christ," "the blessing of the gospel of Christ," "the fulness of Christ." The phrases "in Christ" and "of Christ" occur more than a hundred times in his Epistles. Indeed, "the heart of Paul's religion was his loyalty to Christ."—Benjamin Willard Robinson, *The Life of Paul*, p. 222. Because Paul's thoughts were focused on Jesus, his loyalty to Him

was complete and undivided.

When Jesus is uppermost in our thoughts we too will be loyal to Him. We will love to comply with His will and wishes for us. Jesus will keep us from doing wrong. Many of us have often overcome temptation by remembering the influence of our loved ones. We could not sin when the love of a mother, father, husband, wife, or child was uppermost in our thoughts. If we visualize our friend Jesus standing by our side in the moment of temptation we will be enabled gladly to choose the right and refrain from doing wrong.

We should school ourselves to think of Jesus. It would be good for us to set aside some time each day to think specifically of Him. To do so is not sentimental emotionalism. Rather, it is heroic choice to turn our thoughts from less important subjects and focus them on heavenly themes and Jesus.

Our Christianity will be vital and scintillating only when we enjoy a personal relationship with Jesus. Religion will make sense only when Jesus Christ is its central concern. Elisha prayed for his servant, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see" (2 Kings 6:17). We need the Lord to open our eyes as well to see Jesus as never before. It is by faith in Jesus as an indwelling Saviour and as a constant Companion that the Christian lives, for "it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

A sinner by any other name

Have you noticed how much more difficult it is becoming to sin in a really significant way? With words being used as they are today by some, righteousness by definition is just around the corner.

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," said Shakespeare, but is it true?

The totalitarian state imagined in George Orwell's 1984 used language as one of its tools to control society. Words were invested with altered significance until they came to represent the precise opposite of their original meaning. By controlling words, the state controlled people's thoughts, and through their thoughts, it controlled their actions. We are now only a few weeks away from Orwell's fateful year, and fortunately the world still bears little resemblance in most respects to his sinister forebodings. But in one area Orwell may not have been far wrong. Wittingly or unwittingly, the wordmongers (by whom I mean those who produce the oral and written words consumed by society) are using language to change our attitudes and opinions and thus ultimately, our actions.

Euphemisms are nothing new, but the situation today goes beyond the banality of saying underprivileged when we mean poverty stricken or referring to an axe murder as antisocial behavior. I'm not even talking about "legalese" or "bureaucratese"—the convoluted dialects spoken by attorneys and government employees. I'm talking about what seems to be an effort to replace those words that imply moral absolutes or the existence of sin with neutral, nonjudgmental substitutes. "Soft terms" is what Dr. Charles Wittschiebe, minister, author, and psychologist, calls them.

We don't refer to fornication anymore, and so, in a sense, it no longer exists. "Premarital sex" has taken its place. "Fornication" sounds so ugly and sordid, but notice how free from such connotations is the replacement with its detached, clinical ring. No one commits adultery these days; they have "extramarital sex." And perhaps that's why there is so much of it. Adultery made a person an adulterer, and that didn't

sound nice at all. But to have a little extramarital sex sounds hardly more sinful than indulging in a hot-fudge sundae and ruining your diet!

In some cases we can trace a progression in terminology that seems to parallel society's modified stance to the thing itself. For example, homosexuality has gone from being a "perversion" (what an ugly word that is!) to a "deviation" to a "variation" and has at last become an "alternate life style"! Dr. William Brennan, in *Medical Holocausts I: Exterminative Medicine in Nazi Germany and Contemporary America* (1980), traces a similar evolution in the definition of abortion as set forth in official statements published by the American Medical Association. What is abortion? In 1859, according to the AMA, it was "wanton and murderous destruction." By 1967, more than a hundred years later, it had become "the interruption of an unwanted pregnancy." And in 1970 it was defined simply as "a medical procedure."

The opponents of the "pro-lifers" in the abortion debate are not, as one might suspect, "pro-death." They are "pro-choice." Dirty movies are for "mature" audiences, not dirty-minded ones. The print versions are sold in "adult" bookstores, presumably an establishment that takes its place alongside such other adult privileges as driving an automobile and voting.

The object of all this verbal alchemy is to reduce sin from a felony to a misdemeanor, and the final goal is to get it off the books completely. But, as with most things in life, these word plays carry a price tag. They may help us reduce our anxiety and guilt about the way we live, but they do so at the expense of making sin, and life itself, trivial. As long as we had sin that really mattered, we could still get God's attention. Now, if the wordmongers are right and we really can redefine sin more to our tastes, we are like the children of an indulgent, but

distracted, parent who is too involved in important matters to notice our frivolous misbehavior. We can't do anything bad enough to be noticed, and anyone who has been a child knows that that is worse than having angry parents or being punished. As, one by one, we eliminate or minimize our sins by redefining them, we strip away the quality of human responsibility that gives us importance in the eyes of heaven and that provides significance for life.

A second price we pay is that we lose touch with reality. Take homosexuality. To call it an alternate life style puts it on the same level as a choice between living in Vermont with a wood-burning stove or moving to Los Angeles! Such nonsense belies the anguish and tragedy and life-shattering trauma reported by many of those actually involved. When homosexuality was still a perversion, we may have exhibited un-Christlike hostility and prejudice toward the individual, but at least we took seriously the reality of his excruciating situation.

We think by means of words. As the vehicles of our thoughts, they shape our perceptions, our understandings, and what we believe. But words by themselves cannot change reality itself. A rose by any other name *would* smell just as sweet, even though we might not think so. The wrong label on a medicine bottle doesn't alter at all the contents or the results on the human body. We can change the words describing sin and thus change our perception of it. But we have only distorted our view of reality, not reality itself.

How does God view these efforts to redefine sin? Through the prophet He says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20).

Can we have righteousness by definition? A sinner by any other name would be as lost.—B.R.H.

Busyness

Is life beginning to go in circles? Does too much of your daily activity seem to be nothing more than a cheap anesthetic to numb the pain of an empty life? Want to change? Here's how.

Last night I listened to my mother tell of her girlhood—of the fun people had at church gatherings (church was so much a part of their lives) and how they helped share one another's problems. As she reminisced of the buggy drawn by a beautiful spirited horse and recalled how good the water tasted drawn from their well I pictured the family homestead (I have been there many times) and the long beautiful lane leading to it. I began to think of my own early childhood days when we visited relatives who lived in a nearby town, of the happy times my cousin and I had roaming the woods and picking up stones from the rippling brook. And I wished for the quietude of the countryside, the refreshing and the revitalizing that come from being close to nature. Yes, I thought, I would even exchange the conveniences of today for the uncomplicated living of yesteryear.

Do you agree? Are you discouraged, overburdened with care? Are there not enough hours in the day to accomplish all that you must do? Do you feel exasperated when you are asked to take on another task? Do you feel that life is unfair, giving you so much to do, while others enjoy so little responsibility? Are misunderstandings developing in your house because there is little time for communication and interaction between family members?

Why are we so busy? One answer is the times in which we live. As we observe in the homes we visit, listen to people talk about what they are doing, go grocery shopping, or just take a ride on the highways it's easy to see that everybody lives in a rush! I wonder whether it isn't Satan's plan to keep us so busy that we don't have time for a relationship with God or our fellow men? Perhaps we have even become so busy with God's business that we don't have time for Him.

Because of the nature of our husbands' work, our homes are different from the average home. Besides the regular responsibilities of housekeeping and child rearing, we must become involved in our husbands' work, answer the constantly ringing tele-

phone, and entertain on a larger scale than most wives. Some work at a job outside the home as well! Some are working by their husband's side giving Bible studies or being involved in evangelistic meetings. Even though our lives of necessity have to be busier than most, would honesty make us admit that some of this busyness is self-inflicted or used as an escape mechanism?

Charles Swindoll helps us take a good look at the pitfalls of being too busy and gives us four steps we can take to bring about a change if we really want to!—Marie Spangler.

Run, saint, run!

Appointments, activities, assignments . . . run!

Demands, decisions, deadlines . . . run!

Schedules, services, seminars . . . run!
Plans, programs, people . . .

Stop!

Step aside and sit down. Let your motor idle down for a minute and think for a change. Think about your pace . . . your busyness. How did you get trapped in that squirrel cage? What is it down inside your boiler room that keeps pouring the coal on your fire? Caught your breath yet? Take a glance back over your shoulder, say, three or four months. Could you list anything significant accomplished? How about feelings of fulfillment—very many? Probably not, if you're honest.

☐ Dorothy Dean

Prayer at two degrees celsius

Lord,

Here winter's up to our boot tops,

And along comes a seed catalog,

Balm in Gilead to a gardener.

Each page blooms with spring

And temptations.

I admire the roses, breathe their fragrance,

Become greedy, wanting them all.

But

Crowd a garden, and nothing grows sturdy enough

To bear fruit.

My life's like that, Lord.

When I cram too much in,

Everything gets straggly,

A jungle of loose ends.

Help me be selective

So what I do is pleasing in Your sight.

Amen.

There's a man in Oklahoma City, named James Sullivan, who knows how you feel. Back in the 1960s he blew his town wide open developing the largest Young Life Club in the nation. And that's not all he blew wide open. Along the way, he managed to sacrifice his health and his family. Blazing along the success track, Sullivan became a difficult man to keep up with, let alone live with. His wife, Carolyn, was getting tired. So were his children, who seldom saw their father. When they did, he was irritable. Although he never realized it at the time, Sullivan's full-throttle life style was actually an escape technique. Listen to his admission in his book, *The Frog Who Never Became a Prince*: "I was a man who existed in a shell . . . guilt, resentment, and hatred welled up within me. The resulting hard feelings I developed became almost insurmountable."

What happened? Wasn't this guy a Christian, working for Jesus, spreading the gospel, reaching the youth? Yes, indeed. But Sullivan substituted activity for living, busyness for meaningful priorities. One Thanksgiving Carolyn asked him a question as he was racing out the door to speak at some camp. "Do you know," she said, "or do you even care, that from the middle of September until today, you have not been home *one* night?" Not long after that, she broke emotionally. He contemplated suicide.

Stinging words—but true. Sound familiar? Here's why: Busyness rapes relationships. It substitutes shallow frenzy for deep friendship. It promises satisfying dreams, but delivers hollow nightmares. It feeds the ego, but starves the inner man. It fills a calendar, but fractures a family. It cultivates a program, but plows under priorities.

Many a church boasts about its active program: "Something every night of the week for everybody." What a shame! With good intentions, the local assembly can *create* the very atmosphere it was designed to curb. The One who instructed us to "be still, and know that I am God" must hurt when He witnesses our frantic, compulsive, agitated motions. In place of a quiet, responsive spirit, we offer Him an inner washing machine—churning with anxiety, clogged with too much activity, and spilling over with resentment and impatience. Sometimes He must watch our convulsions with a heavy sigh.

My mentor was wise. He once declared: "Much of our activity these

days is nothing more than a cheap anesthetic to deaden the pain of an empty life."

Searching words—but true. Want to change? Here's how: First, admit it. You are too busy. Say it to yourself . . . your family . . . your friends. Openly and willingly acknowledge that what you are doing is wrong and something must be done—now. I did that recently and, through tears, my family and I cleared some bridges the thorns had overgrown.

Second, stop it. Starting today, refuse every possible activity which isn't absolutely necessary. Sound ruthless? So is the clock. So is your health. Start saying "No." Practice saying it aloud a few times—form the letters in your mouth. The phonetic structure of this two-letter word really isn't all that difficult. If feasible, resign from a committee or two . . . or three or four. Quit feeling so important. They'll get somebody else. Or maybe they'll wise up and adopt a better plan.

Third, maintain it. It's easy to start fast and fade quickly. Discuss with your family some ways of investing time with *them*—without the TV . . . without apologies for playing and laughing and doing nutty, fun things . . . without gobs of money having to be spent to "entertain" you.

Fourth, share it. It won't be very long before you begin gleaning the benefits of putting first things first. Tell others. Infect them with some germs of your excitement. Believe me, there are a lot of activity addicts within the fellowship of faith who'd love to stop running . . . if they only knew how.

Ask James Sullivan. His nickname is "Frog." By the time he got kissed, it was almost too late.

Almost.

From Killing Giants, Pulling Thorns, by Charles R. Swindoll, Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon 97266. Copyright 1978. Used by permission.

Prayers from the parsonage

Thanksgiving dinner has been on my mind for weeks. We expect so much from this meal: American history, family traditions, and regional culture all have a place in the recipes and preparations.

Besides the menu planning, shopping, and cooking, there's the house to clean, the tablecloth to press, and the centerpiece to arrange. All so that people will eat well at a memorable occasion.

"He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men" (Luke 9:13, 14).

If I'd been faced with five thousand hungry men (besides women and children!) I'd have panicked. Like the disciples, I'd have frantically asked, "What are we going to feed them?" even as I calculated the cost per head.

Lord, it seems this would have been a

good time for a sermon on the importance of fasting or a lecture on world famine, but You cared about the people's basic needs. You didn't serve a banquet of roast lamb and dainty sweetmeats, but neither did You ration out watery soup and old bread. You didn't make the families form bread lines, but neither did You let them mill around begging.

Everyone seated in groups of hundreds and fifties. A blessing in faith. Then wholesome barley loaves and tasty fish for all. It was familiar fare the people could gratefully accept and enjoy. "And they did all eat, and were filled" (Mark 6:42).

Jesus, not just for this important holiday, but at every meal, make me quick to thank You for the food I have. May I be willing to share, even to offer it first to others. For I know that miracles happen every day when what seems to be insufficient becomes enough, when a large group is fed with order and efficiency, when a simple meal is transformed into a feast of love and fellowship.

Cherry B. Habenicht

Can archeology really prove the Bible?

Archeology can often help answer the question of what happened in ancient times, but it can rarely answer why. It can help bring understanding, but it cannot create faith. Faith comes from God.

Ever since Napoleon rallied his troops by the Egyptian pyramids 180 years ago with the clarion call "Forty centuries look down upon you!" the more spectacular discoveries of archeology have repeatedly hit the world's headlines. In Napoleon's day it was the Egyptian Rosetta stone. In Queen Victoria's time it was the huge Assyrian palaces with their cuneiform tablets. In the roaring twenties it was the golden splendors of Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt and the royal tombs at Ur in Iraq. In post-World War II years it was the Dead Sea scrolls. In the 1970s the headlines heralded a major ancient royal archive of clay tablets from the Syrian city of Ebla.

The cavalcade of great archeological finds having a bearing on the Bible seems almost endless. We aren't even surprised anymore when a new find is announced by Biblical archeologists. Do all of these finds, and more, *really* prove the Bible true?

During the first part of the Christian era very few informed Christians doubted the veracity of Scripture. Then along came the Enlightenment, when various individuals began to doubt not only the Bible's historical accuracy but even its spiritual truthfulness. The motivation for much of this scholarly study was not necessarily wrong, but the end result for the conservative Christian was disastrous. For instance, notice just four of the extreme conclusions that became popular in the nineteenth century:

1. The text, or words, of the Bible itself were considered corrupted, so very little of it was thought trustworthy.

2. The stories of the patriarchs in Genesis were thought to be tribal myths.

It was considered unlikely that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were historical personages.

3. Even much of later Biblical history as it related to world empires such as the Hittites was considered impossible because nothing about the Hittites was known to secular history.

4. Daniel was considered the latest Old Testament book and completely unreliable, all of its predictions written down after the events had already occurred.

Into such a world of doubt and disbelief the discipline of archeology was born not much more than a century ago. It soon became apparent, after a few archeological discoveries, that many of the popular negative conclusions about the Bible could not be maintained. For instance, let's look at the four conclusions already referred to:

1. Regarding the text, or words, of the Bible, archeology demonstrated that they were, on the whole, trustworthy. Before the advent of archeology the oldest available manuscripts of the Bible were medieval, and people could legitimately ask, "How do you know that the Bible you hold in your hands is anything like the autographs of the authors?" The Christian had to answer, "By faith I believe that the Lord has preserved it accurately through the centuries." But since the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls we now have manuscripts for most Old Testament books going back to the third/second century B.C. And for the New Testament we have copies on papyrus dating back to the second/third century A.D. After careful comparison we can conclude that the words of the Bible on the whole have been transmitted faithfully and accurately down through the centuries.

2. What about the patriarchal stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis? Can we believe what we read, or are these legends from a much later time projected back into hoary antiquity?

Although archeology has not uncovered the remains of the patriarchs themselves, it has uncovered the remains of the social, political, and economic world in which they lived. Today we can confidently say that the features recorded in Genesis find their optimum place early in the second millennium B.C.—no earlier and no later than the Biblical account would put them.

3. What about the Biblical mention of the Hittites, as for example Ephron, the owner of the cave of Machpelah, or Uriah, the soldier of David? In 1843 a distinguished scholar wrote concerning the mention of the Hittites in the Bible, "Its unhistorical tone is too manifest to allow of our easy belief in it." But now there is a whole discipline called Hittitology. Archeology has provided detailed information on Hittite language, laws, and history. Today you can even visit their splendid capital city of more than four hundred acres in the heart of Turkey.

4. Finally, what about the book of Daniel, which has found itself in the critics' den on more than one occasion? As recently as fifty years ago many scholars considered Belshazzar, for instance, to be a pure invention on the part of the writer of Daniel 5, because this king was unknown from classical Greek sources that discussed in detail that period of Babylonian history. But then came an archeologist who dug up a series of tablets and cylinders that illustrated that Belshazzar was indeed the last ruler of Babylon; in fact, he was coregent with his father, Nabonidus, who alone was remembered by classical sources.

With these kinds of discoveries being made during the past century it's no wonder Christians began to think of archeology as proving that the Bible is true. In a rationalistic age when witness to the Bible's veracity had become fewer and fewer, the stones of the ancient Near East literally began to cry

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out that the Bible deserved a closer look. This may not be what Jesus had in mind in Luke 19:37-40, when He said the stones would cry out if He lacked human praise, but I like to think the analogy is appropriate. In other words, I believe that the discoveries of archeology are providential for our time and that it is an exciting time to be alive and to see Providence at work.

Now, as we look at the rapidly accumulating evidence of archeology as it relates to the Bible, can we really say it is *proving* the Bible true? As I see it, it is not very helpful to talk about archeology's proving the Bible true—at least in the sense that a scientist or logician would use the word *proof*.

First, the truth of the Bible is ultimately of a religious order, and spiritual truth can be neither proved nor contradicted, nor can it be confirmed or invalidated by the material discoveries of archeology. The authority and trustworthiness of Biblical truth require a commitment of *faith*. However, since the basis of the Biblical revelation is the story of how God and human beings have interacted, the Bible is written in large part as history. It's concerning this historical truth of the Bible that one may legitimately ask for confirmation from archeology. Since the faith of Israel was founded on the interventions of its God in its history, the major historical truths have consequence for the Bible's religious truth.

But even if an archeological find should apparently contradict a historical fact in the Bible, it would merely indicate the human side of the Bible authors, whose knowledge was too limited or whose observations were too imperfect to enable them to record history with unimpeachable accuracy. It would have no bearing on the nature, validity, or applicability of Biblical truth, because what the Bible recounts is sacred history. By that I mean it is essentially a theological document rather than a textbook of history. When it touches on what we would call history it does so to provide a religious *interpretation* of history—an interpretation that archeology can neither confirm nor invalidate. However, the facts underlying the interpretation can be confirmed, but not "proved," by archeology.

And second, since the Bible is a literary text, archeological evidence can only confirm or confute an *interpretation* of that text, and not the text itself.

Therefore, to relate archeological evidence to Biblical evidence, one should begin with the actual text. The text is primary. After one arrives at an interpretation based on the use of all available literary tools, then one should compare interpretation of the Bible text with critically sifted evidence provided by archeology. Striving to be an honest Biblical interpreter, one will naturally attempt to find an interpretation that best suits all the evidence available from both archeology and the Bible.

"Well, how does archeological evidence relate to the Bible if not as proof?" you may be wondering. Archeology has been crucial for the study of the Bible in many ways. Let me mention only a few. *It has been crucial in the matters of text and language.* For instance, it has helped to establish the Biblical text. As mentioned earlier, before the advent of archeology our oldest Biblical manuscripts were medieval. Now, since the discovery of the famous Dead Sea scrolls, our text of the Old Testament can be an eclectic text of the fourth-second centuries B.C.—a jump of more than one thousand years back in time! And since the discovery of Egyptian papyri, our chances are excellent for ultimately recovering or reconstructing an archetypal text of the New Testament that is not more than one or two generations from the autographs.

Archeological discoveries have cleared up the meaning of many obscure words and phrases. For instance, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the thousands of clay tablets uncovered in the past fifty years at Ugarit on the coast of Syria. Here we have a vast body of texts from the fifteenth to the twelfth centuries B.C. written in a poetic dialect similar to Hebrew and corresponding to much of the language of Job and Psalms. When you remember that the Bible contains 1,500 *hapax legomena* (words used only once in the Bible) and an additional 3,000 words used fewer than five times, you can appreciate how these Ugaritic materials have widened and deepened our understanding of Biblical Hebrew vocabulary and syntax. Their discovery has forced scholars to abandon the method of wholesale emendation of the text when they come to a Biblical passage they cannot understand.

Besides Ugarit, we find much other help when it comes to the understanding of words. Just one example is from 1 Kings 10:28, where we learn that Solo-

mon imported horses from Egypt and (according to the K.J.V.) "linen yarn." This translation was just a guess. Now we know from archeology that the word in question was a proper noun, *Que*, an ancient name for Cilicia, famous for its white horses. So Solomon was importing the best horses from Egypt and Cilicia.

Archeology has also been crucial for the general understanding of the Bible as an ancient book. It has supplied for modern Bible students the frame of reference under which the Biblical writers operated and that they assumed would be familiar to their audiences. If we had space we could write here about ancient Near Eastern Creation and Flood stories, legal codes, and covenant forms. Archeology has fleshed out the Biblical picture not only of the Hittites but of the Philistines, Ammonites, Canaanites, and so forth—with their customs, teachings, and religious rites.

Archeology has illustrated scores of Biblical customs, practices, and artifacts. For instance, archeology has shown that Abraham's relations with Sarah and Hagar were in accord with the practice of his time. Clay tablets describing similar incidents have been recovered from the ancient Mesopotamian city of Nuzi. They date to about the middle of the second millennium B.C. A barren wife was expected to arrange for her husband to have a child by a suitable slave girl. The slave girl's economic security was ensured, and their offspring became the legal heir unless the true wife later bore a child. Another Nuzi tablet tells of a man who sold his birthright for three sheep, reminding us of Esau selling Jacob his rights as a firstborn. Eighteenth century B.C. documents from Mari on the Euphrates River also furnish an adequate setting for the patriarchs through the mention of Biblical names and a similar social situation. The dramatic new finds at Ebla in Syria promise further elucidation on the backgrounds to this period of Biblical history as well. Only passing mention can be made of other Biblical customs illuminated by archeology—use of asses' jawbones, boiling a kid in its mother's milk, keeping the Sabbath, and crucifixion, for example.

Finally, archeology may be used to illustrate, verify, or complement specific historical data. For instance, we have the mention of many Israelite kings in Assyrian and Babylonian sources; we even have a picture of Jehu kneeling before King Shalmaneser on the so-

called Black Obelisk found in Assyria. Archeology has recently provided confirmation of each of Nehemiah's enemies; it has vindicated the account of Jehoiachin's Babylonian captivity as recorded in 2 Kings 24, and given us abundant evidence for the existence of the Assyrian king Sargon. Not only do we have numerous records of his activity in Assyria but in 1963 an inscription he set up in Ashdod, in the coastal area of Palestine, was found, thus corroborating the specific statement concerning his military presence there found in Isaiah 20:1.

Often archeological data may be used to supplement or complement historical data from the Bible. For instance, the Moabite stone, or the Mesha stele—the most important royal inscription ever found in Palestine—supplements the account of Israel's relations with Moab as recorded in 2 Kings 3. Similarly, the Taylor Prism gives us further light on the Assyrian king Sennacherib's unsuccessful siege of the city of Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah as recorded in Isaiah 36 and 37. And the discovery of the Siloam water tunnel inscription from the time of

Hezekiah amplifies the Biblical account in 2 Kings 20:20.

We have to admit, though, that it is not always so easy to relate archeological discoveries to the Biblical text. The former are often too incomplete for convincing correlation. Then one must be willing to keep an open mind and be patient.

In conclusion, then, we can say that archeology illuminates the world of the Bible, but archeology cannot establish its claim to truth of a higher order. Archeology can help answer the question of what happened in ancient times, but rarely why it happened. Archeology

can bring understanding, but it cannot create faith. Faith is the gift of God that comes to those who ask Him for it. If students of the Bible come to their task without faith they will find only interesting historical and religious documents. But to the believer the Bible will become God's living word ministering to his or her needs today. And as we properly use the archeological data we will be encouraged to know that our Bible is not simply a patchwork of legends, but rather, remarkably reliable records of men and women who themselves have responded to the revelation of God in history.

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Grief Recovery

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very thoroughly some of the less important parts of the relationship and say goodbye to these. Gradually they can move toward saying goodbye to the most intimate aspects of the relationship.

While I do not agree with the entire technique and philosophy of Dr. Donald Ramsay, of the University of Amsterdam, I do like to show his filmed sessions with a woman suffering longstanding grief. As the woman finally relinquishes her relationship with a dead daughter, the healing is obvious to any group watching. The film ("Grief Therapy," Carousel Films, Inc., 241 E. 34th Street, New York, New York 10016) prompts weeping, which is important to some in the group who have not been able to cry. Watching this film also encourages group members to begin saying goodbye to their own relationships that can no longer be.

A woman wrote me two years after

attending Grief Recovery. She did not say goodbye to her relationship with her 60-year-old mother until months after the program ended. She drove to Indiana to visit her mother's grave. In the cemetery she thought through every aspect of their relationship. Step by step she said goodbye. As she put it: "Finally healing began to come."

Loss of faith is frequently a problem in grief. Many Christians report not being able to pray and read the Bible. Church attendance is reduced or nonexistent. Long-held spiritual concepts are often questioned after a major loss.

In the group we discover that loss of faith during grief is very common and very temporary. Group members usually share experiences of how they handled their temporary loss of faith.

The fifth session

This last meeting is comprised of three parts—assessment, long-range planning, and farewells.

Members of the group are asked to assess their progress on a scale of 0 to 10. They are also asked to tell the group what contributed to their progress or lack of progress, including their success (or lack

of success) in saying goodbye to the lost relationship.

Long-range planning includes group interaction about how to get back into social involvement and how to combat despairing loneliness.

Saying hello includes farewells. This is a reality of life and a part of Grief Recovery. Words of thanks and farewell are freely spoken. Some of the people wish to keep the new relationships formed with other Grief Recovery participants alive. They exchange addresses and phone numbers.

The effect of Grief Recovery was summarized by one woman who said, "We have come to the close of Grief Recovery, but I wish we could be together always. It has been so warm in this group. We have felt so much love. Because of this experience our lives will never be the same. We have become like a family."

Just before the last session ends, I tell the group about plans for follow-up. This includes telephone calls, personal visits, and additional group meetings.

The final article in this series will focus on follow-up, counseling, and preventive ministry.

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CPE residency

Kettering Medical Center offers five positions in a twelve-month residency in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) beginning the first of September, 1984.

The program is designed for those who wish to improve their pastoral care and counseling skills for parish ministry or to work toward certification as a hospital chaplain or other specialized ministries. The training will build on an individual's seminary education and pastoral experience. Stipends up to \$12,000 are available. Application is due January 15, 1984. A seminary degree and at least one unit of basic CPE are prerequisites for the one-year residency.

Basic and advanced CPE are also offered in eleven-week quarters—winter, spring, summer, and fall. Kettering Medical Center

has been accredited as a training center by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education for the past fifteen years. Descriptive brochures and application forms are available from: Chaplain Darrell Nicola, Kettering Medical Center, 3535 Southern Boulevard, Kettering, Ohio 45429. Phone: (513) 296-7240, ext. 5005.

Starting with the Bible

Want to encourage your members to spend time with the Word this coming year? Take a part of the first worship service in January to challenge the congregation to a systematic reading of the Bible during 1984. Then, using one of the many available Bible-reading plans, print in each week's bulletin the portion that will need to be covered that week in order to read the entire Bible by the end of the year.

Parson to parson

When you run up against a puzzling situation or a perplexing problem in your ministry and you aren't really sure how to handle it, what do you do? Wouldn't it be great to have a broad cross section of your peers give you the benefit of their thoughts?

Beginning in January, 1984, MINISTRY will be initiating a new feature, "Parson to Parson," that will do just that. We intend for this column to be what *you* want it to be. That's why we're asking you to provide both the situations to be considered and the solutions you have found.

Here's how the feature will work. Each column will pose a question and give a sampling of response from readers indicating how they would, or have, met such a situation. In addition, the topic to be discussed in a future column will be given.

To get the column going, we need you to give us the questions, problems, or situations you have faced. We'll even pay you for them! For each question you submit that is used in Parson to Parson, we'll pay you \$15. Send your suggestions to Parson to Parson, MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Recommended reading

Lifelines: The Ten Commandments for Today.

Edith Schaeffer, *Crossway Books*, 1982, 213 pages, \$9.95 hardcover, \$4.95 paper. Reviewed by Douglas L. Griffin, Director of Pastoral Care, Shady Grove Adventist Hospital.

The two questions that form the warp and woof of this book are Who am I? and How am I to be fulfilled? Such questions, according to the author, can be answered only by the Creator, and answers can be found only in His Word. The Ten Commandments tell us what we need to know about ourselves.

Each of the ten chapters is devoted to one of the commandments and builds upon previous chapters, thus constructing a document that is integrated literarily and theologically. While the author reconstructs the sociocultural milieu of the Israelite people subsequent to the Exodus, based entirely upon the documents in the Biblical book by that name, she also makes relevant to Western culture the basic propositions revealed by God in this ancient code. It is refreshing to find that the author approaches the Decalogue as propositionally accurate declarations from God Himself, given to a nation newly risen out of slavery as well as to all humanity.

I have found this book to be a delightful balance between the joyous freedom of the grace of Christ and the responsibility involved in being a child of God. I heartily agree with the author's injunction: "Let us thank God for the righteousness of Christ which covers us as a sparkling white linen robe; but let us also be sensitive to the constant danger of subtle shifts in our love."—Page 43.

Disciples in Action.

Leroy Eims, *NavPress, Colorado Springs, Colorado*, 1981, 320 pages, \$5.95. Reviewed by Lester Bennett, Associate Director of Sabbath School Ministries, Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Drawing from the book of Acts,

Eims endeavors to capture the principles demonstrated by the disciples in accomplishing the mission on which Christ sent them. Then the author sets these principles out as guidelines for effective Christian service today.

Eims's attempt to base church outreach formulae on Biblical principles is a refreshing contrast to current tendencies that rely on psychological concepts or business management techniques. And his book gains interest and makes practical application easy by the use of first-person illustrations that arise from his worldwide service for the Navigators.

However, Eims has written the book like a chapter-by-chapter homiletical commentary on Acts. The large mass of points makes it difficult to group major themes. It would have been more helpful if he had organized it by the major principles running through Acts and drawn on the various experiences recorded there to substantiate and illustrate the principles.

Highlights of the Bible: Poets and Prophets

Ray Stedman, *Regal Books, Ventura, California*, 1981, 224 pages, \$3.50, paper. Reviewed by Ed Shakespeare, Yorba Linda, California.

Many of us do well just to be able to find the books of Haggai, Habakkuk, or Zephaniah. But to be able to give an outline of their message—that might be another story.

The Highlights of the Bible series is intended to help one get not only a picture of the whole sweep of Bible history but also a basic understanding of the message of each individual book. Adventists have tended to study the Bible topically, gathering together and organizing all the verses on a given topic. But in the process we have sometimes missed part of the meaning because we missed the context. The question "What is the message of this whole book?" is a needed balance to the topical approach. By stepping back to get the larger picture, to see the forest rather than just the

trees, we gain a very helpful perspective.

The second of three volumes, this book covers the second half of the Old Testament, the books of poetry and prophecy. Dealing with the poetic books, Stedman says that Psalms expresses human feelings and is a good book to read when one is fearful, worried, anxious, or resentful on the one hand, or grateful, happy, or excited on the other. Job is a cry of faith. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes explore the hope, and Song of Solomon the love, of the human soul. "Thus, these poetical books probe the depths of the things which abide."

Stedman also summarizes the message of each of the sixteen major and minor prophets. For example, Isaiah tells us about God the redeemer. Jeremiah's message is that God chastens, while Ezekiel and Daniel point out the God who rules. If you'd like to get an overview of the Old Testament message with some good application to today's world, this book is one of the best places to start.

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