

# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

September 1987

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**Managing sensual temptations**

There is no doubt that your article "Battling Sexual Indiscretion" (January 1987) had immense value to pastors all over the world. I would like, however, to include three further suggestions that will help in managing sensual temptations.

First, the minister's daily walk with the Lord is most important. When one's experience is of close communion with God through study, prayer, meditation, and reflection, then the spiritual strength that comes will be greater than any temptation. Furthermore, such a walk will promote high self-esteem, and the need to have others—such as counselees—enhance it will be diminished.

Second, the minister should be neither too busy nor not busy enough. (Is there such a minister? we may ask.) Being too busy will place undue pressure upon us, and it is possible to seek times with women counselees just to have time to be quiet, with all its possible subtle consequences. Not having enough to do will give our minds and emotions time to run rampant, as the biblical account of David and Bathsheba demonstrates.

Third, and not the least important, is the pastor's own marriage. How many ministers neglect their wives in favor of the parishioners, thinking they are doing God's will? One of our greatest ministries is to display to our churches and to the world the fragrant witness of an intimate marriage. Therefore, the pastor will ensure adequate times for making love. (Paul states that abstinence is only for prayer and fasting, and that interruption for any other reason places both husband and wife in danger of temptation.) He will attend to his communication with his spouse, will ensure time is taken out from church meetings for such occasions as candlelight din-

ners. The minister will, as best he can, understand his wife's needs, and will not place undue pressure upon her—after all, parishioners can do that!

If possible, husband and wife will attend a marriage enrichment weekend, and will develop friendships with those of the same generation both within and without the church. Vacations together are a must. Above all, he will pray for his wife and family.

Walking with our Lord, programming our time properly, and being conscious of the deepening of our own marriages are but three suggestions that I would like to add to the already excellent article.—John S. Woodward, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

**An unscholarly statement**

I would like to respond to your unscholarly statement that "Colossians [2:16] refers to the ceremonial sabbaths of Leviticus 23, not to the weekly Sabbath of Exodus 20"[editors' comment in Letters, May 1987].

First, Leviticus 23 mentions the weekly "sabbaths" as well as the annual feast days (Lev. 23:3, 38). Second, the annual, monthly, and weekly holy days of Colossians 2:16 are the same as mentioned together in several OT passages (1 Chron. 23:30, 31; 2 Chron. 2:4; Neh. 10:33).

It seems that in the face of such obvious contradiction of truth, you would cease making that argument.—Frank Jamerson, Dothan, Alabama.

*Adventist thinking on the interpretation of Colossians 2:16 varies somewhat. However, to us it seems that the weight of the biblical evidence, New Testament as well as Old, supports the continuing validity of the seventh-day Sabbath. For a comprehensive treatment of the Sabbath in the New Testament, see Samuele Bacchiocchi's series in the May, July, September,*

*and November 1985 issues of MINISTRY.—Eds.*

**Adventists—practice what MINISTRY preaches**

I am grateful for my complimentary subscription to MINISTRY and for the helpful articles it features. I am grateful, also, for its contribution toward engendering a better understanding of the differences, but more important, the agreements, that exist between Seventh-day Adventism and other Christian churches.

My earnest prayer, however, is that this fellowship will be expressed more personally than merely on the printed page. It is much easier to talk about unity than to put it into practice.

A very real confirmation of this opinion occurred in a sad experience recently. Two Anglican people known to me, both of whom had previously sat under my ministry and had stated a warm appreciation of it, have now become Seventh-day Adventists. My attitude, expressed to them both, was that while we were sorry to lose them, if they had found a deeper relationship with God through Adventism, then we would rejoice with them. My grief is that their response was to tell me that I "have the mark of the beast" and that I am bound for hell. They have indicated to me that there is no hope of fellowship until I too embrace Adventism, for it alone teaches the truth.

Now that is clearly neither Anglican teaching nor language. It has been acquired by them since becoming Adventists, and it reflects the content of several Adventist tracts that have found their way to my mailbox over the years. It is that attitude, found generally among Adventists (though not apparent in MINISTRY), that portrays non-Sabbatarians in general and Anglicans (Continued on page 25)

If you're receiving MINISTRY bimonthly 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.

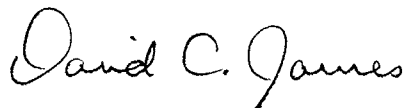
**Can a person's sexual orientation be changed?** Six years ago MINISTRY did an interview with Colin Cook, a former homosexual who said it could. Cook had established the Quest Counseling Center to help other homosexuals find deliverance.

**Recently Cook slipped,** and the Quest Counseling Center has had to close its doors. Homosexuals convinced that sexual orientation can't be changed and asking the church to accept their lifestyle are pointing to this as evidence supporting their contention.

**What really happened?** And what are the implications? Bob Spangler's frank interview with Colin Cook is our lead article this month.

**"Whose Funeral Is It, Anyway?"** makes suggestions for personalizing that service that every pastor must face eventually. And Robert Veninga includes "Personal Tragedies: Survival Skills for Pastors."

**This issue also contains** a couple of articles related to counseling, an article on the pastor's family, and three editorials that we hope will stimulate your thinking. Hope you'll find it good reading.



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MINISTRY, (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1987, is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A. Subscriptions: US\$19.95 for 12 issues in U.S., US\$22.95 for 12 issues elsewhere. Single copy: US\$2.00. Member Associated Church Press. Second-class postage paid at Hagerstown, Maryland. This publication is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International. Call toll-free 800-521-3044. Or mail inquiry to: University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to MINISTRY, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.

**Editorial Office:** 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts.

VOLUME 60 NUMBER 9

# Homosexual recovery— six years later

**J. Robert Spangler  
and Colin Cook**

**Does the closing of  
the Quest Learning  
Center under a  
shadow prove that  
attempts to help  
homosexuals change  
their behavior are  
misguided?**



*J. Robert Spangler is  
editor of MINISTRY.*



*Colin Cook, former  
director of Quest  
Learning Center, is  
currently writing book  
manuscripts and will  
soon resume leading  
seminars for recovering  
homosexuals.*

*Spangler: Colin, it is quite well known that the Quest program that was designed to help homosexuals find freedom from their homosexuality has been suspended partly because of a crisis in your own life. I realize this experience has been painful both to you and your wife as well as to many of us who have put confidence in your own experience of change and the program you started. We ran a lengthy interview with you in the September 1981 issue of MINISTRY. This article generated more responses than any other we have ever done—nearly a thousand letters came in to you and to our office. So my question is What happened? How did you go wrong and where are you now?*

**Cook:** Well, I sinned against God; I wronged some of my counselees, my wife, and the church, and I regret that I let a lot of people down. Although no intercourse was involved, I indulged in very inappropriate physical intimacy with some of my counselees. I'm deeply ashamed to admit this, but it is the fact.

*Spangler: Would you share with us how you seemingly reverted back to the old pattern?*

**Cook:** It was not back to the old pattern, as wrong as these events were. Not the full homosexuality of years ago. But I believe I deceived myself and allowed myself to get into a sexually addictive pattern. Like any addict, I refused to interpret it at the time for what it was, erotic and seductive. I have been humbled by the fact that I am capable of such

delusional thinking. It shows me the basic corruption of my humanity and reminds me again of the power of spiritual deception in homosexuality.

The Lord has led me to deeper levels of repentance and renunciation of this false intimacy. I have been free from it now for eight months. I believe yet another addiction in me—you could also call it, spiritually, a bondage—has been broken. I am reaching out in confession and repentance to those I have wronged. Several of us have been reconciled so far, which is beautiful.

I think my intentions were good in the beginning. It's my view that the homosexual experiences a state of arrested growth during childhood, a kind of psychological orphaning with regard to his love needs and identity with the parent of the same sex. Somehow those needs have been blocked on a deep level. When the person becomes open to healing, the fulfilling of those needs starts up where it left off. I had known for some time that a lot of these needs are transferred to the counselor by the counselee if the counseling relationship is good. Usually, I acted responsibly with these transference feelings, but in a number of cases I foolishly allowed the "parenting" to become physically affectionate.

Before long I was in a typically addictive pattern. I was enjoying the physical stuff more than the counselees were and I wouldn't admit it. Sexual energy was being experienced in these events, a fact that I denied to myself. An addictive cycle had developed. And so had secretiveness. I deluded myself into thinking that no one would understand, so I kept the problem to myself. I really got hooked

into the major dynamics of addiction: denial, cyclic dynamics, nondisclosure, delusion. When I say I got addicted I am not trying to deny sin. I believe a person is responsible for his addictions. If you can't admit that, you can never get free.

Scripturally, then, I was living in the flesh again, developing lasciviousness and bondage. As the addiction took hold, normal friendships became less satisfying. A good conversation, a nice dinner, and recreational time all appealed less because they did not fulfil this false need.

**Spangler:** *Isn't it the same with a man's lustful attitudes towards women? He can get to the point where he views women only as sex objects. Then it becomes hard for him to maintain normal social relationships with women—it is only sensuality that counts.*

**Cook:** True! It is impossible to appreciate the gentler, more tender emotional sensitivities that go on in normal relationships. Usually such a person is quite emotionally distant even while trying to be close. Social satisfaction is impossible for a person who sees others as mere objects for his own gratification.

**Spangler:** *How do you see this fall in the light of the healing you spoke about in our interview for MINISTRY six years ago?*

**Cook:** Nothing will ever erase from my experience the new world that opened up for me then after thirteen years of iron-clad perfectionism. The good news about Jesus, revealed to me through Romans by Dr. Hans LaRondelle and others (Hodge, Nygren, Luther, and Calvin, for example), led me to experience Jesus as my peace. I could face the brokenness of my homosexual distortion now and talk about it with God. He was my wholeness. Through counting His righteousness as mine I gained a new sense of identity that enabled me not to identify myself as a homosexual any more. And He was my victor. I began to face struggle, temptation, and defeat in an entirely new way and to grow by it.

I have no doubt that that experience, twelve years ago, broke the bondage of despair, homosexual identity, and the power of very addictive behavior. But I still had a lot of growing to do, a lot of becoming. I am reckoned as whole and heterosexual in Jesus. This is the justified

life, and flowing from that I become more and more whole. This, of course, is the sanctified life.

**Spangler:** *How is this growth process affecting your family life?*

**Cook:** Even though the major bondage of homosexuality was over well before marriage, I sense that my marriage to Sharon and my fathering of my two boys were and are definitely part of the ongoing healing process. In the early days of marriage I sensed a lot of irritation that was usually directed towards Sharon. It took me several years to discover that that was an irritation with myself that I projected onto her. I believe in helping with the children, changing diapers, bathing them, and so on—and also helping around the house with dishes, vacuuming and such. But because I was less responsible then, still discarding vestiges of passivity from the homosexual personality, I would feel irritated that she would have to ask me to do these things so often when I had already agreed to do them but was slow on the uptake! Now, that passivity affects sexual responsiveness. It's the child in us still; we haven't grown up enough to pull our own weight at home. Hence a subtle child-mother syndrome can easily develop, and it's impossible to be sexual with one's mother! Then the irritation with ourselves increases and that worsens the sexual relationship. Now I take much responsibility in the home. It's been eight years of growing up, and it clearly affects how I feel about myself as a man and how I respond sexually.

**Spangler:** *How is your wife Sharon coping with this crisis?*

**Cook:** My wife is a princess, and I have deeply wounded her spirit. I grieve over this many times. She thought I was loyal. I was afraid to tell her of my continuing struggle for fear of hurting her. But my counselor said, "Colin, who are you really protecting? You are protecting yourself. Yes, it will be painful for her, but she is stronger than you think."

And she is. Sharon has been tremendously loyal to me over these past eight months of crisis. Her integrity eclipses mine entirely. But she is no flower on the wall, smiling sweetly and forgiving me without hesitation. She expresses her anger and her hurt to me. She doesn't throw plates. She doesn't yell. There is not a

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## My own experience increasingly witnesses to the reality of God's call in spite of my having botched things up.

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vicious bone in her body. But she can tell me, "I feel like knocking your head against a wall for what you have done to me. You have taken years from my life." And I had to be willing to hear this.

**Spangler:** *Do you think she will be able to trust you again?*

**Cook:** Yes, it is not so much a trust regarding never falling again as a trust in the sense of giving herself to me. This will take time, but we are both very hopeful that the capacity to trust will be fully renewed. She says, "I want to forgive you, but I don't want to do it shallowly." But she is so loyal to Jesus Christ that I believe the healing of her wounds will come. All of this has shown me that I have been incredibly blind to the delicacy and strength of marital love. I have trampled on that delicacy, yet, instead of shattering, it is coming forth with a new strength.

She doesn't try to police me. She doesn't quiz me about where I have been. I have developed a deep level of accountability with her. It has been immensely helpful to me, and Sharon can work with this because she does not try to be the solution to whatever I reveal.

As good as our past eight years have been, I think we both sense that our best years of marriage are ahead, now that this disloyalty has been put away.

**Spangler:** *Would you say that now your convictions are stronger relative to the possibility of homosexual recovery?*

**Cook:** Yes! The gospel declares the good news that we can be forgiven and freed. I believe it is also the call of God to men and women everywhere to renounce homosexuality in their lives. And my own experience increasingly witnesses to the

reality of God's call in spite of my having botched things up.

**Spangler:** *Isn't this comparable to what Christ said to the adulterous woman: "You are forgiven; go and change your life. Go and sin no more." What other insights have you gained from your failure?*

**Cook:** I had to be willing to admit that the behavior I was involved in was not what normal men do. I always said that I wanted to be able to relate to men in the way that other men do.

I had to be willing to accept more of the norms of my society. Granted, men in our society don't know how to be affectionate with each other. It is healthy, I believe, for two men to be able to hug, and I wouldn't feel it necessary to accept societal limitations on that. But there are other society norms that make common sense, and I think we have to accept the implications of our choice to live in the society we do.

I am also learning to become more aware of my weaknesses and limitations. There may be many normal things that I may never allow myself to do because of my weaknesses. Plus, I've gained a new sense of the responsibility of public service. People in ministry need to be trained in this area. You can't do many of the things that a private person can do. And you have to be willing to live with those limitations or get out. I had not grown to the mature level where I could recognize that.

Another factor that is being impressed upon my mind is that of daily fellowship with my Father in heaven. I had neglected this. I became too busy and stressed. I was fool enough to think that I could survive morally within the context of the highly charged relationship of counselor and counselee without this daily communion with God.

Now a spin-off from this is the sense that if I trust in Jesus as my righteousness and wholeness (trust, notice—that's what faith is) then I will be daily renouncing my own righteousness, having a healthy awareness of my limitations. Boldness in God, yes, but distrust in myself. So it seems to me that a man who is righteous by faith paradoxically receives regular convictions of his need for repentance. I think I had been repenting less and less, and an insidious human-centeredness was taking over.

**Spangler:** *What do you think of the advisability of someone freed from homosexuality counseling a practicing homosexual who wants help? Isn't this placing the counselor on rather shaky ground and exposing him to serious temptations? I remember I discussed this with you some years ago. How do you feel about it now?*

**Cook:** Many years ago I was helped immensely by Ellen White's *The Ministry of Healing*, especially the chapter "Working for the Intemperate," which considers the issue of helping the alcoholic. I apply its principles to homosexuality. One of our church leaders showed me this chapter, and I have to admit it sounded incredibly progressive coming from a Christian leader whom I had always conceived of as conservative and sometimes a bit stuffy.

Notice these sentences: "All who give evidence of true conversion should be encouraged to work for others. . . . Whatever may have been their besetting sins, however low they may have fallen, when in contrition they come to Christ, He receives them. . . . If they desire to labor in uplifting others from the pit of destruction from which they themselves were rescued, give them opportunity. Bring them into association with experienced Christians, that they may gain spiritual strength" (p. 178).

**Spangler:** *That term "experienced Christians" is your key, isn't it?*

**Cook:** Absolutely. That is the key of accountability and that is the key I did not turn fully. I was accountable monthly on many vital matters concerning ministry, but not on the intimate level of sexual sobriety or purity. Here is another statement from the same chapter: "When light flashes into the soul, some who appear to be most fully given over to sin will become successful workers for just such sinners as they themselves were. . . . They see where their own weakness lies, they realize the depravity of their nature. They know the strength of sin, the power of evil habit. They realize their inability to overcome without the help of Christ, and their constant cry is, 'I cast my helpless soul on Thee'" (p. 179).

I know of no great church movement that started from the hierarchy. Something happened to men and women at the grass roots level and they immedi-

ately went to their own kind to proclaim the good news. Beggars sharing bread with beggars.

**Spangler:** *You have referred to accountability several times now. How does it work? How can fellow Christians be helpful?*

**Cook:** You know, when you are struggling with a sin, you tend not to tell anyone for two reasons: fear of rejection, and a much more subtle fear of being challenged to renounce your sin. That is what I mean when I say nondisclosure is a function of addiction. I feared to disclose to my board for these two reasons. This was a betrayal of their trust. It put them all in a very embarrassing position.

As a board we were very responsible with finances and goals, et cetera. But since we as a church are not as open on more intimate matters, we had no model to go by. As a board, we could have set up a system by which they could ask me about my sexual temptations, and I should have given them the freedom to ask me about these things, say on a monthly basis. I also would have needed the assurance that if I did reveal a problem, I would not have been immediately clobbered and thrown out.

A proper plan would have recognized the potential for a sexual fall, duly guarded against it, and provided a means for dealing with a fall, so that the news of it would not have been such a shock and treated as if it invalidated the whole ministry.

Can't you see how this would help pastors too? A pastor needs a small group of mature people with whom he can be fully vulnerable if he is having a grave struggle. And how this group would act upon a pastor's particular revelation would have to be decided beforehand. A leader needs pastoring perhaps more than, or at least as much as, the sheep. It is a lonely and difficult position. To whom can a pastor turn in total confidence if he is facing a personal problem?

**Spangler:** *What accountability do you have in your life now, Colin?*

**Cook:** I have a counselor, of course. Ed is a Christian clinical psychologist who has worked with me on and off since 1974. I am also accountable to and meet monthly with three elders in my local church, and I report regularly to a group of sponsors who are supporting me finan-

cially while I am on a two-year writing project. And I am accountable to a local support group. I have also developed a supervision arrangement with a local Christian psychiatrist for the small amount of counseling I have resumed after a six-month break. To put it another way, I have entered more fully into the local society that I know has legitimate expectations of me. And I am most accountable to my wife. It was deeply significant to me that when I told her of my struggles, she responded that she was not so much hurt by what I had revealed as by the fact that I had not told her before. It made her feel that she had not known me after all.

**Spangler:** *As you know, some in the gay community are using your failure as evidence to support the idea that homosexual change is futile and therefore homosexual lifestyles are perfectly all right as long as they are responsible and committed relationships.*

**Cook:** Yes, I am afraid so. And I shall probably have to live with that in one way or another for the rest of my life. But I have been given the grace of God to confront my shadow, to face the dark side of myself. And I can live with it and move on. Those who want to will use my experience to justify their own decision to remain homosexual. My experience will be one more reason for them to hang onto the hormonal view that prevents them from ever conceiving that there can be growth (in spite of failures) and "becoming" in the process of finding freedom from homosexuality and developing heterosexual identity. But others who embrace the message of the image of God in Creation and redemption will see in my experience the challenge to free themselves in Christ and to grow in spite of their failures. I live under an irrefragable conviction, based in Scripture, that God takes not only failed men, but also their failures and records them as a means of demonstrating His grace. Like King David I have sinned. But if he could write a song about the glory of God's forgiveness and renewal, then so can I. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

**Spangler:** *Some would say you took advantage of grace, Colin.*

**Cook:** And they would be right. Sin always takes advantage of God's love and

kindness. I deceived myself into acting as if freedom from slavery to sin could be known without slavery to Jesus. I am humbling myself before Him so as not to take advantage again.

So often, committed gays get angry and depressed because they see no way back into the church of God. But the way back is through repentance. They do have an alternative. They are not stuck. If committed gays would acknowledge that the homosexual lifestyle is a sin to be renounced and turned from no matter how deeply they may desire it, I believe that many in the church of God would help bring them back and work for their healing. And there would be a highly significant work for them to do.

But there is no use calling for repentance until you have helped the gay man to see the nature of his delusional thinking. This thinking is distorted and cultic. It is this, in the main, that gives homosexuality such power. When you get deceived into thinking that homosexuality is neither brokenness nor sin nor temptation, then talk about repentance from it sounds like gobbledygook.

Let me say at this point, I do not fault the committed gays for revealing my moral and ethical sins to the church.

**Spangler:** *But that bothers me. There seemed to be a lack of following the counsel Jesus gave in Matthew 18.*

**Cook:** Yes, I agree. That was a serious misjudgment. But still they had a right to be angry and indignant, and there is no way I can fault them on that. I believe they have done me and the rest of the ministry of recovery a service by calling me to account. But it was wrong of them to couch the issue in the broader terms of homosexual orientation. They said, in effect, that since neither I nor any of my counselees had changed orientation, that orientation change is impossible. They simply ignored the growth, the "becoming," that had taken place in me and others.

You are either gay or you are straight, they say. And that is it. You can grow in gayness or grow in straightness, but you can't switch from one to the other. From that viewpoint, if you yield to temptation homosexually while seeking to live heterosexually, you are finished. Your fall confirms what you always were and always will be. This is part of the delusional thinking that leads gays to remain gay. They lock themselves into a mind-

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## The church can no more dismiss the issue of homosexual recovery because of one man's failure than it can close all the church doors.

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set that predefines and circumscribes all future growth. I am convinced that only Christian realities can break this delusion.

**Spangler:** *Do you feel that continuing growth allows at times for blight on the growing cornstalk?*

**Cook:** If that were not true in this fallen world, we would give up eating corn. I learn, by a growing faith, to identify myself in the wholeness of Christ my righteousness, learning to walk forward step by step in a heterosexual lifestyle toward men and women. As God reveals it and enables me, I learn, step by step, to shed the homosexual mind-set and behavior. All the time I must see Jesus as my completeness. In some of my propensities and delusions I still feel homosexual. But as I day by day commit myself to the truth about who I am in the Man Jesus, and the responsibility that is involved in loving with purity and obedience, I respond heterosexually in my marriage and toward other people.

**Spangler:** *Isn't that principle applicable to all life's situations?*

**Cook:** Yes. As Luther put it, "At one and the same time a sinner and a saint."

**Spangler:** *You do believe, though, don't you, Colin, that some homosexuals, perhaps many, will never have a desire for the opposite sex? What can the gospel offer them?*

**Cook:** It may surprise many people to know that change of orientation was

never a major issue at Quest, but rather a releasing from life dominance. It was the pro-gays who introduced the controversy of orientation change. This fact was often misunderstood because of the human tendency to constantly subjectivize the gospel, shifting confidence from Christ to conversion.

I believe that love and forgiveness from God abound for people struggling with homosexuality. By virtue of what He has done for them in Christ, He does not charge their sinful natures against them. As He calls a person into fellowship with Him, He also calls him into obedience, which involves a renunciation of homosexual behavior. As the new life proceeds, there is a gradual recovery from the delusions and emotional deficits that made the homosexual urge so intense. In time the recovered person may find that he wishes to date the opposite sex and marry. As he walks by faith, he will *live* above any residual homosexual pulls. Most likely they will not go away totally, but they will not need to dominate or become a determining factor when the mind develops purity of spirit.

Many will find that they have little desire to develop intimate opposite sex relationships. But they can learn to find freedom from the addictive power of sex, that bondage to lust, that 20th-century absurdity of feeling that they will die without a weekly orgasm. Then they will not find the desire for sex life-dominating, and the call to healthy close friendships in celibacy will seem truly possible and fulfilling.

God loves and saves people in exactly the same way whether they have a homosexual or heterosexual drive. There is no difference before Him.

**Spangler:** *What you have just stated is applicable to the thousands of Christians who are singles and who, by God's grace, are living celibate lives. In our interview six years ago, you stressed justification. Are you now bringing in a greater balance between justification and sanctification?*

**Cook:** I never felt comfortable with a justification-sanctification balancing act. It treats relationships with God like a mathematical formulation and sounds more like the abstractions of Melancthon than anything Paul or Luther said. To me, justification is the massive, passionate, prodigal love in which God renders judgment in our behalf, scooping us

up into His kingdom while at the same time overthrowing the powers of evil that resist us. All this is done in Christ on our behalf—there is no human performance in it. Then Christ releases His Spirit into us to enable us to believe it, cling to Him, and receive all that has happened.

So it is not fifty percent justification and fifty percent sanctification. It is one hundred percent the justifying God from whom sanctification flows as we learn to cling constantly to Him, without whom there is no beauty of holy love within us. I think if you read that September 1981 interview again, you would hear me expressing a healthy view of the holy life. That, after all, is what walking out of homosexuality is—an expression of holiness. But I became ungrateful for grace. I neglected to grow. And so I am now looking at where in the sanctified life I failed to take hold of the full benefits of God's mighty justifying act in Jesus.

But, you know, Bob, there is something important to notice about that interview. I was not willing to state then that I still fell into homosexual sin from time to time. I was, of course, trying to make clear that I was accounting myself heterosexual *in Christ* and that the faith response to this was breaking the addictive force of the homosexual urges. I made it clear that I still experienced temptation from time to time, and I wanted it to be clear that I had rejected the ontological perfectionism that had short-circuited so much growth. But still I stopped short of saying that I occasionally fell. Why? I have examined this often. For one thing, my fear led me into the dishonesty of nondisclosure. I have dealt with that side of myself. Let me address another point.

I think I genuinely wondered whether my church could ever accept a Christian in the process of struggling to overcome homosexuality. We love the victory stories. And I had had a sufficiently massive deliverance that I could, without dishonesty, tell a victory story. But what about the "becoming" part of my life? I have never felt comfortable in my church with that. We expect a person to repent of his sins and leave them all outside the church when he is baptized. And ideally, so he should. But he will bring into the church all the emotional baggage and deficits that stimulated his sins in the first place and that may stir up those sins again until he matures. I frankly ask my brothers and sisters in the faith, Where

in the structure of church community do we show the willingness and format to allow that growth? Does a Christian struggling with homosexuality and desiring to grow to freedom in Christ have a place? We can deal with sinners outside the church. We can deal with "saints" inside it. But—and I regret that it has taken me so long to acknowledge this myself—when will we have the courage to acknowledge that we are all "becoming" and get specific enough about ourselves so that we can help one another?

**Spangler:** *Do you still believe recovery can take place?*

**Cook:** I have no doubt about it. When you are in the addictive stage of homosexuality, it seems utterly impossible to contemplate never having a homosexual experience again. It is like saying goodbye to a vital part of yourself or giving up your pressure valves. But freedom from addiction leaves you without panic, and when the addiction is gone you begin to live life to its fullest at last.

I have been totally free from my addiction for about eight months, and I feel alive. It is still a day by day thing. I have to receive spiritual resources from God. And there is a constant dismantling of my false attitude toward life and a renunciation of false solutions. But I would never look back. Every struggle has been worth it. No pain, no gain.

**Spangler:** *And what are your future plans?*

**Cook:** You know, it is as clear as day to me that this trial was permitted by God. None could have lifted a little finger without His express permission. Some had very legitimate complaints; their intentions were sound. And some "intended to harm . . . , but God intended it for good" (Gen. 50:20, NIV). I believe God said, I love you, Colin, but I am grieved by what you have done, and I am about to discipline you and get this sin fully out of your life so that you may bless and not harm.

The church can no more dismiss the issue of homosexual recovery because of one man's failure than it can close all the church doors and say, "Sorry, chaps, about this Man Jesus. We made a mistake." To speak of the healing of homosexuality is to speak of the healing of mankind. The vital issues are the same.

Maybe some would like to forget this



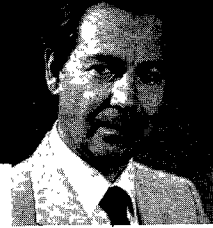
business. The Quest crisis separated the statesmen from the politicians. One, when the going got rough, was heard to say, "We should never have been in this work in the first place." Others, full of noble grace, have mourned and wept and carried my sin and humiliation with them. They intend to rebuild.

The future? I see a thousand Christian psychiatrists, psychologists, and ministers, all professionals, who will gather together in an association of ministries and therapies; an association that will meet annually for training and planning; an association whose professional members will do research on people in recovery and write papers for journals of influence; an association committed to the truths that Quest has espoused, whose members will offer their various counseling therapies in service to the Homosexuals Anonymous Fellowship that is already in place.

This isn't a time to be timid. Shame-faced, humbled, yes, but courageous in faith. People need to know that we are not a committee of reactionary charlatans sitting here calling for a return to the Dark Ages. We need professionals who will throw off the demoralized state of many of the healing professions, professions that have succumbed to the pale voice of naturalism. We need committed professionals who will challenge their colleagues with a vision of the capacities of the human spirit when it has been renewed and incorporated into Jesus, the one true Man, God Himself, who alone can make us truly human.

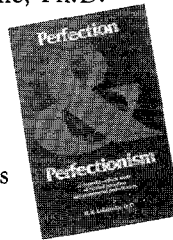
I see a glow upon the mountains. We must arise and shine, for our light has come. The glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Gross darkness covers men and women in homosexuality and the gay community, but the Lord shall arise upon them, and His glory will be seen upon them. He is about to bind up the broken-hearted and proclaim liberty to the captives. I see Him giving beauty to homosexual men and women in place of the ashes of their lusts. I see Him giving them joy for the mourning of their unmet love. Many who have labored all their lives in the Lord's vineyard are not going to like seeing these broken ones receiving the same privileges as they have, but they must hear the call of repentance just as homosexuals must. And on that day there will be glorious celebration in heaven, and everybody will be wearing garments of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness. ■

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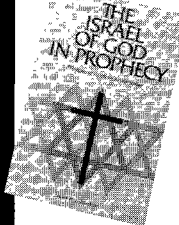
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# Search for success

Eric Doran

**T**he word *success* is almost as elusive in today's society as the word *love*, carrying with it a host of meanings. To the businessman it suggests wealth, property, and position; making the largest sale, getting the highest raise, or becoming corporation vice president. And the rest of society generally measures success by similar criteria—external marks of status and prestige.

But in the realm of the ministry, such definitions are inadequate and distorting. For the pastor, success cannot be measured by quantitative standards.

But this is how success is sometimes judged in the ministry. I made the mistake once of asking a fellow clergyman how large his church was. The strained explanation that followed taught me that for many pastors this can be an awkward question. Some judge success by the size of their congregation. The larger the church, the more successful one is.

To others, holding a position at denominational headquarters is the determiner of success. This is called "upward mobility." The premise underlying this definition is that the successful pastor always keeps moving "upward": from a small church to increasingly larger churches and ultimately to an office position in the denomination. And if we don't follow that track, then we have failed—and the midlife crisis strikes.

What if the larger churches are always given to other people? What if we never get those office positions? Have we really failed? Are we then second-rate minis-

ters? I am convinced that the answer is no. Quantitative measures almost never tell the complete story. Success for the minister must be measured by a different standard. And that standard, I believe, is determined by God's will.

I wonder how many of us will spend a good portion of our lives being unhappy and disappointed in our humble congregation, feeling that we have been unfairly passed by, only to discover some day that we are exactly where God wants us to be. In human terms, success means pastoring the larger church. But in God's eyes, success is being where He wants us to be. Which really matters? In the face of eternity I am sure it is clear that only one counts. Only one seal of approval matters—and that is God's seal. God ultimately determines success or failure for each of us.

In my opinion, the story of John the Baptist speaks more clearly to man's proud heart than any other story. If we were to judge by worldly standards, he had it all—and lost it. He had come out of the wilderness as an unknown. But his preaching was dynamic, and he moved people's hearts as no one had done in centuries. He baptized many and even had a following of disciples who called him their teacher. Thousands flocked to hear him or even just to get a look at him. And we will never know just how far John's popularity might have carried him if circumstances hadn't changed.

But something happened. Another man came on the scene. He too was a dynamic preacher. And the crowds who a little while before were pressing around John were now traveling in the opposite direction to hear this Jesus of Nazareth.

John's disciples had a hard time swallowing what appeared to them a humiliating failure. And they complained, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him" (John 3:26, NKJV).

John's simple response powerfully presents the lesson of humility. He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (verse 30). It was this attitude of humility that would bring him to a dungeon in Herod's hall and eventually to death. In the eyes of the world he was a failure. But in the eyes of God he was a success because he fulfilled his mission and then stepped out of the limelight when it was his turn to do so.

This is what made him a great man. His success wasn't determined by the thousands who followed him or by his dynamic preaching but by his willingness to let God direct his life, even into paths he himself wouldn't have chosen. And in order to find success in the eyes of God (where it counts most), we also must be willing to let God direct our lives—even if that means no glory and prestige, or perhaps even downward, rather than upward, mobility.

Not many of us will get to pastor the large prestigious churches or hold important denominational positions. But when we share the grief of a family who has lost a child to death or help heal a wounded marriage, who is to say that we have not succeeded in the finest and truest sense of the word?

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**By human standards,  
most of us will be less  
than successful.**

*Eric Doran pastors in Courtland, New York.*

# Listening is more than hearing

Garth D. Thompson

**Are you a listener or just a hearer? How can you develop the skill of evangelistic listening?**



Garth D. Thompson is professor of pastoral care at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

**T**here is need of shepherds who, under the direction of the Chief Shepherd, will seek for the lost and straying. This means the bearing of physical discomfort and the sacrifice of ease. It means a tender solicitude for the erring, a divine compassion and forbearance. It means an ear that can listen with sympathy to heartbreaking recitals of wrong, of degradation, of despair and misery."<sup>1</sup>

This description of evangelism captivates my imagination. Is there a more moving representation of evangelism than "seeking the lost"? We are privileged to join the Lord in His mission "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

To most Seventh-day Adventist ministers "evangelism," or "seeking the lost," implies three things: drawing attention by advertising, proclaiming the gospel, and calling for decisions. We might not think of "an ear that can listen" as a primary tool of evangelism.

Is an ear that can listen different from ears in general? Is there a difference between a listening ear and a hearing ear? While there may not be a wide difference in definition, I have chosen to differentiate between the two for the purposes of this article. The following examples illustrate the contrasts between the two:

**A Hearing Ear:** A young man approaches his pastor and says, "Pastor, I have been wondering about this passage of Scripture. Some people think it means one thing, some another. What do you think?" The hearing-eared pastor recognizes the question as an invitation to en-

ter into discussion, to inform, to give the official church position, etc. "Well, John," the pastor says, "it means . . ." While the pastor's ear hears the question about Scripture and doctrinal position, it hears nothing about John's personal self.

**A Listening Ear:** If the same young man approaches a listening-eared pastor with the same question, the pastor will listen to what he was disclosing about his internal experience, and may respond: "John, it sounds as if you are troubled about what this passage is saying to you."

Simply listening thus to another may afford him an experience that is not only rare but highly enabling. We have noted that Ellen White proposes it to be a central and essential redemptive activity of shepherds who, under the direction of the Chief Shepherd, are seeking the lost and straying.

## Active listening

Research has verified the beneficial effects of listening and has helped to define the type of listening that is most therapeutic. *Active listening* is a primary element of any truly therapeutic intervention.<sup>2</sup> In fact, one entire school of psychotherapy is based on the proposition that when listening is clearly conveyed, attentive, genuinely empathic, and respectful, it is the one intervention that is not merely necessary but entirely sufficient for fostering positive change and growth.<sup>3</sup>

While others may not accord to listening the same all-sufficiency, they do hold it to be necessary to all other therapeutic activities. "After all, whatever we do in therapy is accomplished by means of communication. That is what we do with

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## From childhood on, most of us have experienced questions as veiled accusations.

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clients. Communication is simply listening to and sending information, listening and responding.”<sup>4</sup>

But much of what passes for listening is not active. It is really little more than involuntary hearing. Active listening has the following characteristics:

1. It is *intentional*. In active listening a listener intentionally seeks to experience as accurately and as fully as possible all that another is communicating.

2. It is *focused*. While a person may talk about many things and people, an active listener focuses on what that person may be disclosing or reporting about his inner self. Whatever persons, events, or situations an individual may be speaking about, an active listener focuses on what it all reflects of that individual's internal experience, what it *means* to him—to his life situation, his attitude, his emotions, and his behavior.

3. It is *interpretive*. An active listener attempts to recognize the meaning of a speaker's thinking, feelings, and attitudes about his subject. A listener directs his interpreting to nonverbal as well as verbal output, with the recognition that all interpretation, especially of the nonverbal, must be held as strictly tentative. No amount of skill or insight should lead one to presume to certainty of interpretation!

4. It is *conveyed*. Unless a listener conveys the fact that he is listening, his listening will be of limited value. The primary vehicle for conveying that you are actively listening is to report the product of the listening by making regular perception checks of what you have heard.

### How to listen actively

Three considerations may serve to clarify active listening further: people-listening versus topic-listening, dialogue versus monologue, and reporting versus questioning.

When a woman is talking about her marriage, we may direct our attention to what she seems to be saying about it: it is terrible, her husband is impossible, etc. When we thus direct our attention to her apparent subject, we are topic-listening.

If, on the other hand, we direct our attention to what she is indicating about her *self*—about her own frame of mind or emotional state—in her talk about the marriage, then we are people-listening. Thus, for instance, a boarding school student complaining about cafeteria food may really be indicating that he is homesick or discouraged, or that he has just received a Dear John letter—though ostensibly the topic is the cafeteria! A people-listener would be sensitive to what the student was saying about his *self*, while a topic-listener would get caught up in a consideration of the quality of cafeteria food.

The people-listener would convey his attempt at listening by responding: “Wow! It sounds like you are mighty homesick!” The topic listener, on the other hand, might respond: “What's so bad about the food? I enjoyed my dinner in the cafeteria last week.” Such a response would put the student on the defensive and leave him feeling misunderstood and distanced from his hearer.

Close, analytical, even critical listening to topic content is not to be put down. It is essential to living. But it is listening to understand the *person* that best qualifies as active. For the truly listening ear it is not so important to understand that which is upsetting to another as to understand his experience of being upset—how it feels, what it means to his functioning.

Paul Tournier suggests that for most people, interactions with others are seldom much more than “dialogues of the deaf.”<sup>5</sup> That is to say that while there may be a form of dialogue, for the most part we don't really tune in to what others are saying. This makes it difficult for the one who is supposed to be the listener to offer much “witness” to the speaker. And talking to someone who is merely “hearing” and not “listening” creates problems for the speaker as well. In fact, it intensifies the isolation and alienation that are among the major factors that keep people from fully functioning personhood.

Dialogue at its best connotes two or more people interacting on a common level, each listening intently to and try-

ing to understand the other, and responding to what he has heard. Neither presumes to instruct the other nor assumes a level of superiority. (This may be difficult for the pastor who has grown accustomed to being placed on a pedestal!)

Dialogue implies a person interacting with a person, responding to self-disclosure rather than to topical content. Thus, the moment a “helpee” is allowed to talk in the third person about someone “out there”—spouse, son, employer—dialogue tends to be diminished. The helper needs to retain intentional focus on the person of the helpee even as he seeks to help her focus on *his own* disclosure of self. (“Ruth, you said your mother is impossible. It sounds to me as though you feel like giving up.”) True dialogue must be kept in the you-I mode, rather than in the you-he (she, they) mode.

Another caution: as soon as one party to attempted dialogue presumes to assume the role of informer, instructor, adviser, admonisher, exhorter—intellectualizing about topical content—true dialogue tends to cease.

### Questioning and reporting

Asking questions is commonly seen as a helpful tool for conveying attention and interest, as well as a necessary means for prompting additional information from another. Questions like “How long have you felt this way?” “How do you feel about her?” “What did he really want you to do?” seem—and often may be—indispensable. As a vehicle for manifesting a listening ear, however, they have serious limitations.

Jacques Lalanne states pointedly that “questions have their place. Anyone who has seen a skillful lawyer break down a carefully constructed lie knows the value of effective questions, or cross-questions as *weapons*.”<sup>6</sup> The trouble is that that is precisely the way questions are commonly experienced—as weapons of attack!

From childhood on, most of us have experienced questions as veiled accusations. A cartoon I once saw shows a mother calling down the hall, “Whose filthy, wet, snowy boots were left on the hall floor?” From another room Johnny calls back, “Those are my boots!” Whereupon Mother retorts, “I know those are *your* boots!” Poking his head around the corner, Johnny asks plaintively, “Then how come you had to ask

whose boots they were?" Most of our childhood memories related to questions connect them to interrogations or accusations.

Thus, questions can leave the one being questioned feeling cornered, whether or not the questioner intended it that way. Because we have experienced questions as veiled accusations, most of us have learned to be wary of them and to respond to them with as little information as possible. With that there comes the sense of needing to be distanced from the questioner. That is a long way from describing the relationship a redemptive undershepherd needs to foster!

A much more effective vehicle for fostering a redemptive relationship is what we may refer to as reporting. When empathic listening has prompted within the listener an awareness of the experience of another; when he is so involved that he is actually aware of what is happening inside himself with regard to the other's situation and feelings; when he then reports his perceptions in the tentative form of perception check, then he is affording the other the luxury of feeling understood, even though his perception

may not be completely accurate. If, rather than hiding behind questions, he will identify what it is that he has perceived, a much more vital relationship can occur than could possibly occur otherwise.

Thus, as a shepherd "seeking for the lost and straying" hears words about a hope that has failed to materialize; as he observes hunched shoulders and softer than usual voice; as he tunes in to his own sympathetic awareness, he may report the result of his people-listening: "I sense that you are feeling terribly disappointed." This report affords the counselee the feeling that his listener has really been trying to be with him. Then, rather than restricting his communication to the least possible, he warms to disclosing yet more that may similarly be listened to and understood.

Reporting and questioning may seem similar on the surface, but there is one key difference: reporting includes a description of the reporter's feelings rather than just a question about the other's feelings. Reporting would rephrase the question "What are you feeling right now?" to "I am wondering [reports what

is happening inside me right now] what is going on in your mind right now." The latter is an affirmation, a statement, a disclosing of myself. The former offers none of myself. "What did you mean by that?" can become "I wish you would explain what you meant just then." The latter tends to defuse any sense of attack that might be perceived in a question.

The psalmist testifies to the redemptive experience that really being listened to can afford. "I love the Lord," he said, "because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live" (Ps. 116:1, 2). Our ministry is at its best when it too is "the ministry of the inclined ear." ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1915), p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Janet Moursund, *The Process of Counseling and Therapy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Rogers, *Client-centered Therapy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1951).

<sup>4</sup> Moursund, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957).

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Lalanne, "Attack by Question," *Psychology Today*, November 1975, p. 134.



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# When tragedy strikes the pastor

Robert L. Veninga

**Is it possible to turn a loss into a positive experience? What symptoms can you expect to experience after loss, and how can you come through it with renewed hope?**



Robert L. Veninga, Ph.D., is a professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of three books including *A Gift of Hope: How We Survive Our Tragedies*.

**A**s a pastor, you spend a great share of your time comforting the ill and the broken-hearted. But what happens when a tragic event touches your life? To whom do you go for comfort? And to whom do you confide your fears as well as your hopes?

The purpose of this article is to examine recent research on human suffering. We will explore the stages of recovery and the important role that faith has in the healing process. But we will also suggest practical strategies that can help diminish the pain and assist us in moving into a new era.

## The anatomy of a crisis

Crises tend to blindside us at the most unexpected moments. A drunk driver hits the rear of the car, and instantly life is dramatically altered. A physician gives us a bleak diagnosis. A spouse dies, leaving a deep sense of aloneness and discouragement.

How does one recover from such events? Most people recover gradually, in stages. And while each individual's experience is different, certain attitudes, emotions, and hopes are typical among those who have survived a difficult loss.

Stage one is characterized by *shock and disbelief*. After receiving negative news, there is a paralyzing numbness. Said one individual: "I couldn't believe the diagnosis. I left the office saying, 'This is a nightmare. This can't be happening to me.'" Another person commented: "I don't remember anything after being informed about my wife's death. I can't

even recall who came to see me."

In this first stage we do not want advice. Nor do we want false assurances. What we do want is someone who will listen, identify with our loss, and quietly reassure and comfort us.

In stage two, *deliberate activity*, we struggle to get life back to normal. It is not uncommon for people to return to work within a few days after a tragedy. I have known ministers who lost a family member, yet preached the next weekend and continued to meet their church responsibilities. And I have known professors who insisted on not missing any classes even though they were dealing with some of life's most difficult problems.

Returning to work can be a positive coping mechanism, for in work we find meaning. And it is there that we often have some of our closest relationships.

Nevertheless, the desire to get back to work can be a way of escaping—a way of not having to think about what has happened. If we escape in this or any other way, the "grief work," as Freud referred to it, will only be delayed.

Another problem with returning to a vigorous routine too soon is that family members may misread what is happening. They may conclude that we are coping well and do not need support.

Likewise congregations may misread what is happening to their pastor. If their pastor is giving stirring sermons and leading the congregation in a competent manner, they may conclude that expressions of concern are no longer warranted.

Yet nothing may be further from the truth. For even when we appear strong,

we may be weak. And even when we are surrounded by people, we may feel lonely.

In stage three, *hitting rock bottom*, two emotions come to the surface. The first is anger; the second is loneliness. Listen to a 33-year-old man describe his experience:

"Three weeks after our daughter Jenny had died, I awoke from a fairly good sleep. I began the day in the usual way. I had breakfast, read the sports page, and went over my calendar for the day.

"I got into my car and started to back out of the garage. Then I happened to see a fishing pole that my father had sent in anticipation of the birth of his grandchild.

"Seeing that fishing pole really unbuttoned me. I slowly drove out of the driveway. But I stopped the car when I noticed a group of healthy, happy kids waiting for the school bus. Then I saw a neighbor working in her garden. Another neighbor was just finishing his job.

"Everything seemed so normal. That's what I couldn't get over. It was like everybody was happy and enjoying life. I felt like shouting: 'Don't you realize that life just can't go on as if everything is OK?' I just wanted to explode."

Anger seems to hit us at the most unexpected moments. As Virginia Woolf noted poignantly in *Jacob's Room*, we experience the death of someone we love not at the funeral but when we come suddenly upon an old pair of shoes. And coming unexpectedly upon that fishing pole or that old pair of shoes brings a stabbing pain that reminds us we have lost something precious.

After anger is loneliness. The paradox is that you might not be alone. You might be surrounded by a loving family, good friends, and a supportive congregation. But if you are going through a tragic life event, it is not uncommon to feel that no one really understands your pain and sorrow.

### Rediscovering hope

In stage four, *the awakening*, hope begins to stir. It is often a hope rooted in faith—a faith that suggests that no matter how difficult the experience, you are not traveling down the bitter road by yourself.

I have frequently asked victims of a tragedy whether there was any particular event that gave them hope. It was amazing to see their reactions. Those in stage three would get a quizzical look and in

effect say, "Of course not! Nothing could make me feel better."

But those who had rediscovered a meaning within their lives would smile. And then they would share an event that had kindled a sense of anticipation and even hope.

With a twinkle in his eye, a 66-year-old widower recalled how he had met a friend at church: "She smiled at me from across the aisle. It sure surprised me. She looked friendly and I reckoned that she was about my age. I knew then that God had not forgotten me."

Or I think of a 33-year-old woman who was not able to bear children. One day she received a telephone call from an adoption agency informing her that she was about to be a mother to a 3-year-old Asian-American. "I was so excited that I couldn't remember my husband's telephone number at work. But I got ahold of him and told him that he was a father. He was so choked up that he couldn't talk."

Such incidents have a way of dramatically altering our perception of ourselves and our heartbreak. Sometimes it takes a mind-blowing event to convince us that we can in fact pick up the pieces of our lives and move into the future.

But most of the time our lives are refocused by small events—a call from a friend, a trip that awakens our sense of gratitude, a new focus on our ministry. One father who had lost his child told me that the turning point for him was in acknowledging his blessings:

"One day I thought about all the things I had going for me. I could see Julie reading in the den, and I thought about how much I loved her, even if I hadn't shown it much lately. And I looked at our living room and thought about how much I enjoy our house. I got up and looked at our backyard and got a good feeling as I saw the firewood stacked neatly by the fence. And I said to myself, 'With God's help I'm going to make it. I don't know how, but I am going to make it.'"

The final stage of healing is *acceptance*. But one must be clear as to what acceptance means. Acceptance does not mean forgetting—as if to deny the significance of the heartbreak. Acceptance does not imply glossing over the hurt. Nor is acceptance shrugging one's shoulders and saying "What else can I do but accept the situation?"

Acceptance is predicated upon forgiving both the injustice and any person who may have caused the pain. It means

remembering all of the joys of one's past life. It implies an affirmation that one's work on this earth is not completed. And it implies an affirmation of the future—a future that will have new joys, new commitments, and new purposes.

How does one know when one has reached the fifth and final stage of healing? There seems to be one characteristic of all survivors of a heartbreak: they can look toward the future with optimism, knowing that while the pain of their tragedy will be with them for years, it is still possible to find new mountains to climb, new books to read, and new missions to fulfill.

### Survival strategies

If you have recently experienced a major loss, you may find the following suggestions helpful. Most of them are probably not new to you. In fact, the advice might be similar to that which you give to members of your congregation who are hurting. But each suggestion is important in its own right. And if you practice all four of these suggestions, you will be able to find new hope and joy.

#### 1. Be gentle with yourself.

Remember that it takes time to recover from a major loss. How long? One survey found that it took most people approximately two years to regain their hope and to find a renewed spirit of optimism and direction in their lives.

Pastors tend to rush their grieving process. Part of this is because of the pressure of needing to help others. But part of it stems from a belief that if they had enough faith they would be able to put the tragedy behind them quickly.

It is important to remember that human pain does not loosen its grip at one point in time. Rather, it works its way out of our consciousness over time. There is a season of sadness. A season of anger. A season of tranquility. A season of hope.

But these seasons do not follow one another in lockstep manner. The winters and springs of one's life can be all jumbled together in a puzzling array. One day you feel as though the dark clouds have lifted, but the next day they have returned. One moment you can smile and encourage others, but when alone the tears emerge.

If you are recovering from a loss, be gentle with yourself. You may find yourself taking two steps forward in your journey, only to take one or more steps backward. But such is the nature of healing.

2. *Confide your hopes and fears to a friend.*

If you want to survive a tragedy, you need a friend. At least that is the experience of individuals who have withstood some of the stiffest challenges that life can bring.

Michelle King is a 16-year-old Michigan girl who survived months of punishing chemotherapy. Each time she received an injection, her best friend would be with her. "I would lie on my back after those treatments, emotionally and physically exhausted. But my friend would hold my hand and softly repeat, 'You're going to make it. I know you're going to make it.'"

Kahlil Gibran remarked that we can forget those with whom we have laughed, but we can never forget those with whom we have cried. Most friendships worth their salt are nourished in human struggle. When you have suffered together, you have established a bond that the passage of time does not sever.

Who can serve as a sympathetic friend? A spouse can lend an understanding ear. And there are special people in every congregation who would willingly give their pastor support.

But spouses tend to be caught up in their own struggles, and church members often have difficulty accepting the humanness of their pastor. For these and other reasons it is often best to turn to another member of the clergy for support.

What are the characteristics of true friends? First, they are reluctant to give you a lot of advice. And when they do give you advice, it is given as Samuel Taylor Coleridge once observed, as snow. "The softer it falls the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind."

The second characteristic of good friends is that they are optimistic. A good friend is one who can enter into our misfortune and understand its complexity. But a good friend will also affirm that life has not ended and that the future can once again be bright. As Dr. Elton May said: "One friend, one person who is truly understanding, who takes the trouble to listen to us as we consider our problem, can change our whole outlook on the world."

3. *Don't go to bed at night without having a plan for the coming day.*

What should be in that plan? You should write out your objectives for the

following day in three areas: work, family, and recreation.

Why is it so important to write out your objectives? It is not uncommon for individuals to slip into depression in the months following a major loss. It might not be severe enough to necessitate professional counseling, but it may hinder your effectiveness as a pastor. One of the best ways to handle depression is to plan your next day in a way that maintains a healthy balance in the vital components of life.

Play is important. You need to keep up with avocations and hobbies. And it is particularly important to exercise. In fact, research on exercise has now documented its power in breaking gloom. In one study, completed at the University of Wisconsin, researchers compared the benefits of running and long-term psychotherapy. Individuals who were depressed were placed in one of two groups. Some were assigned to 10 weeks of running therapy and 10 weeks of psychotherapy. This group met with their therapist and exercised three times a week. The other group had only psychotherapy.

When the experiment was concluded, the patients who ran showed the most improvement. More important, a year later most of the joggers were still running and were free of depression.

If you feel discouraged, take out a piece of paper. Divide the page in three columns. On the left-hand side, write out your work priorities for the following day, making certain to include ample time for meditation. In the middle of the page, write out what you would like to do with your family and/or friends. And then on the right-hand side, write out a few things to do that will bring a smile to your face. Before you go to bed, read over the list. Do so again in the morning. In so doing, you are giving life direction. And in all likelihood the depression will begin to lift.

4. *Let your disappointments become a foundation for a deeper faith.*

Those who have survived heartbreak have engaged in what Dag Hammarskjöld once referred to as "the longest journey, the journey inward." The journey inward is difficult, for it may call into question the very foundations of our faith. Questions about the goodness of life and the meaning of faith, which were perhaps last explored in a seminary classroom, now have a new urgency.

Cherish the questions. Verbalize the

questions. In fact, become a friend to the questions. As Rainer Maria Rilke said: "I want to beg you as much as I can . . . to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves."

What happens when we love the questions—those searing inquiries about the meaning of life and the meaning of faith?

On the one hand, we become more sensitive to individuals who struggle with the meaning of faith in their own lives. But equally important, we enrich our own faith.

Individuals often comment that one of the positive outcomes of their grief experience was that they were forced to come to terms with difficult questions that they previously had either avoided asking or never taken the time to answer. One minister told me: "My wife's death forced me to slow down. It forced me to meditate. It forced me to look to God in new ways. And although I wouldn't ever want to go through this experience again, I know that I am now a more compassionate pastor and perhaps a better expositor of God's truth."

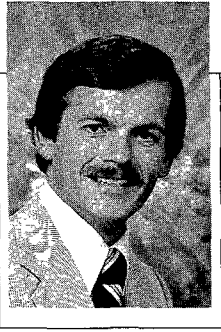
There is one last suggestion that will enable us to transcend our heartbreak, and that is to *see God in simple acts of kindness.*

There is a story that points to the importance of seeing God's strength in the mundane. A man was warned that the spring floods would soon encompass his house. A neighbor drove by and beckoned him to flee from the home, but the man replied that he believed God would see him through the flood. The waters rose higher and the man moved to the second floor. Another neighbor came by in a canoe and tried to persuade him to leave. But he turned down the offer of help and climbed to his rooftop. The rains continued, and soon the water lapped at his feet. A rescue helicopter came by, but even then he refused to accept help.

The man drowned. In heaven he approached God with bitterness: "Why did you let me drown?" God replied, "I was there with the friend in the car and the friend in the canoe. It was I who sent the helicopter. But you did not see Me."

How do you survive a major loss? Be gentle with yourself. Entrust your feelings to a friend. Plan each day with care. And find God's strength in the simple acts of kindness done by others. In time the pain recedes. And in time you will discover renewed purpose and joy. ■





# Visiting the grief-stricken

Jack R. Van Ens

**D**eath is the final enemy with which each of us must grapple. We shy away from that reality. People tell me that they feel terribly ill at ease

when visiting someone who is grief-stricken. They don't know what to do after they rap on the bereaved person's door.

For those who gallantly contact people pained by death, the following tips may prove helpful.

**1. Make several short visits.** Bereaved people cannot cope with lengthy conversations. Visitors wear out their welcome when they stay past half an hour. A series of short visits is far better than one extended stay. Come for a 15-minute chat one day. Then pop in for 10 minutes the next.

**2. Let the grieving person make plans.** Sometimes well-intentioned friends prop the bereaved individual in an easy chair while they scurry around making funeral arrangements. Encourage the person pained by death to do the telephoning to friends, to the funeral director, and to family. These are more than chores to keep the bereaved busy. Such responsibilities force the grief-stricken to focus on death's reality. They can't duck it.

**3. Encourage people to talk about**

*Dr. Jack R. Van Ens is pastor of the Arvada Presbyterian Church, Arvada, Colorado.*

*what happened prior to the death.* Listen to them. Let them repeat the details. Be a listening ear as they rehearse where they were, what the doctor said, how they responded to the last gasp of the dying one. The mind needs to retrace these happenings.

**4. Don't neglect to mention the deceased by name.** Our minds are delicate computers. Stored in them are memories of pleasing and embarrassing interactions with the deceased. Our memory banks want us to release the tapes on which are reminiscences of good and bad days with the person now dead.

**5. Include the children in the funeral plans.** Death is a very real part of life. Some parents try to shield their offspring from death's reality by hustling them off to a neutral corner. Even a little child needs to be part of the sorrow, held in the arms of a grieving mother or father. He senses that something sad but special is going on. Why should we try to isolate the children from this part of life?

**6. Keep pills in the closet.** Contrary to the adage, *big boys do cry* when they feel the separation from loved ones. It is therapeutic for the bereaved to cry and show their pain. Don't deprive them of the therapy by loading them up with sedatives and sleeping pills. A tearful person is far better off than one who has been made into a zombie by tranquilizers.

**7. Actualize the death.** Hearing about someone's death by telephone or

reading the obituary notice is not the same as seeing the corpse. Without facing the body, some bereaved people begin to deny that their loved one has died. Of course, if the body is disfigured in a hideous way, it may prove counterproductive to view it.

**8. Show your humanity.** Even a parakeet can talk. Humans are able to communicate on levels deeper than the verbal. Hug a hurting person. Wrap your arms around him. When people are in shock, words buzz by them. They bounce off like raindrops on a tin roof. Touch is very important, then, because a physical contact can break through. Words only erect verbal walls.

**9. Let the bereaved spit at God.** When people are robbed of loved ones, they sometimes take it out on God. They ask why God allowed such a person to die. Their fuse is short when it comes to talking about God. They may shake their fists and swear at God, or say that prayer makes little sense to them. The Bible may seem to them an ancient book of religious nonsense. Walk with the bereaved and stick near them. If you put the lid on their frustrations by saying that God doesn't like such hostile reactions, you may find the grievers drifting away from religion. They may not feel accepted or understood. They may begin to think that God is a thousand miles from nowhere.

It's tough to minister effectively to those hurt by death. But following these practical tips can make visits to those who are grief-stricken easier and more effective. ■

# Whose funeral is it, anyway?

Robert D. Firebaugh

**Have your funeral sermons gotten into a rut? Could you use the same one for any member of your congregation? This article tells how you can personalize your messages.**



Robert D. Firebaugh pastors the Jefferson Avenue United Methodist Church, Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

**A**fter attending a funeral someone remarked, "If the pastor had left out the obituary, I would not have known who had died!" To make funerals fully effective, we must learn to personalize them.

We live in a society that has become depersonalized. From checking accounts to credit cards, we are reminded to "please use your account number on all correspondence." Even the medical staff dealing with life-threatening illnesses end up manipulating machines rather than relating to the human beings before them.

We who are clergy must determine how to balance the paradoxical claims of Christian faith that "all are equal in the sight of God" and "our God is a personal God." Many emphasize individuality in life and then equality in death. Because of this they conduct funerals without mentioning the deceased except for the reading of the obituary. Such funerals are impersonal.

We have taken a step toward overcoming this difficulty when we recognize that being equal in the sight of God does not necessarily mean that we are all the same. Paul asserts that we each carry the image of the man of dust and of the man of heaven. Each individual is both/and rather than either/or. When the community of faith gathers for a funeral, it celebrates the presence of both in the deceased.

Because of this it seems entirely appropriate to combine the sermon and the eulogy. While praising a person's life (eu-

logy) we can provide religious instruction (sermon).

The family and friends of the deceased will think his spiritual qualities—love, patience, kindness, and so forth—more important than his possessions or even the events in his life. These qualities reveal the values the person held. Often these values are not only enduring; they are Christian. By incorporating these personal values and relating them to God's desire for all His creatures, a sermon can remember the individual while offering joyful thanksgiving to the Creator.

I conducted the funeral of a man who had done menial labor for the same dry cleaning establishment for the last 21 years of his life—not an obviously meaningful existence. Conversations with the family led me to establish as the theme of my sermon the loyalty he showed to family, employer, and church despite receiving few overt rewards.

After the service one of the man's friends said, "I now see John in an entirely different light." Finding and referring to his qualities had affirmed his worth in the eyes of those who mourned his death and had highlighted one of the Christian virtues.

## **How to go about it**

To prepare this synthesis of eulogy and sermon, the pastor can ask the deceased's family about four aspects of his life: work; group associations, either formal or informal; hobbies or favorite things; and personality traits. (One could also use Paul's list of spiritual gifts or the spiritual fruits to organize the sermon.) Adding to the sermon scriptural passages directly

related to the qualities of the individual will affirm his life and add spiritual content to the message.

In our society work holds a great deal of meaning. When speaking of the deceased's work, remember his skills and abilities as gifts from God and as a contribution to society.

By means of the groups to which a person belonged, we can see further into his/her soul. Membership in a church, in service organizations, or even in informal groups can be revelatory. Groups can be vehicles for expressing love or convictions of social responsibility. The lack of participation in organizations may indicate a more contemplative nature.

Hobbies renew people's souls. They help them cope. People use hobbies to feel alive and exercise their creativity. Knowing what hobbies a person was interested in enables us to know a great deal more about him. Along with hobbies, favorite colors, flowers, reading material, music, or poetry often express the depths of a person's soul.

Another category we can use is personality. A caution here: family members will tend to speak in general terms about the personality of the deceased—his generosity, humor, kindness, etc. Try to get them to furnish specific examples of the general traits. If someone was self-giving, what does his family remember that illustrates that quality?

Don't attempt to make a saint of the deceased. Most of the persons at a funeral service are friends and relatives who know the deceased pretty well. They know his or her strengths and weaknesses. Celebrate the person's strong points thankfully and relate them to the providence of God in all of life.

Close the sermon with biblical passages referring to death and resurrection. The same grace of God that enables people to live the earthly life has provided for eternal life.

Funeral sermons that follow this approach are very effective in helping people both to grieve and to give thanks to God. The process of gathering the infor-

mation reminds family members of the life they shared with the deceased. It also helps them realize that this person has indeed died—that they will not continue to share with him this way again in this life. The release the family experiences during this time moves beyond the intellectual recognition of death to a deeper realization of what has happened.

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus provided a means for the disciples to re-

member Him. The funeral service using this combination sermon-eulogy does a similar thing for family and friends. It says "remember me." Further, it calls the community—especially in the presence of death—to remember God as the one responsible for earthly life and for eternal life as well. The deceased's life is returned to the God who gave it in a spirit of thanksgiving for the gift of that particular life. ■

## Personalizing funerals: another approach

Cathy (not her real name) showed promise as a lawyer. Upon completing law school, she returned to Brattleboro, Vermont, where I minister, to set up her practice. She settled into a home and was developing a relationship with her boyfriend.

Late one evening she was stricken with a severe asthmatic attack. An hour later, at the age of 23, she was dead.

Cathy had not been a churchgoer. Since her family, from a neighboring state, were United Methodists, they asked me to conduct her funeral. I was relieved when they decided the service should be in the church.

Good, I thought, this will be a worship service with singing, a congregational prayer, and a sermon. But I didn't know Cathy. How could I make this service personal? Although her parents had told me many stories about her, somehow I hadn't gotten a clear picture.

Cathy's parents and I decided to try asking two or three people to share some of their experiences with and impressions of Cathy, during the funeral. I introduced this section of the

service by saying, "You all have come here because you knew and loved Cathy. You all have unique and special memories of her. If you can muster enough courage, I believe you will find that sharing those memories in one or two sentences from where you are seated will help yourself and Cathy's family."

One by one for about 20 minutes, Cathy's friends stood and related memories. When Cathy's mother and father stood, there were tears in our eyes. We had all shared in a life that had meaning.

After the service Cathy's parents told me how wonderful it was to hear Cathy's friends talk about her and how healing the service had been for them and others.

Everyone has memories of the departed. Telling stories and hearing those stories is cathartic; it often brings us to laughter and tears at the same time.

Now I almost always include in funeral worship an opportunity for friends and family to express their joys and memories. If I knew the person, I too share memories. If not, I still can preach and lead out in a personal, celebrative worship.

The Christian funeral service is a story of hope. We make that story more personal when we are able to weave into it the life of the departed.

*Thomas L. Shanklin pastors the First United Methodist Church, Brattleboro, Vermont. Adapted from the Circuit Rider, September 1985, page 3. Used with permission.*

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**If someone was self-giving, what illustrates that quality?**

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# Those PKs: clues to our kids

**Karen Nuessle**

**Are PKs harder to raise than “normal kids”? Whether they are or not, here are some ideas that will make your life a little easier.**



*Karen Nuessle, who writes from Port Orchard, Washington, is the proud parent of PKs. She also enjoys teaching grades one to three and story telling.*

**P**icture an expectant mother just being wheeled into the delivery room, the anxious father-to-be holding her hand, and the doctor humming, “Nita, Jua-ha-ha-nita.” The nurse standing to her left smiles a professional smile and begins a spiel much as a flight attendant does once the passengers are seated.

“Now, if at some time this child causes you any embarrassment or shocks you enough to take away your breath, the oxygen mask will drop from the compartment overhead. Be sure to adjust your mask properly before assisting your child.

“Under your seat is a flotation device. Should this child knock you off your feet, grasp this device in both hands and hang on. It may not keep your head above water, but it’s better to strangle this life preserver than your child.

“When all else fails, the emergency exits are located at the front and rear of the cabin. Should you have any questions at any time, feel free to press the call button and you will receive immediate assistance.”

Well, it would be nice if help were that easy to obtain.

Parents (especially ministerial parents) are anxious for their children to behave in an acceptable manner in public, to display character qualities in keeping with their teaching efforts, and occasionally to shine as their progeny. Parents desire this whether they dream in color or black and white, whether they put any effort into meeting these goals or

not, and whether they belong to God or not.

I’ve seen PKs who were ready for the Heritage Singers by the age of 3, could quote Scripture like Billy Graham, and were out there converting sinners at a young age. However, mine can’t do any of those things, and I still love them. When my eldest was three and a half feet tall he read the mission story from behind the pulpit—we never even saw him. Still, it was a high day in my life. My daughter played an angel with a long speaking part in the Christmas pageant one year. And our youngest was the narrator for a church service conducted by his school speech class.

My kids love holding up walls, receding into the woodwork with any kind of attention, and generally disappearing when the spotlight shows up. So what? The fact that they are PKs is no reason to expect them to play set roles.

PKs are normal kids. We need to let them be themselves. They need time and space to find out who they are and what God’s plan for them is. They need opportunities to make mistakes as well as to bask in successes.

You can make sure your life and the life of your child is enjoyable. Here are some clues as to how to do so from someone who has been a school teacher a long time, a pastor’s wife a long time, and a mother for a long time—a very long time.

## **Let your child be himself**

He doesn’t have to act like anybody other than himself. I raised a hermit, a social butterfly, and a cross between a lion tamer and a snake charmer. As you

can see, each one is different. Why not? There are no rules that say our children have to be exactly like us or exactly the way we would like them to be.

We have the right to make choices every day. If we teach our children to make their own choices wisely, we should be willing to allow them to make those choices, which leads to the second clue.

### **Allow your children to fail**

Everybody fails. It's not the failing that's so terrible; it's our reaction to it. Some people are spurred on by the challenge of failure, while others collapse like an empty sack. And that's pretty much what they are—empty. They have no experience to draw upon; they've never practiced getting back on their feet after a failure.

Remember letting go of that little hand for the first time to watch faltering steps that ended in disaster? Yet that little hand was tugging to get free. If you insisted on holding his hand, saying, "Watch out . . . be careful . . . don't fall . . . hold on to Mother's hand so you'll be safe," what kind of reaction would you have fostered? You'd have taught your child to fear. For him to learn to walk, you had to be willing to let him plop down on his bottom. No doubt you were ready for the shock ward, but he was pleased he got as close to his goal as he did. Different viewpoint. Different perspective.

We think in adult terms of the consequences of failure. We burden our children with our view of failure instead of letting them develop their own. We make failure seem to be a terrible calamity when it is really a learning experience. A person learns more from failure and trying to overcome it than from basking in his successes.

I have been present at many parent-teacher conferences in which the parents are too anxious that their child not fail. I see the child at school so anxious not to fail that he attempts nothing.

And what about the child who attempts everything and finishes nothing? He's pushing to find his limits.

I've received report cards proving how unathletic my children were. They were failures in PE. Who fails PE? Feeling like a failure as a parent and wondering what was wrong with them, I catechized, encouraged, and generally drove them into physical activities. They hated my interference, and I wasn't very happy about it

either. It put a definite strain on the parent-child relationship.

My children were not really failing, they were learning, testing their feet, discovering their abilities and their limitations. Now they're so involved in team and individual activities that I wonder why I was so anxious. We need to help our children find the things they do well so they can have something to be proud of in their lives. We also need to help them explore their weaknesses and learn to turn them into strengths.

We shouldn't be so concerned about the child's weaknesses that he feels unable to ever overcome them. Anything can be overcome with God's help.

### **Act like an adult**

Model maturity, not immaturity. It's too easy to react with hasty words instead of thinking through the situation.

At times I have wished I had an emergency exit. Like the time the state trooper stopped me for going through a stop sign and my toddler popped up with "Mommy never stops there."

Or the time I entered my children's bedroom and found them and three of their little friends systematically tearing the pages out of a new set of *My Bible Friends*.

Now, how does one act like an adult in these situations? Stop and think before speaking or grabbing. That pause will save a lot of embarrassment and guilt later.

### **Let children handle children's problems**

A child's difficulties with another child should remain right on that level. When adults get involved, everything immediately gets more personal, more volatile, and much bigger.

Well, Dad, are you going to be there all his life to settle his difficulties with other people? Of course not. Distant though it may seem, one day that son or daughter is going to leave home and face the world without benefit of a guard dad. It's best if children learn to handle their own problems. As adults we have to do it, and it is very helpful to get a little practice before adulthood.

If mom and dad settle their children's problems for them, the children will never mature. Then what happens when the problem is something mom and dad can't deal with? A feeling of absolute hopelessness sweeps over the child. He already knows (because we've told him

by our actions) that he can't handle anything on his own, so what does he do when we can't help? He is sunk.

As parents we often set our children up for failure in their relationships with others. We also teach them which buttons to push to sic us on their friends' parents. And no matter what the difficulty, the children will be friends again, but the parents may never speak to one another again.

In dealing with irate parents, I have found that listening, nodding, and perhaps smiling a small, understanding smile does wonders when I am being harangued about the exploits of one of my children. I wasn't there the first time something happened, and most likely I won't be there the next time.

Granted, we shouldn't allow anyone to beat our children, but knowing when to intervene sometimes takes the wisdom of a Solomon—and Solomon has been gone a long time.

### **Be accepting**

While we want our kids to function on their own, they need to know that we are behind them. And they need to know that we'll continue to love them if they fail or make a poor choice or do an unlovely thing. God loves us unconditionally, and we should be willing to love our children in the same way.

It's easier for a child to make the right choice in a hard situation if he knows mom and dad are right behind him. This is a good time for the silent witness. They want us to be proud of them, but they don't want us to say so. Does this sound like teenage thinking? They want to know, but they don't want us to tell them. It's embarrassing to them. And it can get embarrassing for us, so we should just be there.

Learn to accept your children as they are. This will give both you and your children a feeling of security that is impossible to duplicate in any other way.

### **Remember to laugh**

Sometimes it's much better to laugh than to cry. Our children need to learn this too. Laughter does ease an aching heart, it mends rifts in relationships, and it cements families.

Our family remembers our most horrendous disasters with laughter and family jokes.

Once when we were "parked" on the freeway in San Francisco, one of our boys grumbled, "Shake a leg, shake a leg"—so

we all did. Have you ever pictured crab legs waving from the windows of an automobile? ("Crab" was intended as a pun.)

Maybe our dignity suffered a bit, but now we just wiggle our toes when someone becomes impatient. And guess what happens next?

When someone has done the wrong thing and tension begins to rise, we use one of our watchword sayings: "What a bungling error!" I don't even remember the incident that gave us the expression, just that it happened near Prescott, Arizona.

We use some family sayings when someone is taking himself too seriously: "Well, you're a hangnail on the toe of life," or "You're a pimple on the nose of life." The list gets longer and more graphic with each repetition.

It's foolish, you may say. Well, it is—so what? Humor brings a family closer together and helps each of us to deal better with the relationships in the family as well as outside of it.

The delivery room nurse cannot hold our hand throughout parenthood any more than we can hold the hands of our children for their lifetimes. Would we really want to? Every artist likes to view his finished work. Though "finished" may not be the best word, there is a time when our children must make their own decisions and we are no longer responsible for them. Then we can stand back and see what kind of adults we helped to raise.

Our children teach us so much about the relationship we should have with God. And we teach our children so much about the relationship God has with His children. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement. So why not get as much enjoyment out of it as we can?

In a sense, we are all GKs (God's kids). God is a parent also, wanting the best for His children. He has high expectations for each of us; He does not force us to do His will.

He allows us to be ourselves and accepts us as we are. As I'm sure most of us have noticed, He allows us to fail. He acts out of love and mercy. He does not react without careful thought and consideration. He is always there, no matter where or what the circumstances. And sometimes I can picture Him laughing right along with us.

So our kids are stuck as PKs.

I say that's great. Why say it with a sneer when a smile would be so much nicer? ■

# Freebies: my list

Ken Wade

In my last column I promised to give you a list of some of the public domain and shareware software that I find useful. I'm listing just a few of my favorites. If you have found other good, useful software at a reasonable price, please be kind enough to send me a description of it (or if it's public domain, a copy).

Most of the software on my list can be obtained for free from a bulletin board, or for as little as \$2 per disk from PC Software and Supply, 3319 S. Hennepin, Sioux City, Iowa 51106; phone (712) 276-6877. I have acquired some software from PCSS, but obtained most of the programs on my list directly from the supplier. Contacting the supplier assures you of getting the most up-to-date version of the program and also puts you on their mailing list to be notified of updates and improvements. Several suppliers sell unregistered copies for a very low price and allow you to register only if you choose. Getting a registered copy usually entitles you to user support and a printed manual.

*PC-Write* is a versatile word processor. The latest version (2.71) includes a dictionary that will check your spelling as you write. Unregistered copies (\$16) can be ordered from Quicksoft, 219 First Ave., N., No. 224, Seattle, Washington 98109; phone (206) 282-0452. Registered copies cost \$89.

*PC-Outline!*, which I use constantly (see my article "Idea Processing," November 1986), began life as shareware but later was purchased by Brown Bag Software, 2105 South Bascom Ave., San Jose, California 95121; phone (408) 559-4545.

It is still available from software libraries on a shareware basis, but the list price from Brown Bag is \$89.95. Brown Bag gives ministers a 40% discount—mention MINISTRY when ordering.

*HomeBase*, also from Brown Bag, is similar to Side Kick. It works best on a hard disk system. It can be run RAM resident, and includes an onscreen calculator, telecommunications, and an appointment calendar on which you can set an alarm days or years in advance to remind you to do something. It also keeps notebooks that you can call up and refer to or edit while you are working in another program. The documentation for this one is confusing and contains errors, but a competent computer user can get past those problems. A registered copy lists for \$89.95, but ministers receive a 40 percent discount.

*File Express*. I use this one for keeping track of lists of the people and books I deal with as book review editor. It's a great database for many applications, including church lists. It is especially easy to learn to use because it is menu driven. Order it from Expressware, P.O. Box 230, Redmond, Washington 98073; phone (206) 282-0452. Expressware also produces ExpressGraph (graphing) and ExpressCalc (spreadsheet), which can work with the data stored in File Express, but at this writing I have not tried these other programs. An unregistered copy of any of these programs costs \$10; registered copies are \$49.

*Sorted Directory* (SDIR26). If you get tired of typing "DIR" and watching a disorganized list of files flash past on your screen at 3,000 words per minute, you need this program. It lists your files in alphabetical order, or alphabetically by extension, or by file size, or by date of creation, then tells you the number of files on your disk and how much space remains. It, along with several other useful utilities, is on PC Software's disk S319. As far as I can tell, this is a purely public domain program, because it carries no copyright message. ■



# Cicadas, Creation, and AIDS

**A**s I write this, much of the East Coast of the United States is under invasion. Well, it's not really an invasion, I guess, because the invaders' ancestors were here long before William Bradford and company laid claim to Plymouth Rock.

Some are terrified, others amused, but few in the Washington, D.C., area are oblivious to the 17-year cicadas that have emerged for their brief moment in the sun. They appear by the millions after having spent nearly two decades underground. You can't help noticing them crawling slowly along the sidewalk, their beady red eyes staring resolutely upward toward the trees where they belong.

Rare is the person in the D.C. area who has not had one of the two-inch critters buzz haplessly up and land on his or her clothing or perhaps on a bare arm. On a warm day you can't look anywhere outside without seeing several cicadas in flight, so it was inevitable that cicadas would become intermingled with my meditations on other subjects.

These insects may be very proficient at some things, such as counting off 17 years without ever seeing the light of day. But they are not proficient at flying. They have to climb up on something before they take off, and even then they more often end up on the sidewalk than in the treetops, where the mating goes on.

Watching a cicada fly, I began wondering why the process of natural selection had not somehow brought about better flight characteristics for the poor bugs. It stands to reason that only the better flyers ever get up to the trees where the mating happens. And you never see a

good flier helping a clumsy one make it to the top.

What all this has to do with AIDS is this: The cicada flew past while I was pondering the fate of the world in the wake of the burgeoning AIDS epidemic. George F. Will pointed out in a recent column that in the United States "AIDS still is and probably will remain predominantly a disease of homosexuals and intravenous drug users. It will decreasingly afflict educated, information-receptive homosexuals."\* Will noted that probably half of the drug addicts in New York City already are infected with the AIDS virus, and that heterosexual transmission is increasing primarily among those who have sex with addicts. The implication is that it is primarily the ignorant, the immoral, and addicts who will die from AIDS.

A purely pragmatic reaction to such data would be to view AIDS as a purifier. If we would simply let AIDS run its course, the ignorant and immoral would be wiped out, leaving alive a stronger, more sapient breed of *Homo sapiens*. To work to stop the epidemic would seem counterproductive.

Here is where the creationist's and the evolutionist's viewpoints diverge—and here is why it is so important for us to know whether we believe in Creation or evolution as the origin of the human race.

One reasonable corollary to the evolutionary hypothesis is that natural selection should be allowed to progress unimpeded if the human race is to be kept strong. But Creation's corollary is that God is concerned with every man, woman, and child created in His image. If God believed in simply letting nature take its course to bring about the perfection of

humanity, He would have just let Adam and Eve die, and would have started over again. Instead, He left heaven and came to minister to publicans and sinners.

The human race advances only through becoming more like our Creator, not through behaving like bugs that can let their weaker comrades die unattended on the sidewalk.—Kenneth R. Wade.

\*"AIDS: The Real Danger . . ." *Washington Post*, June 7, 1987.

## Midnight calls

**P**astor, I'm dying!" Mrs. Carter's\* voice came over the phone in a hoarse semi-whisper. She wanted me to leave the church social I was attending and come to her home right away.

Not knowing what to do, I spoke to John Palmer, a doctor. When I told him that Mrs. Carter was dying, he replied, "What! Again?"

I had become Mrs. Carter's pastor not long before this and had not yet met her. She was a widow who had joined the church a couple of years earlier but had not become active in it. She had no family and few friends.

Though it was late, I went over to her

\*I have, of course, changed the names of those involved in this story.

place. I knew she wasn't dying, but I wanted her to know that I cared.

Well, you know what positive reinforcement does. A few weeks later our telephone awakened my wife and me at about midnight. Mrs. Carter was dying again.

This time I tried to convince her that she would make it through the night and that I'd come and see her first thing in the morning. She asked me to put my arms around my wife and say the Lord's Prayer, and then to go into my year-old daughter's room, take her in my arms, and repeat the Ten Commandments.

I didn't follow these instructions, but I did go over to her house again. She needed attention.

The last time she called, one night at about two, I was adamant. I'd see her in the morning, but I was not about to get out of bed and go then.

Finding her dying-from-illness routine ineffective, she tried a new tack. Now the neighbors were out to get her. When I told her that I didn't think the situation was as bad as she portrayed it, she became angry. Before hanging up, she said, "Dr. Palmer just came in the door—with a knife in his back!"

These memories bring a smile—but for me it's a kind of rueful smile. I can't help feeling a little sorrow and some guilt when I think of Mrs. Carter. I tried to visit her fairly frequently, not just after one of her calls. But I didn't meet her need. Because of my youth and the demands of my work, I couldn't offer her the kind of relationship she needed.



David C. Jarnes

I told her I would arrange for someone to bring her to church; she needed to get out of her house and among people. But she wasn't very interested. She felt that the church members were prejudiced against her. I realize now that she needed a *personal* relationship, *personal* atten-

tion. Simply going to a church service, even going with someone else, didn't offer much hope of fulfilling that need.

Although most of the elderly don't signal their needs so dramatically, with the aging of the population, the number of Mrs. Carters around us is increasing. First Timothy 5 says that the needs of these people are, first of all, the responsibility of their families, and that the church should care for those who have no families. While that passage speaks of their financial needs, I think their emotional needs are just as important.

As good pastors, shepherds, we can, by both word and example, encourage the younger members of our churches to be faithful to their responsibilities to their parents. We can encourage those of our members who have the needed gifts to look after those who have no families. And within our churches we can support and perhaps even initiate groups that enable our older members to care for one another.

Shepherding the flock not only means caring for the lambs and the sheep who are productive, it also means seeing that the needs of those past their prime are met. —David C. Jarnes.

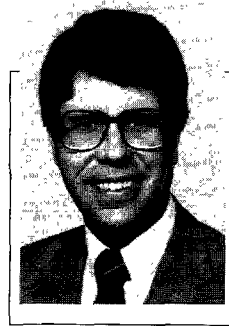
## Status seekers in the church

**E**ach culture has its own ways of displaying status. In Jesus' day, where a person sat in the synagogue indicated his status (see Matt. 23:6; Mark 12:39; Luke 11:43; 20:46). When Jesus noticed how guests were selecting dinner seats, He counseled: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor. . . . Take the lowest place" (Luke 14:8-10).\*

In our day people can indicate status by the cars they drive. Whatever the arguments for the economic value of owning a Mercedes, one cannot escape the fact that owning a Mercedes, a Cadillac,

a Rolls-Royce, or any other status-laden car makes a point. In some cultures, merely owning two cars has high symbolism.

Others choose to show status by the display of educational degrees. They prefer being called doctor rather than elder or pastor. Some show their importance by displaying certificates and diplomas on their office walls.



J. David Newman

We can use our homes, furniture, clothes, and even our watches—Rolex, for example—to show our status. The list is endless.

Organizations also have their way of appealing to the human desire for status. Some vote awards such as Pastor of the Year. How do all the pastors who do not receive this "coveted" award feel? Can they keep their motivations pure as they plan for the next year? Will they be encouraged to do their best for the Lord, or will they keep an eye partially on the award?

In our culture, size and type of office room or rooms often indicate status. When church organizations—whether local, national, or international—plan for a new building, are the offices designed to be purely functional or to indicate status as well? As an individual rises in the hierarchy, does he or she receive a progressively larger office?

Some business organizations, recognizing the liabilities of this system, are seeking to democratize their offices (see "Democracy by Design," *MINISTRY*, June 1986). Churches, conservative by nature, often lag behind instead of leading in such changes. Apparently they haven't outgrown the disciples' question "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1).

The proposed new headquarters building for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has raised again



some of these issues. In this case it concerns who receives *closed* and who receives *open* offices. Many perceive that those who will receive closed offices will do so for reasons of status and not of function. A highly placed source told MINISTRY, "You can't expect a president of a division who is elected to be a vice president of the General Conference to transfer from a closed to an open office."

The results have been predictable. Just as the 10 disciples "became indignant with James and John" (Mark 10:41), so a number have become indignant over giving closed offices to people who spend a majority of their time out of their offices—traveling or in committee. This concern over status has prevented an objective discussion of who really needs a closed office and who can work just as well in an open office.

It is not our purpose here to argue which is the better system. We simply want to illustrate that human nature has changed little in 2,000 years.

Servant leadership is popular in speech, neglected in practice. When Jesus took a towel, poured water into a basin, and washed His disciples' feet, He redefined greatness. What gives status in the kingdom of God is the opposite of what does so in Satan's kingdom.

Jesus *gave up* all of heaven and "made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). Lucifer *wanted* all of heaven: "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God" (Isa. 14:13). Status seeking began with him who eventually rebelled openly against God. Those who seek the kingdom of heaven *put their trust and dependency* in Jesus Christ, not in worldly status. If a person will not accept a position because it does not carry all the right trappings, then we are better off with someone else.

It takes courage to resist the subtle influences of the world, especially when the church has "baptized" certain status symbols. It is too easy to "love praise from men more than praise from God" (John 12:43). It is only at the foot of the cross that we see who we really are—sinners, hopelessly lost. When we look at Jesus and surrender our pride to Him, we receive the only status worth having: being sons and daughters of God (1 John 3:1). —J. David Newman ■

\* Bible texts in this editorial are from the New International Version.

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## Letters

From page 2

in particular as deliberately flouting God's law in regard to the Sabbath, in some sort of ecclesiastical revolt against God's purposes.

May I ask that you continue to promote a sense of tolerance and fellowship, and that you do so among your own pastors and teachers, many of whom still apparently have an innate separatist view of Seventh-day Adventism? Either we love each other for who we are, and acknowledge each other's liberty to understand God as we see Him revealed in Jesus and in the Word, or we sadly have to go our different ways. —Milton Myers, Robertson, New South Wales, Australia.

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### More on baptism and the Sabbath

I would like to comment on two letters that appeared in the May 1987 issue of MINISTRY.

I agree with Rev. Peter Carman as to the validity of infant baptism as opposed to believer's baptism. But his thought needs to be carried another step forward. If our worthiness for baptism depended solely on our intellectual assent (belief), then *all* infants and those who are mentally retarded are automatically excluded. There is sufficient scriptural evidence to indicate that even the unborn are able to relate to the Christ (Luke 1:41, 44). *This in itself is sufficient* not to withhold baptism from an infant. Jesus said that "unless one"—anyone, not just a believer—"is born of water . . . , he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5, RSV).

As to the Sabbath, I agree with Dr. Gerken but again feel that the argument needs to be carried another step forward. God realized that we humans would tire from our labors, and that is why He set the example of a day of rest (I don't believe that the God I worship would ever get tired). The Sabbath was made for man's benefit—not the other way around (Mark 2:27). Even the priests desecrated the Sabbath by working, and yet they were innocent (Matt. 12:5). As long as we are fully convinced in our own minds, it is alright for us to set one day up over another in order to worship and praise God (Rom. 14:5, 6).

The majority of Christians have chosen to celebrate and worship on Sunday (Resurrection day) because Christ is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). We have been given spiritual freedom and liberty in Christ and we are cautioned not to lapse into ritualism (Gal. 4:8–5:12).

You know, we can get so hung up on legalism—we can become so afraid of doing something wrong—that we actually end up defeating Christ's work on the cross. If only we—all of us—would concern ourselves with loving one another as children of God, concentrate on edifying one another instead of tearing each other down, and realize that in heaven there are no denominations (with all their various doctrines), and that there is but one body (Eph. 4:3-6). We have been freed of the necessity to judge one another. And because of that, we are now free to love one another. There is not a one of us who has a corner on (exclusive rights to) the truth. He who says he does have it all is guilty of pride. —David A. Sholes, Marion, Indiana.

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### Destroying men's souls

What the article "Religion and Communism" (March 1987) says Seventh-day Adventists and Mr. Spangler experienced in Russia may be true. But the avowed purpose of Communism is still to exterminate all religion and to rule the world. To Communists, religion is still "the opium of the people." Neither Communism nor any Communist leader has ever disavowed this statement. It is the religion of Satan to destroy men's souls. —Walter Leininger, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

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### An outstanding contribution

I wish to thank the leaders of your church for their generosity in making available this journal to all clergy.

The content is substantive and well presented. Many of the articles help those of us who belong to other Christian denominations better appreciate the Seventh-day Adventist perspective on various issues.

I have found especially helpful recent articles on the church in the Soviet Union. The reprint of Neal C. Wilson's paper (May 1987) made an outstanding contribution to Christian discourse on this difficult and complex subject.

—Gilbert H. Vieira, Lafayette, California. ■



# Understanding the arthritis patient

Keith K. Colburn

**T**he effect of arthritis and rheumatism on the world economy is beyond calculation. In 1982 more than 36 million persons in the United States suffered from some form of arthritis or related disease.<sup>1</sup> No other group of diseases causes so much suffering by so many for so long. More than 25 percent of rheumatic disease sufferers are at least partially handicapped, and about 10 percent are grossly disabled.<sup>2</sup> Arthritis and rheumatism result in at least 27 million lost work days each year.<sup>3</sup>

On a personal level, however, these diseases cause some unique problems of which pastors should be aware. The psychological impact of arthritis or rheumatism on sufferers includes depression, despair, helplessness, and loss of self-esteem. Dreams and goals are often thwarted or have to be abandoned. Families are disrupted. Even children can develop arthritis, drastically altering a family's lifestyle and the child's future.

There is a higher rate of divorce in families in which one spouse has arthritis. For a housewife who can no longer perform her household chores, the loss of self-esteem often leads to depression. Arthritis can be devastating to the ego of a man who can no longer hold a job. The arthritis victim often feels less attractive and less desirable to his or her spouse. For these reasons and more, arthritis pain often affects sexual performance.

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Keith K. Colburn, M.D., is chief of rheumatology at the Jerry Pettis Memorial VA Hospital and assistant professor of medicine at Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

Yet most arthritis patients are stoic. They learn to live with their disease, but many wonder if they would be better off dead than to continue in constant pain and disability.

A description of arthritis and rheumatism will help in ministering to people suffering from these diseases. *Arthritis* is defined as inflammation in the joints; *rheumatism* is a more general term used to denote pain and stiffness anywhere in the musculoskeletal system of the body. There are more than 100 different diseases that have arthritis or rheumatism as part of their symptom complex.<sup>4</sup> Three of the more common forms of arthritis and rheumatism are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and fibrositis.

## Osteoarthritis

The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis, or more appropriately, degenerative joint disease (DJD). DJD is wear-and-tear arthritis. Ninety percent of us have X-ray evidence of DJD by the time we are 40 years old.<sup>5</sup> About 20 percent of the population have actual symptoms of this type of arthritis. Unlike rheumatoid arthritis, however, DJD is not usually crippling. In its primary form it is not presently identified with a systemic disease. Dietary fat, crystals from bone, and genetic predisposition have all been proposed as contributing to DJD, but the primary cause is still unknown.

People in physical occupations—carpenters, construction workers, and professional athletes—are more likely to have DJD. Previous trauma or joint damage often leads to this type of arthritis. The weight-bearing joints are most commonly affected. DJD is manifested by pain in movement, mild stiffness, and some limitation of movement in the

morning, which disappears in five to ten minutes with limbering-up exercises. Usually there is little or no inflammation of the joints in DJD. Although some individuals with DJD become severely disabled and even require surgery and joint replacement, the majority do reasonably well.

## Rheumatoid arthritis

In contrast, rheumatoid arthritis (RA) affects most of the organs of the body. RA is more likely to cause crippling than DJD. It is a disease of the immune system, which, instead of protecting the body, attacks its own tissues. There is no known cure.

About 1 to 2 percent of the population suffers from RA.<sup>6</sup> Patients often have severe fatigue and total body stiffness in the morning. In some the stiffness lasts all day long. Their joints are swollen, warm, tender, often red, and are affected on both sides of the body at the same time. The hands, wrists, and feet are the most commonly affected joints, but RA may also involve the jaw, neck, shoulders, elbows, hips, knees, and ankles. It is, however, very rare for the end joints in the fingers to have rheumatoid arthritis. This distinguishes RA from most other common forms of arthritis.

Untreated, RA goes through periods of severe inflammation followed by periods of feeling better, especially with rest. The natural course of the disease, however, is for the joints gradually to lose function as they are systematically and painfully destroyed.

Other organs that can be involved with RA include the eyes, lymph glands, lungs, heart, and spleen. For some the disease will disappear spontaneously, but that is rare. Although the disease cannot

yet be cured or prevented, modern medicine can usually alter its course and improve the prognosis, especially if treatment is started early enough.

Aches and pains of muscles and/or tendons are frequently referred to as soft-tissue rheumatism and affect most of us at some time or another. Tennis elbow, Achilles tendonitis (heel pain), frozen shoulder, bursitis, and fibrositis are examples of soft-tissue rheumatism. Excessive physical stress, trauma, emotional stress, and lack of adequate rest are responsible in part for these conditions. They generally become more common with age. Fortunately, these conditions are not life-threatening and most often get better with such treatment as heat, massage, and some prescribed medications.

### Fibrositis

Fibrositis is a common but often unrecognized form of rheumatism. Although not life-threatening, it is very painful and difficult to treat. Most commonly middle-aged women suffer with this condition, although men and women of most age groups can be affected. It is characterized by five or six specific "trigger points" of tenderness on the human body.

These patients hurt all the time. They are often depressed, frequently they are awakened from their sleep by pain, and they do not respond well to medication alone. Doctors often diagnose fibrositis sufferers as malingerers or complainers because they can find nothing wrong. Lab tests are normal. There is no sign of other disease. Nothing the doctor can do seems to help, but these people do have a medical problem that in many cases seems to be related to lack of deep-sleep patterns.

Studies by Dr. Jon Russell, a leading expert in fibrositis research at the University of Texas Medical School, San Antonio, indicate that physical conditioning by anaerobic exercise may help this disease more than any other treatment, probably because it increases deep-sleep patterns. Certain medications and physical therapy also seem to help these patients feel better. Sleeping pills do not seem to help, and quick relief is seldom achieved.

Diagnosis of a specific type of arthritis can sometimes be extremely difficult even for a rheumatologist. Various forms of arthritis are treated differently, and early diagnosis is often essential to limit

potential damage. Because the consequences of inadequate treatment are only gradually realized, an arthritis patient should consider very carefully his physician's background training in arthritis. The best physicians are those who recognize their strengths and limitations, and ask for consultation in areas outside their expertise.

### Treatment

Quackery is a serious problem in treating arthritis. People with chronic pain are vulnerable to hucksters, swindlers, and some well-meaning but naive individuals who make unsubstantiated claims for products. The Arthritis Foundation estimates that \$1 billion will be spent this year on unproven treatments for arthritis and rheumatism. Studies have estimated that 94 percent of all patients with rheumatic disease have tried an average of 13 unproven remedies each.<sup>7</sup>

The waxing and waning nature of arthritis and rheumatism makes sufferers of these diseases ideal targets for quackery. Studies have shown that a placebo improves the aches and pains of about 30 percent of arthritis patients. Psychological testing indicates that those helped by a placebo are usually among the most suggestible 30 percent of the population. Unproven treatments such as acupuncture, copper bracelets, vitamin C (one gram daily), vaccines, hormones, and topical creams do not significantly exceed the placebo success rate for arthritis.<sup>8</sup> Other treatments that do not usually help may actually be harmful. These include DMSO, hyperbaric oxygen, Vuron, Liefcort, Gerovital, snake and ant venoms,<sup>9</sup> uranium or radon mines, *chui fong toukuwan*, (a Chinese herbal remedy that contains cortisone in unregulated amounts), motor oil, and cocaine.<sup>10</sup>

The most important problem with unproven remedies is that the patient may suffer increased damage to joints and other tissues that legitimate treatment might have helped to slow down or stop. A physician who is knowledgeable and experienced in the treatment of rheumatic diseases can make a difference for most patients.

Preliminary studies by Dr. Edwin Krick, at Loma Linda University, indicate that a low protein diet does reduce the intensity of arthritis in many patients, but diet is not a cure for arthritis. Avoidance of certain foods, especially

## An arthritis patient should consider very carefully his physician's training in arthritis.

milk products, has been shown to make a difference in the arthritis of a few patients, but not most.

Probably the most important advancement in arthritis therapy in the past 25 to 30 years is the development of good surgical joint replacements for those with severely damaged joints. The results are often very gratifying to the arthritis sufferer.

Arthritis and rheumatism are not one, but more than 100 different diseases. Proper care requires the help of a physician with the knowledge and experience to keep joint and other organ damage at a minimum. Arthritis sufferers deserve more attention to their plight from society and from individuals, especially in the areas of treatment and research. In addition, they need our compassionate help with the many physical and emotional struggles unique to chronic disease sufferers. ■

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report* (Atlanta: Arthritis Foundation, 1982), pp. 1-36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> J. L. Hollander, "Report of Epidemiology Subcommittee," W. R. Katz, ed., in *Arthritis: Report of Governor's Task Force* (Harrisburg, Pa.: 1981).

<sup>4</sup> G. P. Rodnan et al., *Primer on Rheumatic Diseases*, 8th ed. (Atlanta: Arthritis Foundation, 1983), pp. 36, 37.

<sup>5</sup> R. W. Moskowitz, "Clinical and Laboratory Findings in Osteoarthritis," in D. J. McCarty, ed., *Arthritis and Allied Conditions*, 10th ed. (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1985), p. 1409.

<sup>6</sup> R. C. Williams and D. J. McCarty, "Clinical Picture of Rheumatoid Arthritis," in D. J. McCarty, p. 605.

<sup>7</sup> R. S. Panush, *Controversial Arthritis Remedies: Bulletin on the Rheumatic Diseases*, ed. E. Hess (Atlanta: Arthritis Foundation, 1984), vol. 34, p. 5. See also M. D. Lockshin, "The Unproven Remedies Committee," *Arthritis and Rheumatism* 24, No. 9 (1981): 1188-1190.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> R. C. Williams and D. J. McCarty.

## **Beloved Adversary**

W. Glyn Evans, *Daybreak Books, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 161 pages, 1985, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Anne Elwer, free-lance writer and speaker, Yukon, Oklahoma.*

Every Christian faces the question of why God sometimes seems distant, allows misfortunes, lets sincere prayers seemingly go unheard, or seems to put Himself in an adversarial role with those who so desperately hunger for righteousness. Evans suggests that there will be times when the heavenly Father is at cross-purposes with those who seek Him, because humans cannot be purified or matured without experiencing some alienation from the Lord.

*Beloved Adversary* deals with issues that can be depressing, but the author handles them with an underlying message of hope. He emphasizes that anything done to God's glory is never useless and changing our will to conform to the will of God brings inner peace, relief, and victory.

One of Evans' strongest points is that God wants us to yield to His will, regardless of how things go outwardly. He has a balanced view of the seeming contradictions of Christian life—promises of healing when prayers for healing are not universally answered, for example.

Evans maintains that it is all right to have unanswered prayers, to have disappointments and unfulfilled hopes, and to grope in the dark during seasons when God seems far away and His will inscrutable. But while the Christian life is one of constant struggle, the adversarial role of God in a seeker's life becomes less painful as the seeker matures spiritually.

Evans reminds us that God's approval isn't always evidenced by comfort, prosperity, answered prayers, absence of misfortune, or the absolute fulfillment of scriptural promises on human terms. God always keeps His promises, and because we are human, we don't know the total heart of God. Not knowing God fully leaves us with no choice but to accept His dealings, handle the pain, and continue in the path toward spiritual maturity.

## **When Someone You Love Is Dying**

Ruth Kopp, M.D., with Stephen Sorenson, (formerly published under the title *Encounter With Terminal Illness*), *Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1985, 238 pages, \$8.95. Reviewed by William Collins, chaplain, Harding Hospital, Worthington, Ohio.*

Written by a physician who specializes in clinical oncology, this book offers a practical approach to the experience of terminal illness. In the opening chapters Kopp shares insights into denial in both its useful and hindering aspects. She is careful not to promote the once popular conception that denial in any form should be avoided and broken through. Understanding another person's denial of serious illness or death is a critical issue in the medical and pastoral care fields, and Kopp gives helpful suggestions on how to respond to various denying statements, attitudes, and behaviors. Some of them might surprise you.

The book is clearly written from a Christian perspective. I especially appreciated Kopp's personal theologizing, which I found quite moving at times. One helpful chapter focuses on the role of anger in terminal illness and suggests specific pastoral responses to expressions of anger.

Other chapters discuss the patient/doctor relationship, terminal illness and the family, and preparing and waiting for death. The book is well written in non-technical language and is obviously based on personal experience.

## **Fear No Evil**

David Watson, *Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1985, 170 pages, \$3.50, paper. Reviewed by Jerry Connell, pastor of the University Seventh-day Adventist Church, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.*

The subtitle "One Man Deals With Terminal Illness" captured my attention. Anyone in a helping profession sooner or later has to deal with terminal illness. J. I. Packer's forward accurately describes this book as "marvelous, poignant, radiant, heartwarming, heartrending, modest, heroic, and matter-of-fact." The

book is all of these and more. Watson's writing is easy to read, and he wrote this, his last book, with the same sensitivity and depth that characterizes all of his writings.

Watson was an internationally known pastor, speaker, and author who led thousands to Christ. He was one of the pioneers of the Renewal movement in England from the 1960s until his death from cancer on February 18, 1984.

This book is a travelogue of Watson's journey to death. He describes his faith, pain, hope, despair, anguish, suffering, doubts, and triumphs. He recounts how people came from the United States and all over to England to pray for him, and how his wife would nightly "lay her hands on my stomach and curse the cancer in the name of Jesus." He discloses his own struggle as he sees his condition deteriorating. He wonders why the Lord, who used him and others to bring restoration to so many over the years, does not heal him.

The problem of suffering and pain is a major concern of this book. Watson believes that the question one should ask when suffering is not "Why?" but "What?"—to ask why only brings discouragement and doubt. The most important question is "What?": What can I learn from this? What can this mean? What is God trying to tell me through this pain? What can I gain from this that will enrich my life?

Through this experience Watson continues to give his life to the Lord. Through his suffering he still finishes his book with a resounding affirmation—"The Lord reigns."

## **How Can It Be All Right When Everything Is All Wrong?**

Lewis B. Smedes, *Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1982, 132 pages, \$6.95. Reviewed by David Bunker, associate pastor, Fresno Central Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

"If you are trying hard to believe in God while a hundred voices inside tell you to stop believing . . . I wrote this book for you," explains Lou Smedes. For him the pain of cancer, family violence,

war, starvation, loneliness, and desolation cannot be swept away by some easy belief. Our wounds are real and frightening. No list of proofs for God's existence can answer suffering's challenge to belief.

Instead, Smedes sees God's gifts to us as the best response to our suffering: the gifts of grace, joy, forgiveness, wonder, faith, hope, the gift of being held, of being ordinary, and others.

Instead of technical theological arguments for why God is all right when it seems everything is all wrong, Smedes points to our experiences with God as being the most helpful and valid contributions to belief. Belief goes beyond the intellectual ideal, embracing the experiential in a situation comparable to what C. S. Lewis described as joy.

### **The Cross of Christ**

John R. W. Stott, *Inter-Varsity Press*, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1986, 383 pages, \$14.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, *Sabbath school and stewardship secretary*, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

John Stott has written many books. None of them could be described as trivial, and this book is no exception. In my view it is the most important book he has written or is likely to write, because it deals with that most important of all topics: The cross of Christ.

The work is organized under four headings: "Approaching the Cross"; "The Heart of the Cross"; "The Achievement of the Cross"; and "Living Under the Cross."

Stott writes in clear, uncluttered prose that rarely if ever loses or confuses the reader. For instance, describing the dark passions of human sinfulness as exemplified in the characters involved in the events of the Crucifixion, he writes: "Our motives are always mixed. We may succeed in preserving a modicum of rectitude in the performance of public duty, but behind this facade lurk violent and sinful emotions which are always threatening to erupt" (p. 48). Describing Christ's victory over evil on the cross, he writes: "We are not to regard the cross as defeat and the Resurrection a victory. Rather, the cross was the victory won, and the Resurrection the victory endorsed, proclaimed, and demonstrated" (p. 234). Of the means of justification, he writes: "God's grace is the source and Christ's blood the ground of our justification; faith is the only means by which we

are united to Christ" (p. 190).

A welcome emphasis in this book is Section IV, "Living Under the Cross." It has been a weakness of much evangelical preaching of the cross that it has tended to stress the Godward side to the exclusion of human cooperation in working out a life of holiness and purity. John Stott avoids this defect in four telling chapters entitled "The Community of Celebration," "Self-Understanding and Self-giving," "Loving Our Enemies," and "Suffering and Glory."

No preacher who can obtain a copy should neglect to do so. Within these pages he will come to deepen his understanding of the self-giving love of God in Christ. He will be engaged by a mind rich with the varied treasures of a lifetime of sanctified thinking and experience of Christ and His cross. He will also find his own faith renewed and refreshed. On page after page the wealth of evangelical truth will startle the reader with the quickening, saving power of Christ and His cross. He would be dead indeed who could read this powerful book and not cry with Isaac Watts:

"When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride."

### **Miracles Today: Understanding How God Participates in Our Lives**

Rodney A. Kvamme, *Concordia Publishing House*, St. Louis, 1987, 72 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by Ella Rydzewski, *editorial secretary*, MINISTRY.

This book brings a refreshing perspective to the subject of miracles. In dealing with why some prayers are answered and others are not, Kvamme neither resorts to the extremes of claiming a "lack of faith" on the part of the one being prayed for, nor does he question the validity of modern miracles. Instead, he sees a "bigger view that will hold both the successes and failures." This view focuses on forgiveness and restoration, whether or not a miracle occurs in a given situation.

The miracles of Jesus go far beyond amazing feats. They are not ends in themselves; they center on forgiveness. Miracles are only temporary wonders—not to be discounted but kept second to forgiveness. They are preludes to greater things to come, as the resurrection of Lazarus points to the resurrection of all the saved.

Jesus Himself was a miracle. Kvamme points to the life of Paul as a mixture of

miracles (visions, dreams, healings) and nonmiracles (his "thorn in the flesh") and helps us realize that such a mixture is part of every life.

Concerning miracles today, the author sees no biblical evidence of a cutoff date. But it is the Holy Spirit who enlightens us to see miracles in their proper perspective. We need to revel in the "natural" miracle rather than the "supernatural" (i.e., healing is a blessing, but continued good health is a greater one).

The Holy Spirit empowers us to expect God's miraculous working. Kvamme aptly describes expectancy as our responsibility in enabling God: "Expecting a miracle does not bring it about, but not expecting a miracle can prevent it."

### **Personal Ministry Handbook**

Larry Richards, *Baker Book House*, Grand Rapids, 1986, 275 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Ed Wright, *pastor of Family Ministries*, Collegedale, Tennessee.

When you want to respond to a plea for help in coping with a specific situation, to what resource will you turn? You need insights, suggestions, and certainly appropriate Scripture passages for ministering to a wounded or worried heart. Yet you don't have an hour to spend in your study. Where can you find genuine help on the run?

*Personal Ministry Handbook* may be what you're looking for. Section one deals with preparation: a general, scriptural foundation for Christians interested in using their spiritual gifts in ministry to others. Section two deals with specific situations a person is likely to face. Richards deals with more than 70 topics, including work, guilt, doubt, anger, alcoholism, mental illness, child or spouse abuse, homosexuality, and suicide prevention. For each topic Richards provides appropriate Scripture passages and a succinct guide for dealing with the situation. Broad insights are followed by more specific hints, all generally within two pages per topic. The book concludes in section three with a training guide for either group or individual use and a summary of the beliefs of major cults and world religions.

While some may use the first and last sections, the specific resources of section two represent the real value of the book. Worth tucking under the seat of the car for those frantic crisis calls, it is equally suited as a foundation for further study. As with most tools, it must be used selectively. And while you may not agree with

every concept offered, the overwhelming weight of conservative biblical insight makes this volume well worth its price.

### **Beyond Seduction**

Dave Hunt, *Harvest House, Eugene, Oregon, 1987, 282 pages, \$7.95, paper. Reviewed by Kenneth R. Wade, assistant editor, MINISTRY.*

The subtitle of this book is "A Return to Biblical Christianity," and Hunt's concern throughout is to expose nonbiblical ideas that have crept into Christianity in recent decades. He has done a thorough work of documenting some of these errors and of showing how they run contrary to biblical Christianity.

Among the errors attacked are the positive confession movement, Christianized psychotherapy, overemphasis on building a positive self-image, seed faith, and visualization in meditation.

Hunt sees evidence of demonism and Eastern mysticism creeping into popularized Christianity, which does not teach people to submit to God but rather to conjure up mental images of a god who tells them what they want to hear. He calls us back to Bible-centered meditation and to submission to the God who reveals Himself in Scripture rather than a god of our own imagination. He calls us to look outside of ourselves for salvation rather than probing within to try to find a good core that we can build into something worthwhile. Because the Bible teaches that the natural man is at enmity with God, he calls us to surrender.

Hunt has done extensive research, and documents his charges against leaders who have strayed from biblical Christianity with direct quotations from their own works. The book contains more than 500 footnotes. Among teachings to which he takes exception are those of many well-known thought leaders such as Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Paul Yongi Cho, Richard Foster, Oral Roberts, Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, Clyde Narramore, and Bruce Larson. Even Andrew Murray receives a few critical blows. Those whom he cites in favor of his view of biblical Christianity include Charles Colson, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Carl F. H. Henry, A. W. Tozer, C. S. Lewis, and C. H. Spurgeon.

Critical reviews of one of Hunt's previous books, *The Seduction of Christianity*, which he coauthored with T. A. McMahon, claimed that he used authors' words out of context and defamed many writers by misrepresenting their views.

This may be the case with this book also, and one can't help wondering whether a critical reading of everything ever written by those whom Hunt brings to his defense might yield statements just as questionable as the ones he excerpts from some of those whom he attacks.

Whether or not you agree with all that Hunt says, this book is worth a careful reading. It will challenge not only your thinking but your walk with God.

### **The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of the Modern Jewish Study of Jesus**

Donald A. Hagner, *Academie Books, Grand Rapids, 1984, 341 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Wayne Willey, a pastor in Amesbury, Massachusetts.*

This is an intriguing book dealing with a most important question—What is the attitude of the twentieth-century Jew toward Jesus?

Hagner has provided an excellent survey of Jewish thought toward Jesus. He documents the growth of a more positive attitude toward Jesus among Jewish scholars during the past century. While there are no indications that Jewish scholars are about to proclaim Jesus to be the Messiah who fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament, there is a growing acceptance of Jesus as a good Jew and a prophet. This trend is occurring almost exclusively within the Reformed branch of Judaism, but it still represents a significant development in Jewish thought.

Yet this acceptance of Jesus has come at some cost. Jewish scholars almost uniformly reject any non-Jewish elements they find in the Synoptic Gospels, claiming they are an invention of Gentiles in the Christian church, and of Paul, apostle to the Gentiles. After discounting these non-Jewish elements, modern Jewish scholars conclude that Jesus was a rabbi, very much in the Pharisaic tradition, whose teachings offer little that is new or original in content. They see Jesus as an idealist whose teachings are impossible to practice, while they see rabbinic Judaism as being much more practical and therefore more relevant.

This is more than just an analysis of what is happening in Jewish scholarship. Hagner also provides a critique of the methodology and conclusions of Jewish scholars.

The book is well written and well documented, and is useful in understanding the cultural background in which Jesus lived.

### **Adventists in Russia**

Alf Lohne, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1987, 159 pages, \$9.95, hardback. Reviewed by Robert H. Pierson, retired president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

Anyone interested in the worldwide progress of Adventism will not want to miss reading *Adventists in Russia*. Lohne is eminently qualified to deal with this subject. He visited the U.S.S.R. for the first time in 1969 when he was the Northern European Division secretary. As a vice president of the General Conference he visited almost every year from 1977 up to and including 1985, when he retired. He made friends with large numbers of Adventist leaders and lay members, as well as contacting many officials among the top echelon of the Ministry of Cults.

Elder Lohne shares his insights into the often baffling history of the Adventist Church in Russia from its inception until 1985. He analyzes the segment whose leaders were recognized by the government and the faction that was tolerated but not officially recognized. Tactfully and effectively he describes the causes behind the fracture and the measures adopted in recent years to bring about a fraternal union among the scores of churches and hundreds of workers involved. The reader receives rare insights into eras and actions of Adventist Church leaders in dealing with the government on the subject of military service. A careful scrutiny of the Shelkov dissident group, which received wide publicity in the world press, especially in the United States and Europe, includes material that enables one to better understand some of the schisms in Russian Adventism.

Elder Lohne writes from firsthand experience when he deals with the efforts of the General Conference during the years since 1975, having played a leading role in those events. He describes the visits of various General Conference leaders and their efforts to bring together the estranged segments of the church. He tells about the various negotiating sessions in different republics and the manner in which the Lord blessed in gradually gaining the confidence of government leaders, church leaders, and members until an encouraging measure of unity, both in Christian spirit and organizational function, was achieved.

## Clinical Pastoral Education stipends offered

Kettering Medical Center is offering five stipended positions (\$13,200) in a one-year residency in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) beginning September 1, 1988.

The program is designed for persons who wish to improve their pastoral care and counseling skills for parish ministry or to obtain certification in specialized ministry, such as hospital chaplaincy. A seminary degree (preferably Master of Divinity) and at least one unit of basic CPE are prerequisites for the residency. Applications may be submitted through January 15, 1988.

For further information and application forms, contact Chaplain Dorwin Snyder, Kettering Medical Center, 3535 Southern Boulevard, Kettering, OH 45429; phone: (513) 296-7869.

## Nominate a missionary

The Direct Mission Aid Society is now accepting nominations for its 1987 Yokefellow Awards. Each year the society awards monetary grants to Christian missionaries who have made an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and physical welfare of the people they serve. The grants are made to missionaries selected from those serving in Third World countries. Individuals of any denomination may be nominated. All inquiries should be addressed to the Direct Mission Aid Society, Route 3, Box 88E, Annandale, MN 55302.

## A gift for your givers

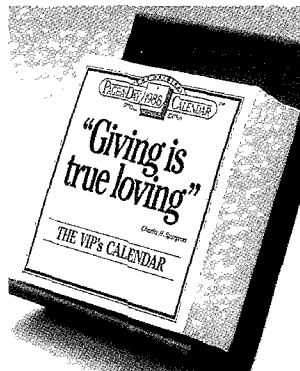
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All orders include individual mailers for your distribution. A check payable to Giving Calendar—PSI must accompany your order.

For more information or to order, write Norma Hendrixson, Giving Calendar—PSI, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012; or phone (202) 722-6132.



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# Ministry

## Professional Growth Seminars

### September-October 1987

#### Texas

Sept. 14, Houston  
Sept. 15, San Antonio  
Sept. 16, Dallas  
For more information call John McFarlane (817) 295-0476

#### Michigan

Sept. 29, Battle Creek  
For more information call Jay Gallimore (517) 485-2226

#### California

Oct. 8, Los Angeles  
For more information call Lloyd Wyman (818) 240-6250

#### Louisiana-Arkansas

Oct. 13, Little Rock  
Oct. 14, Shreveport  
Oct. 15, New Orleans  
For more information call John McFarlane (817) 295-0476

#### Washington, D.C.

Oct. 26  
For more information call Jim Cox (301) 441-1777

#### Topics include:

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## 10-DAY ITINERARY

June 6-16, 1988

Visit

- The **JERUSALEM** of Jesus' day and the places that evoke His life, death, and resurrection.
- **MEGIDDO**, the site of the ancient battle of Armageddon.
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- **MASADA**, where the Roman army crushed the last Jewish resistance.
- **SINAI**, where Moses received the Ten Commandments.
- **BETHLEHEM**, the birthplace of Jesus, and **HEBRON**, the burial place of Abraham.
- **QUMRAN**, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered.
- **SHECHEM**, to climb the mounts of blessing and curses.
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- . . . and much more!

COST: **\$510**

This itinerary includes 8 hours of class instruction and the equivalent of 8 full days of touring. It offers 4 units of continuing education credit.

Actually live in the heart of Jerusalem, minutes from the Ancient Wall and Gethsemane—comfortable accommodations in the newly refurbished **JERUSALEM CENTER** Hostel—advantages of a small group with participants limited to 30.

Cost includes instruction, housing, meals, excursions (fares and entry fees), and transfers. Excludes airfares in and out of Israel.

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*Do all of what is included in the 10-day itinerary plus—*

- Spend a **ROSH HASHANAH** (Jewish New Year) and **YOM KIPPUR** (Day of Atonement) in Jerusalem.
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