

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

May 1991



Apartment House Evangelism

No circular reasoning

The charge by the *Ministry* book reviewers (November 1990) that Samuele Bacchiocchi (in *Wine in the Bible*) admits circular reasoning into his argument is, in my thinking, an invalid criticism.

There are two basic premises in Bacchiocchi's argument. The first is that Scripture is inspired by God and essentially does not contradict itself. The second is that when Scripture derogates wine, it does not specify only the *abuse* of wine, as some commentators assume, but both *use* and *abuse*.

The first premise, which is aired by all fundamentalists, is assumed but not specifically stated. The second premise is stated quite clearly. Once this second premise has been adopted, the division of texts containing the indiscriminate *yayin* into positive and negative statements is an inevitable step that will most likely yield strong similarities to Teachout's determinations.

Presumably most Adventist reviewers would agree with Bacchiocchi's first premise. Whatever criticism and debate there is should center on the acceptance of his second premise. Such debate would require evaluation of the coherence, cogency, and defensibility of interpretations given to seemingly difficult texts. It is notable that this has been attempted by the writer of the second half of the review. —Gary Christian, New South Wales, Australia.

Historicist method bears up

In our age of seeking the fresh and, yes, even the fanciful, I was encouraged by reading the consensus statement of the Daniel and Revelation Committee ("Issues in the Book of Revelation," January 1991).

Let's be alert to new prophetic insights as we pray for the Spirit's illumination, but let's never leave the historicist method of prophetic interpretation, which bears up quite well under examination. Protestant Reformers and, until rather recent times, their spiritual descendants were champions of the historicist school. Not so strange or shabby

bedfellows! —Ken Lockwood, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Le-moore, California.

■ Regarding the consensus statement of the Daniel and Revelation Committee: On page 11 we read, "The earthquake, sun, moon, and stars of the sixth seal are literal, and the opening of the sixth seal begins with the Lisbon earthquake." Later lines invoke Mark 13:24 in support.

There is no biblical support whatever for the interpretation given. The signs are mentioned about a dozen times in Scripture, but not always in the order demanded by the Adventist tradition (see Isaiah 13:9ff, which mentions the stars before the darkening of the sun). Obviously the signs are contemporaneous, not separated by decades and centuries. Furthermore, the great earthquake is that of the seventh plague (compare the last verses of Revelation 6 with the closing verses of chapter 16 and see also 11:19). Ellen White's *Early Writings* locates the signs on the eve of the Second Advent, not with the Lisbon earthquake (p. 41).

Mark 13:24, 25 includes the falling of the stars in "those days," which in context means the days of the great tribulation climaxing at the Second Coming. The years 538-1798 cannot possibly be meant, even on the traditional assumption of a fulfillment in 1833. The year 1833 is a long time after the supposed end of "those days." —Desmond Ford, Good News Unlimited, Auburn, California.

■ Ministry asked William Shea of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' Biblical Research Institute to reply:

The above comment confuses several earthquakes in the book of Revelation. There is an earthquake at the beginning of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12), and there is another at its end (verse 14). Neither of these earthquakes is the same as that which takes place during the interval between the sixth and seventh trumpets (Rev. 11:13). While Revelation 6:14 may synchronize with Revelation 16:20, Revelation 6:12 does not syn-

chronize with Revelation 16:18, 19.

Celestial signs did accompany the various occurrences of the Day of the Lord in Old Testament times, those involving Nineveh, Babylon, Samaria, and Jerusalem. But none of these Days of the Lord are the same as that in Revelation. To blend all of the celestial signs together is to misunderstand the nature of the Day of the Lord in Old Testament and New Testament times.

If one is going to cite Ellen G. White's view on this subject, one should give the full picture of her interpretation. She mentions the first earthquake of the sixth seal on page 305 of *The Great Controversy*, and the second earthquake on page 637. The celestial signs of this seal follow the first earthquake (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 308, 333). These celestial signs were distributed around—before, during, and after—the great termination of the time prophecy of the 1260 day-years in 1798. —William Shea, associate director, Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland.

A dangerous falsehood?

In his article "Sermon Introductions" (January 1991), Floyd Bresee is excellent on methodology but commits an appalling historical error when he offers as an example: "Nineteen hundred years ago there was a religious group who kept all the Ten Commandments, paid a full tithe, was most faithful in every detail of religious life—and they murdered Christ!"

The Gospels make it clear that it was the Romans, not the Jews—let alone the Pharisees—who crucified Jesus. And several generations of Christian and Jewish historians have demonstrated beyond doubt that those few Jews who played a part in the tragedy acted as they did, not because they were Jews, but in spite of that fact. They were collaborators with the Roman authorities. The overwhelming majority of Jews would have regarded Jesus with sympathy as yet another fellow Jew martyred by the hated Roman overlords.

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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. (You may subscribe to the other six issues per year for half the price of a full year's subscription. Write us at *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, and include a check for US\$11 or your Visa or MasterCard number.)

In this issue you will notice that we have begun printing not only the names but also the addresses of our international representatives. Those of you outside of North America who are receiving the complimentary subscriptions to *Ministry* that come every other month may correspond with these offices regarding questions, problems, or suggestions. (In North America, please continue to correspond with our Silver Spring, Maryland, office.)

This issue offers articles of interest on several counts. Three of the articles came from the international talent search we held last year. (The biographical notes reveal which three.) And it offers several mini-themes: two new approaches to evangelism, theological and philosophical reflections, and an emphasis on the family.

In addition *Pastor's Pastor* features more helpful advice on sermon preparation, and this month's Shop Talk offers suggestions on conducting funerals. All in all, there should be something here that you'll find helpful or stimulating.

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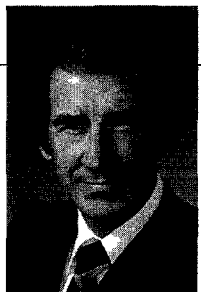
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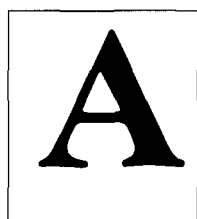
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As wide as humanity

Rex D. Edwards



n enquirer once asked a priest to define the position of a layperson in the Roman Catholic Church. The priest replied succinctly,

"The layman has two positions. He kneels before the altar; that is one. And he sits below the pulpit; that is the other."

Adding substantiality to this story, in his book *Lay People in the Church* Father Yves Congar wrote, "Lay people will always be a subordinate order in the church."¹

Congar says that the theology of the laity raises the whole question of ecclesiology. Though I disagree with his constricted view of the role of the laity in the church, I agree with his relating these two topics. But if—as those in this narrow Catholic tradition maintain—the ministry constitutes the church, it is difficult to see how the laity can play any other than a very minor role. Under these circumstances they constitute a kind of appendage, and the apostolic succession of the ministry is the sole guarantee of the existence of the church. Then the clergy are the rulers, and the laity the subjects. Is there not a richer and more worthy ecclesiology than this?

The definition of the church most common among Protestants affirms that the church is the whole company of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who evidence their faith by their manner of life. This definition has the advantage of directing attention to the person, faith, and vital obedience of the Christian, as well as that of plainly stating that Christians are a company, a fellowship. These things must always be central. But

this definition of the church is defective in that the place it gives to Christians and their faith may overshadow that of God and the salvation that He offers.

In this respect the concept of the church as the body of Christ has undoubted advantage. It draws attention to Christ as the head, and brings to mind the fact that He is the life of the church and that the church is always His church. The church, then, is the community in and through which Christ is bringing His redemption to bear on people's lives. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," said Jesus to His disciples (John 20:21).

There is no ground for regarding this commission as given only to the 12 or to those who are ordained. The commission belongs to the whole church, and indeed in the early centuries it is probable that it was laypeople who did most of the preaching of the gospel in new fields. It is a startling thing to read such a statement as that Congar cites from Bonaventure: "So the cleric is distinguished from the layman as having the charge not only of living by the faith and upholding it, but of imparting it."² On the contrary, imparting the faith is the task and privilege of the whole church—without differentiation. The church is always a people with a mission: by words and works to make the name of Jesus Christ known to the ends of the earth.

A Protestant cannot help being struck by the pitiable place assigned to the laity in Roman Catholic theology—though in fairness to the Catholic Church we must note that there is much contemporary thinking in its ranks that accords the laity a more active and less passive role.

Trying to upgrade the position of the laity, Congar himself wrote: "During the

last few decades Roman Catholics have made a veritable discovery of the crucial truth that lay people are fully 'of the church.'" To this end he also quotes a cardinal: "Lay people are not outside the church. They cannot be looked on as a kind of addition to the church, as if she comprised only the hierarchy."³

As for Protestantism, we may wonder whether in practice the average layperson in its churches does much more than sit below the pulpit and kneel at the holy table. But teachers, doctors, nurses, farmers, ministers—all are called to and should be involved in carrying out its mission; the ministries of all should win men, women, and children for God. When the mission of the church is being considered, anything like clericalism is wholly out of place.

The ministry—part of the church

So then there are many ministries, and among them is the ministry of oversight (which is sealed by ordination). But the church encompasses the ministry, not vice versa. It is the church that gives the ministry its being—not the ministry, the church. The ordained minister fulfills a representative function within the church.

The question of the right relationship between ministry and congregation is the central question. The ministry is derived from the congregation and exists for the congregation, yet this does not mean that the congregation controls the ministry. The congregation should recognize the ministry as called of God to their office and should recognize that their primary function is the preaching of the Word. It is preaching—rather than the conduct of public worship and the exercise of oversight—that is the hallmark of

the ministry (though these other two functions properly belong to the preaching ministry as well).

The priesthood of believers is the vocation of the whole church to intercede and witness. Here again we are dealing with a major theme. The duty and privilege of intercession belong to the whole Christian community. When ministers conduct public worship, they are leading the congregation, not doing something in place of them. Wherever the church is alive it expresses its vitality in prayer without ceasing. Such prayer opens the way to the ministries of care and compassion without which the church could never be the church. Though these tasks belong to the whole church, it is plain for all to see that the laity can here find unlimited scope for the exercise and expression of discipleship.

We have an unequalled opportunity to develop the concept of partnership in the service of Christ. This is no day for suspicion between ministry and laity. The whole task of the church is the task

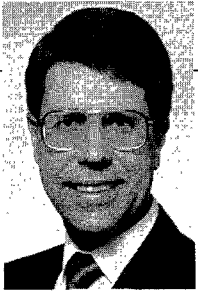
of the whole church. It is not a matter of rulers and ruled, teachers and taught, but of the people of God receiving all that God purposes to give and passing it on to a needy world. In order that this shall be done, the great army of laypersons must be instructed in the faith and given all possible guidance in translating this faith into action in the differing circumstances in which they serve. But no witness can be ultimately fruitful unless it issues from a life that is consecrated to God through and through. This is the supreme vocation of the whole church.

Ministers and laypeople are partners in an enterprise that is as wide as humanity. Their task is to bring the fullness of Christ through the fullness of the church to the whole human race—and the time is short, and the business urgent. ■

¹ Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church* (Madison, Wis.: Bloomsbury Press, 1985), p. xxiii.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.



Are there moral absolutes?

J. David Newman

I listened to a distinguished Christian ethicist speak about the standards of conduct and moral judgment. I became uneasy when he suggested that there are no such things as absolutes. His guiding principle seemed to be that of “doing the most loving thing for the person or people involved.” Eventually I raised my hand and asked him whether he considered the Ten Commandments to be relative or absolute. He hesitated for a long moment, then said, “I would have to consider them to be absolutes.”

“How do you reconcile that with your former statements?” I asked.

“Well,” he responded weakly, “there are some tensions.”

This “tension” stemmed from his un-

willingness to accept the Bible as the final authority, especially when it came to behavior. But such conduct as murder, adultery, theft, and lying is always unacceptable.

A story circulating out of the former East Germany illustrates the problem. A certain woman had been separated from her family and incarcerated in East Germany. Her only hope of escape was a policy that allowed pregnant women to leave.

She pondered her dilemma. Her husband and children now resided in West Germany. Was it “loving” to leave them without a wife and mother? Making her decision, she bribed a guard to impregnate her, and on proof of pregnancy was allowed to reunite with her family.

In some situations it seems that we must choose between two undesirable outcomes and have no prospects of a

third choice; we must choose the “lesser of two evils.” In our illustration, for example, the woman “had” to choose between remaining separated from her family and committing adultery. Some claim that such situations indicate that there are no absolutes. But these situations pose false dilemmas. God never leaves us in a position in which we are forced to break one of the Ten Commandments.

What about the effects of this woman’s adultery with the guard on that man and his family? And how did the woman know that God did not have a mission for her in that East German prison that might transcend the needs of her family? What if Joseph, falsely accused and imprisoned, had decided to find his own way out of the Egyptian dungeon by bribing a guard? God is well able to turn evil into good.

The Bible contains many illustrations of what happens when people place human wisdom above divine wisdom. God promised Abraham a son. Abraham and Sarah could not imagine how that could happen at their advanced age. So Sarah suggested that he help God out by following the local custom of taking a concubine. Scripture records the pain this decision caused.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could have invented many ethical reasons for bowing down to the image on the plain of Dura. Surely God would not want three families to lose their husbands and fathers. And besides, wouldn’t God rather have them continue as rulers of the provinces than be killed and have pagans take their place?

They recognized a third possibility—supernatural intervention. But they were prepared to die if God should not intervene. They believed that love and obedience to God superseded all other relationships.

This regarding of love to God as of first importance, and love to others as clearly second, is the only hierarchy of values that God has given. The vertical dimension always comes before the horizontal. The Ten Commandments, the first four of which tell us how to relate to God, are absolutes that allow no exceptions. They describe how we are to maintain the vertical and horizontal relationships. If there is conflict between the two, our relationship to God must take precedence over all other relationships.

David’s experience with Saul demonstrated both ends of the spectrum: the
(Continued on page 24)

Apartment house evangelism

Barbara Oden and Timothy Ponder

Here's a workable way of reaching the millions who live in the large apartment complexes of the world's urban areas.



Barbara Oden, the multifamily housing coordinator for the Union Baptist Association, coordinates and encourages the ministry Baptists are carrying on in Houston's apartment complexes.



Timothy Ponder pastors the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Bartlesville and Nowata, Oklahoma.

Houston is the fourth-largest city in America; 1.7 million people live within its city limits and close to another 2 million in its vicinity.¹ Nearly half (47 percent) of Houston's population live in its more than 3,000 apartment complexes—and only 2 percent of these people attend church.²

Barbara, how did you get involved with apartment house ministry?

I did not intend to get involved with it at the start. After being an apartment house manager for eight years, I wanted to do something else. I felt God was leading me into some type of full-time Christian work.

Looking for a youth position, I went to Mission Service Corps orientation to see what they had to offer. They told me about this apartment house ministry need. I called Harvey Kneisel [minister of missions at First Baptist Church in Houston] to see if I could help at First Baptist until I got an assignment with youth. An hour before I got there to interview with Harvey, an apartment manager in Spring Branch called and asked him if there was anybody who could come and live on her property and help her keep her tenants there. She offered—free—an apartment to live in and an apartment to use as an activity center, if someone would just come there to help her. That's how it all started. I felt that God was setting that whole thing up even before I got to Harvey's office.

What type of program did you implement at Springbrook Village?

There were a lot of ethnic people there, so we offered English classes four times a week—twice during the day and twice at night. You can always do an activity with kids, so we had a kids' Bible club every week. This club has special activities and crafts in addition to Bible instruction; it is similar to Vacation Bible School, but it goes all year long, once a week.³

The teenagers were driving everybody crazy, so we started a teen night. We'd have movies, or let them bring games and have a game night. We also started an aerobics exercise class, which the ladies really wanted. Out of this we developed a ladies' coffee and some Bible studies. It wasn't long before we started a church congregation right there at the apartments.

How did you get the people interested in the religious activities and not just the secular ones?

When we started, we did a survey to determine the interests and needs of the people in the apartment complex. Along with all the secular activities we offered on the survey, we listed home Bible study, teen Bible study, and a kids' Bible club. We immediately started these three spiritual activities with the people who expressed interest in them. Then as people began to talk about their problems and share with us something about their lives, we could share Christ with them. We asked these people to invite their friends and neighbors in the apartment complex to our Bible study classes.

We found that if we advertised sub-

jects that are vital to them, we could attract more of them to the studies. For example, we found that more people would come to our studies if we said that we were going to study the biblical view of parenting or marriage or being single or divorce or peer pressure—depending upon the group—than if we just said, “We are going to study the Bible.” People want to know how they can turn to the Bible to find help with their everyday life problems.

How does an activity director go about publicizing activities in the apartment complex?

We do a monthly calendar that lists all of the upcoming activities. The manager will often include this in the apartment newsletter. If not, we pass out the calendar and other flyer announcements door-to-door, so that everyone will be aware of what is going on. We also put up posters in the laundry rooms, by the mailboxes, and in other places.

When a ministry group is just starting its work in an apartment complex, the leaders usually plan a large event such as a carnival or a picnic with volleyball and softball to bring attention to the activity program. Three hundred people attended the carnival that was held to kick off the ministry at Springbrook Village apartments. Five of those attending became Christians as a result of this social event.⁴

What results did you see from your work at Springbrook Village?

I went there in August 1986. By the end of the year we had about 70 new believers on that property. Then we had another problem—what to do with these people. It takes a lot of transportation to get them to and from the church. Besides, they really didn't want to go to church. They were scared and felt uncomfortable. They didn't feel as if they had the right clothes or enough money to put into the offering. Since they didn't want to go to church, we decided that we would have Sunday school and church there.

So your original plan was to bus all of the new believers in the apartments to a nearby church?

Well, it seemed like the logical thing to do, especially with all of the churches around. I didn't understand that they didn't want to go. I had never worked with that type of person before. Every-

body I had been around had been to church, at least some of the time.

Do they feel as if they are going to church when they are in this apartment setting?

Yes, they really do. They develop their own congregation.

Do the apartment complexes have room for these church meetings?

We don't really get many more than 50 in our church fellowships; our largest one has 70. They don't get much larger than that because people are always moving out. That is why we try to keep the activities going—we need to keep people coming into the churches as others move away.

Further questioning revealed that the congregations meet in apartment units that have either been donated or rented—often with a second unit accommodating Sunday school classes. If an apartment complex has a clubroom and it is available, this often serves the space needs much better than does an apartment unit.⁵ As soon as possible a pastor (often a bivocational lay pastor) is assigned to work with the activity director in establishing and building up the new congregation.

Missions USA, a Baptist mission periodical, offers this interesting note on the Springbrook Community Church: “On Sunday mornings, members park their bicycles and skateboards outside the apartment that serves as the sanctuary. Felder's [the lay pastor's] head deacon is a tenth-grade student.”⁶

How do you help the Christians in these small apartment house congregations feel they are a part of a larger community of believers?

I'm working with about 24 churches in Houston. We invite the people in the apartments to special programs at the local churches, such as Easter and Christmas programs. If the church youth have a special retreat, or if the singles have something going, then we include those meeting in the apartments. Sometimes they will attend a Sunday night service at a church. However, they always feel like guests. They never feel as if that is their church.

How much money does it take to conduct an apartment house ministry?

Actually, if you use some ingenuity it costs very little each month—

By the end of the year we had about 70 new believers on that property.

somewhere around \$100. This money is used for supplies, refreshments, photocopying, things like that. What you need to find are dedicated people willing to give their time, and enough money to buy them their supplies.

We try to find a couple or a single person to move to the complex as the coordinator—the activity director. Then we try to get a couple to pastor the church once it gets going. We don't move both leaders into the apartments; only one or the other. Usually it is the activity director, since he or she is the person whom the manager wants to deal with. The activity director is interested in the overall program in the apartments, while the pastor focuses upon the spiritual aspect of the work.

We ask for two apartment units when we begin the ministry: one for the activity director or pastor to live in, and one for an activity center. We're willing to settle for one—but if we ask for just one to begin with, we're not likely to get two.

You mentioned ethnic groups earlier. I suppose that the main ethnic group you encountered in Houston is the Hispanic.

Yes, they are a large group, but I worked with a lot of Koreans at Springbrook Village. They made up my English classes. We also encountered a lot of Vietnamese and Laotians. And I found that it is hard to mix ethnic groups.

Some apartment complexes have limited access. You have to get the resident's permission before you can gain admission to the complex itself. Is this common, or is this the exception?

Some of the higher priced complexes have this security feature. We have activity coordinators in a couple of these; the managers have allowed them to open the gates when they have an activity.

How many apartment house ministries are you currently coordinating for

the Union Baptist Association in Houston?

We have 32 active ministries in apartments throughout the city, but 65 complexes are waiting for an activity director. That's frustrating!

I don't even advertise. I don't tell managers anymore; in fact, I try to keep it quiet. To let these managers sit there month after month when they've asked for our services is much worse than if they had never heard about them. When we began, we talked to a lot of managers, telling them what we had to offer. Sometimes they would say yes; most times they would say no. But as we became successful, there was a much greater demand for our services. The first complex I worked in, Springbrook Village apartments, was 50 percent occupied when we came. Within that first year occupancy went up to 92 percent. Another complex, The Oaks of Wood Forest, has gone from 70 to 97 percent occupied while our ministry has been there.

What makes these occupancy rates improve so much?

People know that if they move to another complex, they are not likely to have these activities there. And these programs give the managers a strong selling point when someone comes inquiring about renting.

Share with us again some of the services that your ministry offers.

We offer activities, seminars, and study classes that help people—for example, "English as a Second Language" and "How to Operate Your Car on \$500 a Year."

We also try to run a benevolence program in the apartments. We help the needy residents with food and clothing; once in a while we can help them with a utility bill or steer them to the place where they can get help. If they need a job, we try to use what resources we have to get the word out so they can get a job. There are food banks in different parts of the city, and we try to take the people to one of these if they need assistance with their groceries. Many of our churches also have food banks.

Serious social problems are facing us everywhere, but these problems seem to be compounded and magnified in the large cities—in the setting in which you and your workers are ministering. How do those in apartment ministries deal

with such situations as broken families and divorce, alcoholism, drug abuse, incest, physical abuse, crime, promiscuity, etc.?

It is not easy for our workers to deal with this aspect of the ministry. The churches meet with their people who are involved in this ministry on a regular basis. Also, I try to meet with the coordinators once a month so that we can talk through and share together the difficulties and problems they are confronting. But it is really tough. The situations and problems you face in the apartments will really break your heart.

We're just lay people; we don't have seminary training. Many of the volunteers find the behavior they see offensive. It is hard for them to accept people where they are and draw them to Christ. And they want these people to change right now. We have the mind-set that if these people accept Christ as their Saviour, they will automatically become like us. When people say that they have accepted the Lord and we go back the next week and see the beer bottles on the table or find out that they spent two or three nights with a woman, we get really impatient.

The gospel does have power to change lives, but sometimes we don't see the progress we would like to see.

We need to remember that Jesus spent time with the woman at the well and Zaccheus; He ate with the publicans and sinners. We should do the same as we try to reach them for the Lord.

What has your work in the apartment ministry taught you about the urgency of sharing the gospel?

I just came back from Fort Worth. In the part of the city where the church I visited was located, 64.5 percent of the people live in apartments, and only 4 percent of them attend church. There are 32 apartment complexes around this particular church in Fort Worth. A study found that only 40 people out of the 10,000 that reside in those apartments had visited this church. And the church is right across the street from them! They just will not go. There is resistance to church, no matter what the denomination.

As Christians, we all must work together in reaching the world for Christ. I think those of us who believe in salvation must join hands and reach the people who live in these apartments. I don't care

whether you are a Baptist or not—your help is needed! ■

¹ The Research Department of the Houston Chamber of Commerce provided these population figures for 1987 for the city of Houston and the surrounding counties. The official designation of this seven-county regional area is "Houston-Galveston-Brazoria Consolidated Statistical Area."

² Barbara Oden named a study done by the Houston Apartment Association as the source for this figure on church attendance.

³ Another children's program those in apartment ministry hold during the week is the Big A Club. This club meets on Sunday morning as a special type of Sunday school. It is a yearlong Bible study program developed to teach unchurched elementary children who Jesus is and why He came to this earth.

⁴ Clay Renick, "A Church for Everyone," *Missions USA*, January-February 1988, p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

To learn more . . .

If you would like to learn more about ministering in apartment complexes, you can purchase the manual written and compiled by Barbara Oden, *The "How To" Book for Starting Ministry in Multifamily Housing Communities*. Send US\$8.00 (which includes postage and handling) to Barbara Oden, c/o Union Baptist Association, 2060 N. Loop West, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77018; phone: (713) 957-2000. (Make the check payable to Union Baptist Association.)

Barbara Oden is also willing to come to your church for a seminar about apartment house ministry. Or you may go to Houston and observe an apartment ministry firsthand. In either case, please contact her at the above address.

You may also learn more about apartment house ministry through a set of videotapes. The two videotapes feature Barbara Oden; Harvey Kneisel, minister of missions at First Baptist Church of Houston; and Tillie Burgin, minister of missions at First Baptist Church of Arlington, Texas. (This congregation is conducting apartment ministries in 50 different apartment complexes in the Arlington area.) The videotapes consist of a presentation from each of the three speakers and a question and answer symposium.

You can order the Multifamily Housing Ministry videotapes, which are sold as a set, from Carl Elder, c/o Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 N. Washington St., Dallas, TX 75246; phone: [214] 828-5375. Write or call Carl Elder's office for further information, including the price of the tapes.

Activities for an apartment ministry

As you plan for ministry in an apartment complex, you should first determine which activities your group or outside resource persons are capable of providing. List these activities on a survey and distribute it to all of the residents at the apartment complex. The completed survey will give your ministry leaders a clear idea of which activities the residents would most likely attend.

It is much better to do a few activities well than to offer many activities and do them in a mediocre way. Barbara Oden recommends that for their continuing adult programming, apartment ministries begin with just two activities: one a secular activity or seminar, the other a weekly Bible study. More can be added once these are well-established.

Many of the activities in the following list are those used by Barbara Oden and the ministry workers at Springbrook Village apartments in Houston. Others are being implemented in other apartment complexes in the city. Delete and add, adapt and adopt, as best fits your situation.

Social events and activities

(These activities allow the ministry leaders to make friends with the residents.)

- Kids' carnival
- Skating party (for teens or pre-teens)
- Family movie night (one night a week, usually Saturday night)
- Puppet show
- Miniature golf
- Game night (at a local gymnasium or elsewhere)
- Ladies' coffee

Seasonal social events (children's Christmas party, Easter egg hunt, Fall festival, Fall-Halloween social event at First Baptist Church of Houston)

- Progressive dinner (for adults)
- Baptist summer camp
- Field trips (Houston zoo, Astros baseball, Astroworld, San Jacinto battleground, beach party)
- Friday Night Gas Station (a weekly youth social meeting at Westview Mission Center)
- International dinner (an annual event)

Classes and seminars (secular)

- English as a second language (conversational English classes)
- Photography class
- Aerobic exercise class
- How to Operate Your Car on \$500 a Year (auto repair and maintenance)
- Craft class
- Understanding Your Children
- Child care clinic
- Children's choir
- Hearing clinic
- Jogging clinic
- Sewing class
- Security seminar
- Fire protection
- Cooking class
- Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class
- Survival training
- Financial planning seminar
- Dress Well on a Small Budget

Spiritual activities

Backyard Bible club (a weeklong children's program similar to Vacation Bible School—with Bible stories, singing,

crafts, and games—that can meet during any month of the year)

- Kids' Bible club (similar to the Backyard Bible Club, but meets once a week)
- Big A club (a program designed to teach unchurched elementary-school-aged children about Jesus)
- Teen Bible study (like the Kids' Bible club, this activity meets once each week)
- Spanish Bible study

Gospel music concerts (bus transportation to a gospel music concert or festival)

Sunday school and worship service (usually conducted in the apartment complex; otherwise, provide transportation to a nearby church)

Home Bible study (Small groups of adults studying the Bible about topics relevant to their needs. These small groups, which meet once during the week, form the core of the congregation in the apartment complex.)

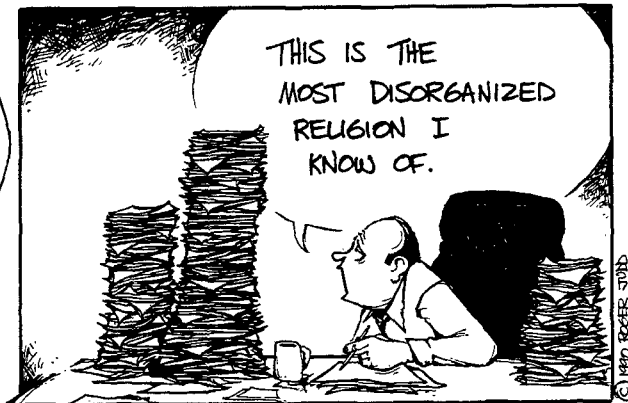
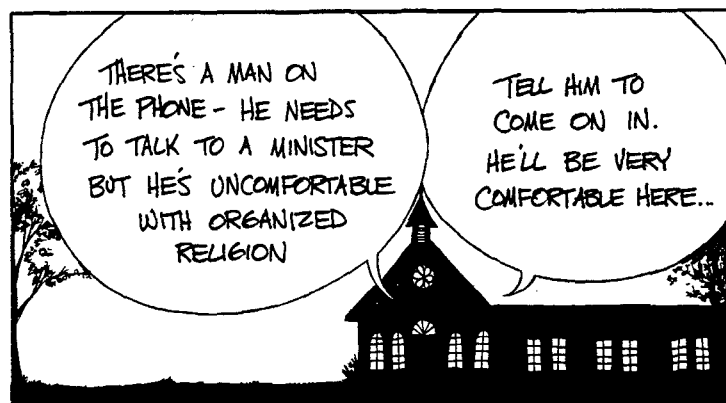
Mini-revival services (with special guest speakers and gospel music)

Special Sunday celebrations (on Easter, Christmas, and other special occasions during the year)

Mission trip (In June 1988, the youth groups from the different apartments' ministries in Houston went on a seven-day mission trip to Mexico. They did Backyard Bible clubs, other witnessing activities, and sightseeing.)

Benevolence assistance (This ministry helps needy individuals and families in the apartment complex with urgent food, clothing, and utility needs. Whenever necessary, it directs these people to community service agencies where they can receive further assistance. It also assists persons in the task of job hunting.)

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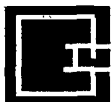
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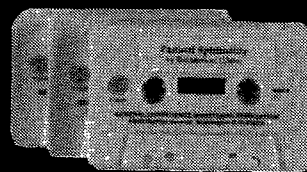
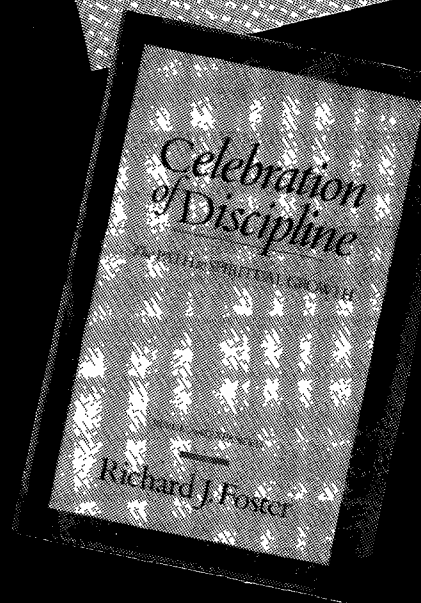
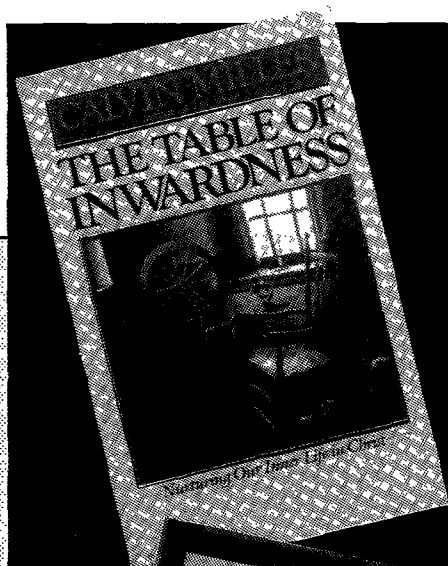
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—Douglas Alan Walrath

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Pauline images of salvation

Robert K. McIver

A mosaic of beauty and color marks Paul's choice of words to describe the good news of the gospel.



Robert K. McIver, Ph.D., is a lecturer in New Testament at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Every so often we read or hear a phrase that at once summarizes an entire era or opens up new horizons in our thinking. Years ago, I had such an experience. My seminary professor was reminiscing at an informal get-together on the kinds of sermons he had heard during his lifetime. "Victory in Christ" seemed to dominate the pulpit during his high school and college years. Weeks of prayer, camp meetings, revivals, and major occasions involving visiting speakers underscored Christian victory as the essential theme of the gospel. In more recent years, my professor went on to say, the emphasis seemed to have shifted to "relationships."

I have thought many times about my professor's attempt to encapsule Christian preaching of many years. Reflecting on my own experience—growing up in a Christian home, attending youth meetings, studying in a Christian college, and now teaching theology—I tend to agree with my teacher, but feel tempted to add one more classification. I think I must have caught the tail end of the preachers of "victory in Christ." I can vividly remember many meetings where I responded to an altar call to rededicate my life to Jesus to gain victory over my sins. When I arrived at college to study the Bible I discovered a new theme: justification by faith. I was hardly a week at college when somebody thrust in my hand a questionnaire on justification by faith. It seemed apparent that the worth of my Christianity would be weighed by how well I answered the questions. A correct

understanding of righteousness by faith, I was told, would confirm my orthodoxy, quickly finish the work, and hasten the return of Jesus. A third trend in preaching, noted more recently, emphasizes relationships.

Thus, in my experience of listening to Adventist sermons, I can trace three key themes over three periods of time in my growth and development. If I were to ask the question, "What is the essence of Christianity?" preachers of each period would provide a distinct answer.

Now, these answers are not contradictory, but they help us to understand how different emphases get the focus in Christian preaching and teaching. In this article I propose to review Paul's understanding of the gospel by looking at the word pictures he employed to describe its essence.

Paul uses a wide range of rich imagery to describe what Christianity is all about. Many of the words, now perhaps reserved for Christian theological use, were part of the ordinary scene of the first century. Paul's readers would have understood his message and its meaning without too much difficulty. Let us review some of Paul's keywords and capture the beauty and the richness of his grasp of the uniqueness and the preciousness of the gospel.

Justification/Righteousness

When Paul speaks of justification by faith in his epistles to Romans and Galatians, he is using a metaphor from the law courts. The Greek word that is translated "to justify" is *dikaioō* (*dikaioōsune*, "righteousness"; *dikaioōs*, "righteous"). When a person stands accused before a court and

the judge declares him not guilty, that person is declared innocent. Paul applies that forensic model to the process of salvation and asserts that because of what Jesus had done, God declares the sinner who comes to Him in faith as righteous.

While John uses a different set of words, what is described in his gospel (John 3:17-19; 5:24) is close to what Paul means by justification by faith. According to John, the one who believes in Jesus does not enter into judgment, while the one who does not believe has been judged already. The judgment comes at the end of the age, and the verdict given in judgment will determine a person's place in the new age. But the believer in Jesus already knows what that verdict will be—eternal life. Similarly in Paul: sinners are justified by faith (*pistis*, "belief"), and if they believe in Jesus and continue their relationship with Him, they have assurance as to the outcome of the final judgment. They know now (in the present) that the verdict will be "not guilty." Their status of righteousness is assured in Jesus (because Jesus is righteous). The future has become present in Christ, and can be grasped by the believers through faith.

Redemption

"Redemption" means repurchase—the act of buying back by paying the price demanded. One speaks of redeeming lost property or redeeming goods placed in a pawn shop by paying a certain amount of money. This is the meaning behind the word *apolutrōsis* that Paul uses to speak of the act of redemption in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24). A particularly striking image associated with this word in its first-century usage concerns the redemption of a slave. A slave could redeem himself and purchase his freedom by paying his owner his market value as a slave, or someone else could buy his freedom by paying the price. Thus when Paul spoke of Jesus as a redeemer, he was in effect saying that Jesus has paid the price to free us from the bondage of sin. His readers couldn't have missed the point of the movement from slavery to freedom—all as a free gift from Jesus, who indeed paid a heavy price for the salvation of the human race.

The concept of freedom in Christ is further reinforced by Paul's emphasis that the individual freed from sin has voluntarily become a slave (*doulos*) of Christ (Rom. 6:15-23). The difference is that the slave in Christ is a joyous, vibrant, living testimony to passing from the

power of sin and death and becoming the inheritor of eternal life.

Reconciliation

"Reconciliation" belongs to the world of relationships. It means an end to estrangement, a restoration of strained relationships. Two persons are estranged. A gulf in relationship divides the two. One party takes the initiative, chooses to freely forgive the other, stretches out the hand across the gulf, and invites the other to accept it. The second party reflects on the magnanimous action, an act of grace, and decides to accept the offer. The gulf is bridged. The relationship is rebuilt. Reconciliation occurs. Paul utilizes this warm image to impress upon his readers the infinitely greater initiative of God through Christ in reconciling the human race to Himself (2 Cor. 5:11-21; Rom. 5:11). God's activity, Christ's role, the free provision, the need for human acceptance of what is available in Christ, the provision for spreading the good news of reconciliation, and the objective that "we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21)* are all present in the Pauline image of reconciliation.

Salvation

The Greek for "save" (*sōzō*, "save"; *sōtēr*, "savior"; *sōtēria* and *sōtērios*, "salvation") conveys at least two different meanings. Mark 5:34 provides an example of the first. A woman afflicted for 12 years with an incurable illness finds herself healed the moment she touches Jesus' robe. And Jesus told her: "Your faith has healed (*sesōken*, "saved") you." The Greek has a double meaning. The woman was not only healed by faith, but also saved by faith.

The second meaning of *sōzō* is rescue. Deliverance comes to a besieged city at the moment of its greatest need. The city is saved from destruction. It is in this sense that the thief on the cross urges Jesus to save Himself and His companions from death (Luke 23:39).

Thus when Paul says that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13), he is affirming both healing and rescue; restoration and deliverance.

Imputation

Paul also uses the word *logizomai* as part of his vocabulary to describe how God treats the repentant. The word means "reckon," or "impute." It comes from the world of business. When a certain amount

of money is credited to an account, that activity is described by *logizomai*. Paul uses that word to describe justification by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited [*logizomai*] to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). To the readers of Paul, familiar with the vocabulary of the day, the message was inescapable: just as a debt is canceled by a credit reckoned against that debt, so is the enormous burden and guilt of sin canceled by God when He by His grace accepts a sinner who comes to Him in faith and seeks His forgiveness. Abraham believed in God; it was counted as righteousness.

Honor

As is true in parts of the world today, the society of the first-century Mediterranean world assessed a person's worth in terms of honor.¹ But most readers of Paul who come from societies influenced by Western ideas would probably miss this dimension of his thought.

In Paul, the key terms that deal with this kind of imagery are shame (*aischunomai*, "I am ashamed"; *aischunē*, "shame," "disgrace") and boasting (*kauchaomai*, "I boast, take pride in"; *kauchema*, "ground for boasting," "pride"). The specific terms of honor/face are not as prominent, although Paul does say that there is no *prosopolempsia* (literally, "receiving face") before God in judgment, and that judgment is based on what a man has done and not his honor-status in society (Rom. 2:11).

Shame, however, the opposite of honor, does occur at some very important places in Paul's argument in Romans. In Romans 1:16, an important summary passage, Paul explains that he is not ashamed of the gospel. And he stresses several times that one who believes in Jesus will not be ashamed (e.g., Rom. 5:5; 9:33; 10:11).

The verb *kauchaomai* ("boasting") occurs in Romans 3:27 and 4:2 and in 5:2, 3. The English word "boasting" has such negative connotations that many modern versions translate the occurrences in chapter 5 with the word "rejoice." But this translation obscures the direct and intentional contrast between the two sets of occurrences of the word. In Romans 3:27 and 4:2 Paul is at pains to point out that people have no grounds for boasting before God on any basis within themselves. But in Romans 5:2, 3 he says that once declared righteous, Christians do have grounds for boasting. They have status in God's eyes. They have honor. But their

honor is entirely centered on God's righteousness and not on their own.

Grace

The word "grace" is central to Christian understanding of salvation. The Greek *charis* means "favor," or "kindness," especially unearned or unmerited. Paul uses the word to stress that God's saving activity in Jesus is absolutely unmerited by the sinner and that it is God's loving disposition toward the erring creature. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Grace carries with it the imagery of gift as well. The recipient does not deserve it, but is free to accept it; he or she has no ground to boast but much to rejoice. The grace-gift image from Paul's time also suggests that the recipient pledges loyalty and service out of thankfulness to the patron.

Through Christ, in Christ, by Christ

One of Paul's brilliant arguments for the salvation of the human race through the death of Christ is found in Romans 5:12-21. Here the apostle postulates that "just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

The argument has posed continual difficulty for the Western mind. However, a little understanding of the culture in which Paul was using the argument would lead to a better appreciation of the passage. No contemporary reader of Paul would have required any particular explanation as to how one man's sin led to the condemnation of all and one man's righteousness led to the righteousness of all. In Paul's time, the individual was intimately tied to the group (for example, family or household).² An insult to one was an insult to all. Good fortune for one was good fortune for all. Thus the Pauline model of salvation in Romans 5 may be understood better as a participatory or a household model in which a corporate dynamic may be apparent.

Sanctification

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul speaks of "those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy" (1 Cor. 1:2). Sanctification (*hagiazō*, "sanctify"; *hagiasmos*, "sanctification," "consecration," "holiness"; *hagios*, "holy") has strong Old Testament roots. It is equivalent to the Hebrew *qadash*, "to set apart." The

word stresses the dynamic contrast between the holy and the unholy, the common and the uncommon, the clean and the unclean, particularly in reference to temple services and the priestly ministry.

As used by Paul, the concept of sanctification also belongs to this dynamic between clean and unclean, holy and unholy. By joining himself to Christ, the Christian now partakes of holiness. The Christian now is dedicated specifically to the service of God. In fact, this experience is available to Christians now, and begins when they are baptized (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:11).³

Atonement

In Romans 3:25 Paul uses the important word (*hilastērion*) to describe what God did through Jesus.⁴ Translation of the word varies: "propitiation" (KJV), "expiation" (RSV), "sacrifice of atonement" (NIV). Paul takes a metaphor from the world of sacrifice, and uses it to portray the supreme sacrifice Jesus made in the drama of salvation. The image of sacrificial substitution suggests that when a person sinned, the sinner brought a sacrifice, effecting a reconciliation between the sinner and God.

Paul uses this imagery to show that as sinners we deserved to die; but just as the sacrificial animal took the place of the sinner and died in his or her stead, so Jesus took our place and died in our stead, and brought us release from death and reconciliation with God. By His sacrificial death Jesus accomplished propitiation, atonement, and expiation; Jesus met the penalty of sin and has made possible the reconciliation of all who have faith in Him.

Victory

Several times Paul stresses that Christ has overcome the demonic forces that have enslaved the world. In doing so, he is using the images derived from warfare. One well-known place where this imagery becomes specific is in the detailed description of the Christian's armor in Ephesians 6:11-20. Paul not only allegorizes the various elements of a soldier's weaponry and armor, but he also states that the fight is against the evil spiritual powers of the heavenly realm (verse 12). But in all this the Christian is a conqueror, and can withstand the onslaughts of angels, principalities, and powers (Rom. 8:37-39).

The image of *peace* also comes from the imagery of war. In stark contrast to the

devastation of defeat in war, those who are justified have peace toward God (Rom. 5:1). They can look forward to and even now enjoy a divine rest from all the struggle of the warfare. It is the calm of peace that characterizes their existence.

To conclude: how would Paul answer the question "What is the essence of Christianity?" While it may be presumptuous to put words in his mouth, we could arrive at a composite answer from various pictures the apostle himself used to describe the saving activity of God. Christianity is the verdict "Not guilty," made possible now through the death of Jesus to all those who believe in Him. Christianity is freedom that comes as a result of being redeemed from sin by the precious price of Calvary. Christianity is reconciliation of the estranged sinner to God, the God of love who has already forgiven us. Christianity is healing from sin and rescue from certain death. Christianity is God imputing righteousness to us, and transforming us from our status of shame to a status of honor by His free gift. Christianity is God's grace in loving activity toward His erring creatures. Christianity is participation in the household of Christ; it is being set apart for holy service to God. Christianity is the provision of atonement for our sins; and it is the victory over the demonic forces of evil that Christ has accomplished and that is ours to share.

In other words, Christianity is the best news that you are ever likely to hear! It is indeed the gospel, the "good news." ■

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

¹ Chapter two of the book *The New Testament World: Insights From Cultural Anthropology*, by Bruce Malina (Atlanta: Knox, 1981), entitled "Honor and Shame: Pivotal Values of the First-Century Mediterranean World," gives an excellent introduction to this aspect of the sociological background of the New Testament.

² The chapter entitled "The First Century Personality: The Individual and the Group" in Malina's book is a helpful introduction to this concept.

³ See also the brief but helpful discussion of sanctification in the article "Dynamics of Salvation," *Adventist Review*, July 31, 1980, pp. 6, 7.

You will readily notice that systematic theologians generally have a different concept in mind when they use the term "sanctification." Systematicians are dealing with a very important issue when they discuss sanctification, but when they do so they draw upon different New Testament terms and images than that of sanctification, terms such as growth, maturity, and perfection.

⁴ I read the term as a reference to propitiation. Both the reference to Christ as redemption and the immediate insistence that the atonement is by His blood seem to demand this interpretation. The fact that substitutionary atonement is a theory of atonement that is currently largely out of favor in theological circles should not prevent the exegete from reading the text in its most natural manner.

A church that draws thousands

Joe Engelkemier

How did 25 high school students and their youth pastor become a church that attracts more than 14,000 people every weekend?



Joe Engelkemier, a freelance writer, has taught religion on the high school and college levels and has written and edited high school religion textbooks. He lives in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

The headline in the Suburban Living section of the May 18, 1988, *Chicago Daily Herald* asked, "Why Do 12,000 People a Week Flock to Hear What This Man Has to Say?"¹ A photo showed Bill Hybels, senior pastor at Willow Creek Community Church, seated alone in an auditorium that holds 4,556 people.

The next day a half-page photo in the same newspaper introduced a second article by showing the same auditorium filled with thousands of people. A subtitle spoke of "old messages" staging "a modern comeback at this unusual church."

Signs of the Times has reported that according to a late-1988 survey 44 percent of adults in America do not belong to a church. The same survey also revealed that 63 percent of these nonattenders believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and 58 percent are open to the idea of belonging to a church.²

If 58 percent of the unchurched are open to belonging to a church, what keeps them away?

The process that put Hybels on the track of an answer to this question began in 1972, when he was youth leader for about 25 high school students. He had tried to get his youth to invite unchurched high school friends to a weekly meeting. They seemed hesitant, and he asked them why.

These youth, he found out, didn't think their sharp high school friends would respond to what they were

doing—singing "Pass It On" and "Kumbaya" and taking lengthy treks in the Scriptures. He challenged them to help design a service that *would* interest nonbelieving friends. The students suggested multimedia, contemporary music, skits, and messages that would help high school students with their daily problems.

They started a Thursday night service that included the things suggested. The core group met Monday nights to study the Bible and pray. "In our Monday night meetings," Hybels said, "students would sometimes spend up to an hour praying for their friends."

In three years attendance increased to more than 1,000 young people!

Having found that they could program so as to interest modern youth, Hybels and several of his young helpers wondered whether they could also discover what would interest unchurched adults. In 1975 they spent a month—eight hours a day, six days a week—conducting a house-to-house survey. Their first question was "Are you active in a local church?" When they got a "Yes," they thanked the person and went to the next house. When they got a "No," they asked, "Would you be willing to tell us why you do not attend?"

"Boy, did we get an earful," Hybels says. "Church is boring, church is irrelevant, church is predictable." And the number one complaint: "The church is always asking for money."

This survey convinced him that traditional and often boring services would never attract the vast majority of non-church people. Drawing cues from what they learned from their survey and from

their experience with the youth, Hybels and his staff developed a format for adult nonchurch people that now attracts thousands.

Targeting "Unchurched Harry"

Willow Creek's target is the adult male 25 to 50—a man they call "Unchurched Harry." On weekends he watches TV instead of going to church. He may be full of questions about the meaning of life, but has probably been turned off by organized religion.

What brings Harry to Willow Creek?

The reporter who wrote the *Daily Herald* article suggested that it is important to understand what Hybels *does not* do. He does not promise to heal the sick, and he does not speak in tongues. He does not preach about hellfire and damnation, and he does not resort to pressure techniques. "Most incredible of all," the *Daily Herald* reported, "he does not ask for money. At every service, when the collection baskets are passed, program director Nancy Beach makes the same announcement: 'If you're visiting with us, we don't want you to feel any obligation to participate in this part of the service. You are our guest.'" ³

Hybels does place a high value on his gift of teaching. He does that teaching calmly and earnestly from a lectern, and discourages the exuberant expressions of faith sought by some televangelists. He is, in fact, turned off by most TV ministries.

"Our seekers want to be left alone," Hybels asserts. "They don't want to say anything, sing anything, sign anything, or give anything. They want to seek from the shadows. And if we allow that, they'll hang around, and sooner or later they're going to be moved."

I first heard about Willow Creek from my pastor early in 1988, and arranged to attend the last two days of a pastors' conference shortly thereafter.

What I found was creativity, excellence, openness, a spirit of helpfulness, and an intense desire to reach unchurched people.

Because I live less than three hours from Willow Creek, I have been able to attend a half-dozen pastors' conferences and a number of weekend services. While we need to evaluate each technique used and be selective, I have concluded that we as Seventh-day Adventists can learn a lot from Hybels about how to be more effective at reaching the unchurched around us.

There is a second reason that I have tried to learn all I can about the methods and strategies used at Willow Creek. Like the unchurched, many of our own youth have mistakenly thought that Christianity is "musty, outmoded, and far-removed from modern-day problems." From its beginning, Willow Creek has attracted large numbers of young adults. In the words of *Guideposts*, the founders "were a group of people, mostly young, who were determined to bring vitality into their worship, and to apply the message of Jesus Christ to their daily lives in practical and dynamic ways."⁴

A two-pronged ministry

To reach the unchurched and at the same time nurture and disciple believers, Hybels has developed a two-phased ministry. The first phase comprises weekend services, one on Saturday night and two on Sunday morning, that are designed to attract the unchurched. These "seeker services" provide a low-key evangelistic environment. Seekers are able to remain anonymous and investigate Christianity at their own pace.

Hybels calls his weekend messages "Christianity 101." These introductory-level messages focus on the needs and interests of Unchurched Harry. They come in series—the series taking up such subjects as "Facing Up to Fear," "The Power of Prayer," "How to Pick a Partner," "Fanning the Flames of Marriage," "Taking Care of Business," "Money, Sex, and Power," "Faith Has Its Reasons," and "Negotiating the Maze of Life" (an early 1990 series on decision-making).

The number of messages in a series varies from three to as many as 10. Each message is preceded by a skit that focuses on a real-life problem or need. Contemporary music also plays a key role in preparing hearts and minds for the day's topic. The message then draws truths from God's Word that help the listener see God's solution for the problem or need being examined.

In contrast to the weekend "seeker services," the two identical midweek meetings—the "New Community" services that make up the second phase of Hybels' ministry—are worship experiences for believers. Key elements include a half hour or more of exaltation through song, corporate and private prayer and reflection, occasional media presentations, and 30 to 40 minutes of weighty

"Our seekers want to be left alone. They want to seek from the shadows. And if we allow that, sooner or later they're going to be moved."

expository teaching—Hybels' upper division "Christianity 401."

Nothing superficial

I first attended a New Community service while at Willow Creek for a pastors' conference. Many of the 4,200 people there that evening appeared to be in their 20s and 30s. Two young men seated near me were talking to each other about praying for some friends. (I have found Willow Creek's members to be friendly, helpful, and eager to share.)

That evening the service closed with Willow Creek's favorite song—"Amazing Grace." Listening to thousands of people enthusiastically singing "Amazing Grace" so moved me that I could hardly keep back the tears. At an evangelism seminar a couple days later I mentioned the impact of that experience upon me. One of the two directors of the seminar, Lee Strobel, related that he had come into the auditorium from duties elsewhere just as that song was being sung. He said that as he realized anew what he had found at Willow Creek, he "went to an empty place in the balcony and sat down and cried."

Eight years earlier Strobel had been an atheist. "I thought that the idea of God was ridiculous," he told us. He had a high-paying job and felt no need of religion. But his wife, whom someone had invited to Willow Creek, finally per-

sueded him to attend at least once "just to hear the music."

The music was great, he conceded, but he was more impressed by Bill Hybels' sermon about salvation as a gift of grace. His curiosity stimulated, Strobel spent months in careful investigation—ultimately concluding that God does exist and that the resurrection of Christ is a historical fact. These convictions led to his conversion.

As Lee Strobel's experience illustrates, there is nothing superficial in the ministries carried out at Willow Creek. There are no "happy talk" sermons. The objective is to reach out to people where they are and help them grow into what Hybels calls "fully devoted followers of Christ."

Membership requirements at Willow Creek Community Church are substantial. Along with accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord and being baptized as a believer, to become a member one must: (1) complete one year of regular attendance and consistent participation in the life of the Willow Creek Community Church; (2) go through the membership classes; (3) be interviewed by an elder or another appointed leader; and (4) sign a statement of commitment to the church.

To maintain their membership, members must re-sign this statement of commitment each year. Would a similar practice in our own denomination help our congregations maintain a higher degree of commitment to Christ and His service? Would it also enable us more quickly to discern and help those who are growing lax or indifferent?

If the approach to ministry used at Willow Creek Community Church appeals to you, may I encourage you to attend one of the pastors' conferences held there each February, May, and October? You'll need to get your application in early; by February of 1990 there was already a waiting list of more than 200 for the May conference. For information, contact Bob Bever or Denise Nelson at (708) 382-6200. ■

¹ By November 1990 the attendance was 14,000.

² "Update," *Signs of the Times*, February 1989, p. 6.

³ Tom Valeo, *Daily Herald* reprint, p. 2.

⁴ Mary Ann O'Roark, "Applying the Word," *Guideposts*, November 1989, p. 43.

Willow Creek

1. Leadership at Willow Creek continually emphasizes that "lost people really matter to God." Bill Hybels draws this thought from Luke 15—the only place in Scripture, he says, where Jesus told three stories to make a single point. "Any time I sense my people are losing their motivation to reach out to the unchurched," he tells participants at pastors' conferences, "I take them back to Luke 15."

Willow Creek leaders have developed a seven-step strategy for taking an unchurched person from point zero (no spiritual interest) all the way to the end goal—"FDF" (fully devoted follower of Christ). As the first step in that strategy, Hybels suggests, a believer must develop a "relationship of integrity" with Unchurched Harry. The more members a church has who believe that lost people really matter to God, the more of such relationships that can be developed.

Hybels models what he preaches on this point. At one of the conferences that I attended, associate pastor Don Cousins said that at Willow Creek "the number one example of evangelism is Bill Hybels. When he speaks, he understands the Harry that he is talking to, for he has a lot of Harrys in his life."

Hybels regularly challenges the leaders who come to pastors' conferences, asking them, "How many unchurched people do you have as close friends? If you don't model building friendships with unchurched people, how can you expect your members to do so?"

2. Willow Creek leaders consistently train believers to become coworkers on the ministry team. Growth results as members are disciplined to become effective team members. The second step of the Willow Creek strategy, for example, calls for the believer to give a verbal witness to Unchurched Harry about what it means to be a Christian. Members are taught several concise, accurate, compelling illustrations they can use in giving this personal testimony.

The believer then invites Harry to a weekend service, and later to a midweek believers' service. Hybels has no altar calls, but periodically he closes a weekend message with an invitation for seekers to choose Christ and then to share that decision with him, with a staff member or friend, or with the person who has

been encouraging the seeker to come.

The final three steps in the Willow Creek strategy are: one, get Harry into a small group; two, help him discover his spiritual gifts; and three, encourage him to enter into stewardship of his time, spiritual gifts, and money.

To help members discover their spiritual gifts and begin using them, the leaders at Willow Creek have developed a system that they call "networking." They have formed scores of ministries in which motivated members can use their spiritual gifts. At pastors' conferences one can secure a notebook that explains in detail how to develop a networking program. (For information about attending a Willow Creek pastors' conference, see the end of the main article.) Through networking, or something similar to it, pastors could help many more of their members to become effective collaborators with themselves.

3. Hybels uses lengthy, lively song services and practical, Bible-centered messages to attract believers to Willow Creek's New Community services. When I was at Willow Creek for the February 1989 pastors' conference, the 4,556-seat auditorium filled to overflowing for the Wednesday night New Community service in spite of the fact that the wind chill outside was 31 degrees below zero! In September of 1989, a second New Community service was added on Thursday nights. Because of Willow Creek's strict membership requirements, there were at that time only about 1,700 baptized members.¹ But these two midweek services were bringing out a total of some 6,000 people!

Most pastors get only a fraction of their membership out to a midweek service. How does Willow Creek draw more than triple their membership?

One factor that makes New Community such a rich service, I have concluded, is the exaltation of God that occurs during the first 30 or 40 minutes. Hybels himself often leads the singing, with appropriate comments as the service progresses. Up to a dozen and a half songs are used, mostly choruses. Lyrics are projected on screens.

Hybels likes to select lyrics that exalt God: At a sample service that was presented for pastors at one conference, the chorus sheet included "Sacrifice of Praise," "Hosanna," "I Will Bless the

Methods

Lord," "Glorify Thy Name," "Lift Him Up," "Praise the Name of Jesus," "Take My Life," and various others, closing with "How Great Thou Art." These songs underscore a truth Hybels loves to emphasize at New Community: "We serve a great and wonderful God!"

The practical nature of Hybels' teaching—its "high user value"—also helps attract the thousands of people who attend these midweek services. A young man who drives an hour to get to Willow Creek told me, "I never leave a service here without taking something I can use."

Hybels often goes through a book of the Bible a few verses at a time. In the spring of 1989 he concluded a nine-month series from the book of Philippians. When he dealt with Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always," he titled his message "Rejoice? You've Got to Be Kidding!" He began the sermon by telling about getting caught in a Michigan snowstorm, then gave specific suggestions about how to deal with problems, pain, and loss.² Perhaps giving our midweek messages an increased "user value" would also increase our attendance.

4. Bill Hybels seeks to model everything he teaches, yet he freely acknowledges his own needs and struggles. At the April 1989 pastors' conference, Hybels urged pastors to model physical fitness. He practices what he preaches, working out at a health club almost daily—not only to keep physically fit, but to meet Unchurched Harrys. And he eats temperately and uses very little meat and few dairy products or eggs.

In his messages Hybels is very open about personal struggles. At pastors' conferences he always speaks about being authentic. He emphasizes that pastors must maintain an authentic prayer life. I have found his book *Too Busy Not to Pray* to have very high "user value." So does his *Honest to God?*—a book in which Hybels discusses how to be authentic as leaders and Christians.³

Hybels has fostered the idea that those at Willow Creek will do whatever it takes to win lost people to Christ—including fasting. Hybels fasts on days when he speaks. "I love the extra edge that fasting gives me," he told a recent conference. "When I am speaking, I want to sense the slightest whisper of the Holy Spirit."

5. Willow Creek members become

involved in small groups. Jesus modeled this in His training of the disciples. During the later years of her life Ellen White wrote often of the need for small group ministries—"little companies," she called them.

One unique feature that Willow Creek has built into their small groups is that of accountability. Members are encouraged to hold each other accountable in their commitments to Christ and in their service to Him. Hybels models this, meeting regularly with an accountability group.⁴

6. Willow Creek leadership continually emphasizes excellence. In preparing his sermons, for example, Hybels writes out three drafts of each message. He reads his messages, yet maintains excellent eye contact with his audiences. He speaks calmly, yet with an intensity that brings conviction.

The same emphasis on excellence is found in the care of the grounds, in the maintenance of the building, and even in the parking lot, which gets swept every Wednesday afternoon.

A closely related principle that Hybels urges at every pastors' conference is this: "Evaluate. Evaluate. Evaluate." Every Tuesday the program staff evaluates the previous weekend's services, asking, "What could we have done better?" And they don't always wait until Tuesday. At the February 1990 pastors' conference, for example, Hybels remarked, "Last Saturday night, immediately after the service, a few of us evaluated the service." After the 9:00 service Sunday morning, another evaluation, and a few more corrections. Hybels says, "We learn something every time." ■

¹ The membership now stands at more than 2,000.

² All of Hybels' messages are available on tape. You can obtain a catalog from Seeds Tape Ministry, Willow Creek Community Church, 67 Algonquin Road, South Barrington, IL 60010.

³ Another of Hybels' books, *Seven Wonders of the Spiritual World*, is one of the most life-changing books I have ever had college students read. Even spiritually indifferent youth have said that they really enjoyed it. They seem to sense the deep concern Hybels has for lost people. Read it yourself first, then test it by sharing a copy with two or three of your youth. All three books can be obtained or ordered through your Adventist Book Center or local Christian bookstore.

⁴ In early 1989 Hybels presented a five-part series entitled "Enlisting in Little Platoons"—a series you might want to obtain and share with leaders in your congregation as a first step in developing a small group ministry in your congregation.

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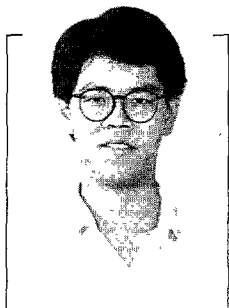
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Matter matters

Siroj Sorajakool

Christianity does not regard matter as evil; nor does it regard as most spiritual those who separate themselves farthest from the material world.



Siroj Sorajakool is a lecturer in the Theology Department of Mission College, Muak Lek, Saraburi, Thailand.

If Socrates had been asked “What is matter?” he would very likely have replied, “Matter doesn’t really matter.”

Would Socrates have been right? Or does matter matter?

The history of humanity reveals a strange phenomenon. For some reason people are unable to leave matter alone. “What is matter?” is not merely a simple question but a deep philosophical and theological inquiry.

God made Adam and Eve from matter. And when they sinned He said, “This matter matters.” God’s statement works like a secret code in our minds, driving us in an unceasing search for the solution.

We know that we live in a material world. In fact, we ourselves are made of matter. And yet in the world of common sense we are never a part of it. We transcend it. But how can two substances made from the same element be different qualitatively? God knows. The problem is, we would like to know, too.

In attempting to answer the question of “What really matters?” Descartes separated mind from matter. David Hume was even more radical. With Hume, says Will Durant, came the expression “No matter, never mind.” The great philosopher Kant, on the other hand, could not see how we can comprehend matter without God’s given program in our mind.¹

In days of old the human race sought to manipulate matter through rites and rituals. Today we do so through scientific advancement, and remarkable is indeed

an understatement in describing what people have accomplished. But when we observe how our manipulation has backfired—through nuclear threat, the greenhouse effect, water pollution, air pollution, flood, etc.—our description of scientific advancement must also include the term *disastrous*.

Religions reject matter

Most interesting of all is the way in which religion as a whole relates to matter. It has a strong tendency toward rejecting matter in any form.

Buddhism, for example, postulates that four basic elements—earth, water, air, and fire—come together to form mankind. And happy are those who understand that they are just a composition of these four elements. When these elements are disassembled, then “I” ceases to be. Buddhism believes that love for matter results only in suffering.²

Hinduism denies the reality of matter. To Hindu philosophy, matter is an illusion; the only real thing being the Brahman, who is the ultimate being.³

Some forms of Christianity see a tension between the spirit and the flesh, between the spiritual and the worldly. They tend to picture spiritual people as people of great restraint who spend lots of time in prayer and Bible study; whose thoughts and conversations revolve around the things of the spirit. These “ideal” Christians love nature only in its pure form (before it has gone into the hand of the manufacturer). They look forward to Christ’s second advent, which they conceive of as taking them out of this world—for they love the people of

the world, but despise the world itself and the things in it.

So Buddhists, Hindus, and many Christians determine a person's spirituality by the distance between that person and matter.

What is this matter? What is wrong with matter? In Thailand the Buddhists with whom I work often say, "Every religion teaches us to be good"—and the goodness they have in mind is this non-material kind of goodness. To be good in the Buddhist worldview is to detach oneself from matter and everything pertaining to it. One Thai student related the concept of goodness to Kosuke Koyama in this manner: "The idea of good in Thai culture can be portrayed as clothing washed, neatly ironed, and placed in a closed, undisturbed drawer. Don't wear it! It will get dirty! The clothing must stay 'detached' from the dirty world."⁴

Nonmaterial goodness

I have found myself asking if Christianity teaches "nonmaterial goodness" as expressed by my Buddhist friends. Is the gospel's essence spirituality to the exclusion of material things? If so, then perhaps Buddhism is more profound, more consistent, more logical, more virtuous, than is Christianity. If this non-material spirituality is what we have been emphasizing as the uniqueness of Christianity, then Christianity is not so unique after all since even an atheistic existentialist like Heidegger aspired to such spirituality.⁵

Christians often define the word "flesh" to mean craving, desire, impurity, pleasure seeking, immorality, jealousy, selfishness, ambition, and so forth. But there is another side to the word "flesh," especially in the Pauline Epistles. Of Paul's use of "flesh," A. C. Thiselton writes: "It represents the desire to secure one's righteousness independently of God's grace in Christ by means of the law. Thus 'sarx' for Paul is not rooted in sensuality but rather in religious rebellion in the form of self-righteousness."⁶

The Galatians desired to please God through circumcision, but, according to Paul, such attempts come from the flesh and not the Spirit (Gal. 6:13, 14). Furthermore, in Colossians we read Paul's attack on asceticism. Now we cannot categorize either circumcision or asceticism as impurity or immorality. Nevertheless, both are fleshly attempts at self-justification. So it is possible that the

pursuit of spirituality of so-called good and spiritual Christians may be dictated by their flesh. God never intended the denial of matter that we witness among religions.

The doctrine of creation teaches that God did not create the material world as an end in itself. He made the material world, as He made the Sabbath, for humanity. God made people with senses, and He intended that they should enjoy the material world through those senses. Feeling has its origin in God; so it is not wrong to say that God created human beings to live an abundant life and to enjoy their feelings. God did not create the material world merely as the means for people to practice self-denial and restraint.⁷

Of bodily joy Bonhoeffer wrote: "Within the natural life the joys of the body are reminders of the eternal joy which has been promised to men by God. If a man is deprived of the possibility of bodily joys through his body being used exclusively as a means to an end, this is an infringement of the original right of bodily life."⁸

Because it claims revelation as its source of knowledge, Christianity must stand radically apart from the natural religious phenomena in its interpretation of the world. Revelation says that God created matter. And because God created matter, matter matters. For this same reason sensation and feeling—direct results of the contact between man and the material world—matter.

"Christianity," says Koyama, "teaches attachment. 'So God attached himself to the world.' . . . The old equation of inevitability—attachment produces sorrow and detachment happiness—inevitably cripples the Christian concept of love."⁹

True Christianity values joy

I believe that the tendency of Christians to value nonmaterial spirituality above joy, laughter, and pleasure (to deny self for salvific purpose, even though not done to the extent of the Buddhist) is to cloak a subjective expression of natural religion with a Christian garment. Many Christians have not allowed the doctrines of revelation and creation, which make Christianity radically different from natural religions, to check this tendency.

The unadulterated Christian worldview, based on the concepts of revelation and creation, allows human beings to

"The idea of good can be portrayed as clothing washed and placed in a closed, undisturbed drawer."

see, to touch, to taste, to feel, to laugh, and to experience joy and sorrow, happiness and pain. Erasmus said it right: "The glory of God is a man who is fully alive."

When matter matters, we will care about the material and the emotional well-being of our neighbors as well as their spiritual and intellectual well-being. We care because the total man is made tangible through the material form. It is with this in mind that Elton Trueblood states: "Christianity is the most materialistic of all the world religions. It is not satisfied merely with the spiritual; it builds hospitals."¹⁰

After a class lecture, a Buddhist student once said to me: "Having joy, although it may bring pain, is better than escaping from pain without experiencing joy."

The biblical concept of creation says that God saw His creation and said, "It is good." ■

¹ W. Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1961), p. 276.

² S. P. de Silva, *A Scientific Rationalization of Buddhism* (Colombo: Metro Printer, 1969), pp. 67-71.

³ Stephen Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), p. 94.

⁴ Kosuke Koyama, *Water Buffalo Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 84.

⁵ M. Chatterjee, *The Existentialist Outlook* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1973), p. 142.

⁶ A. C. Thiselton, *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol. 1, p. 680.

⁷ Contrast the Christian view with this Buddhist approach: "When food is good, greed, which is craving or attachment, will occur. When it is not good, dissatisfaction or dislike will occur. We shall be unable to prevent defilements if we have this attitude." Cited in Koyama, p. 142.

⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Berthe (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., Inc., 1965), p. 157.

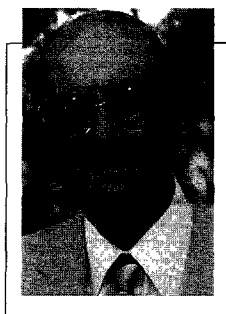
⁹ Koyama, p. 84.

¹⁰ D. Elton Trueblood, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 171.

Ministry to comatose patients

Robert W. Rae

The growing prevalence of cerebral coma challenges pastors to understand this disabling condition and become competent care givers.



After 44 years of ministry in the Presbyterian Church, Robert Rae writes in retirement from Mesa, Arizona.

May 20, 1977. The morning dawned crisp, beautiful, but a little foggy. With her two children securely belted in the car, she was driving along Interstate 235 in Des Moines, Iowa. Suddenly a huge truck loomed in her path. She swerved her old Chevy to avoid the collision, but the median forced her to rear-end the truck. Another large vehicle emerged from the fog and crushed her car. The impact seriously injured the children and reduced the mother to a helpless quadriplegic. A vigorous, active, young woman, with so much of life ahead of her, was instantly turned into a comatose, vegetating invalid. For 14 years all that could be seen was a body, a vacant stare, and total helplessness.

As a pastor, what was I to do?

The question is both relevant and urgent. Relevancy comes in the very nature of our ministry—to care compassionately for those who desperately need such care, to transmit the love and concern of our Lord to such suffering people. Urgency is found in today's statistics. Highway accidents disable thousands of people each year, leaving many of them brain-damaged, comatose invalids. On any single day, approximately 10,000 Americans slumber in protracted coma.¹

Facts about coma

In order to minister effectually to comatose patients, pastors should understand certain basic facts about coma. "Coma" or "comatose" describes a mental syndrome characterized by complete

loss of consciousness, leading to unresponsiveness to external stimuli. This condition may result from any of the following causes:

Simple concussion. Any head injury that produces even a brief period of unconsciousness should be attended to immediately and seriously. A simple concussion may sow the seed for great danger a little later. Often postconcussion complications may include a personality change, persistent headaches, inability to concentrate, emotional outbursts, anxieties, and hallucinations.

Brain damage. Any head injury has the potential to affect the brain. An injury that denies blood and oxygen supply to the brain even for a few minutes can lead to disastrous consequences. With an interruption of blood supply, the brain begins to atrophy, and its neurons cannot regenerate themselves.

Strokes. Cerebral vascular accidents caused by ruptured or blocked vessels that supply blood to the brain cause strokes, which can degenerate into coma and/or death.

Metabolic abnormalities. Tumors, epilepsy, hypoglycemia, acute alcoholism, diabetic acidosis, and such conditions can cause a deterioration of consciousness, passing through stages of lethargy and stupor to final coma.

Intracranial hemorrhages. Hemorrhage in the cranium can cause blood clots, which if not immediately removed by surgery, may produce cerebral coma.

Until a few years ago, care for coma patients consisted mainly of caring for the body while waiting for either a miracle or death. Patients who remained comatose longer than 24 hours were con-

sidered irreversible and were expected to die within two weeks.

By contrast, today's advanced care promises greater hope for the arousal and recovery of comatose patients. One recent study reports the satisfactory recovery of 40 percent of patients who had been comatose for two weeks.² "Satisfactory recovery" includes the ability to dress and feed one's self, as well as enjoy a measure of independence.

What is the secret?

Dr. John La Puma, M.D., of the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics, may have the answer.³ He calls his treatment program "environmental enrichment." Under this program, he provides maximum continuous stimulation calculated to produce patient arousal and recovery. He urges doctors, medical staff, and family members to touch and talk to comatose patients. He uses radio and television to provide continuous stimuli.

Recovered patients have often testified that they did hear and understand what was going on around them during their slumber, even though they could not respond verbally. One recovered patient professed resentment of her physician's 53 days of impersonal treatment. During that time she wanted to tell him: "Doctor, you never say hello to me. Why do you act as if I'm not here?"⁴

Because comatose patients often hear and comprehend what is said in their presence, care givers are warned against saying anything that such patients should not hear. Careless bedside conversation can leave a patient anxious or troubled.

Pastoring comatose patients

While medical science has done much to understand the physical and mental trauma that is associated with comatose patients, pastors can also play a significant role in dealing with such patients and their families. Pain is a personal hurt; it has its spiritual dimension, and it cries out for a word of comfort, a message of hope, an assurance of peace. Here's where the pastor's role becomes significant without becoming intrusive. I suggest five pastoral steps that may contribute in dealing with comatose patients.

1. *Begin by offering "reality orientation."* Comatose patients may hear and comprehend much of what is said to them, even though they may not be able to respond. Therefore, as a pastor, speak to the patients clearly, identifying names and interests. Talk about patients' interests, with the assumption that they un-

derstand you. Guard against saying anything negative to the patients.

2. *Remember comatose patients respond to arousal techniques.* Human touch has never lost its magic. Your touch of encouragement and concern, a warm handshake, a hug to show that you care, a laugh—all these have their value in your pastoral visit to a comatose patient.

3. *Nurture the faith of your patients.* A pastoral visit, at any time, should be a faith-nurturing occasion. The bedside of a comatose patient is no exception. Words of confidence in God's ultimate purposes, reading appropriate scripture passages (eg., Ps. 23; Isa. 43:2; Matt. 6:9-13; Rom. 12:12; 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:8), and offering prayers of faith do mediate pastoral concern. A prayer such as the following would bring strength to the suffering:

Our Heavenly Father: You know the needs that burden our hearts just now. You can give us strength equal to our stress. We need Your help and Your hope. We are grateful for Your love that will not let us go, and for those whose labors of love lift our spirits and lighten our loads. We ask You to work all things together for our good and Your glory, Father God. Have Your own way with our lives and our loved ones, O God. We trust our future into Your loving hands, through Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

4. *Counsel and comfort the patient's family.* Families of comatose patients go through a lot of agony and tension. In addition, they have to deal with many details, such as life-support efforts, payment of long-term care, institutional care, home nursing, etc. Pastors need to be competent in counseling in these areas. Also, there may come a time when the pastor must counsel a family to accept the impossible. Isn't preparing a family to face suffering and death an important pastoral responsibility?

5. *Value opportunities for ministry to the Lord's disabled disciples.* With evidence that comatose patients do respond to external stimuli, and with a faith that undergirds all Christian hope and action that nothing is impossible with God, what a marvelous privilege a pastor has to transmit that hope to a suffering patient.

Witness how God used a friendly salutation to arouse Jackie Cole from her 47-day coma.⁵

As Jackie's coma dragged on, her husband came to believe that his wife's respirator was thwarting God's will for her departure. After considerable anguish, Harry Cole and his children petitioned

God used a friendly salutation to arouse Jackie Cole from her 47-day coma.

the Baltimore City Circuit Court for permission to shut off Jackie's respirator so she could die with dignity. Judge Carrol Byrnes denied their petition, contending that Jackie was not yet "brain dead."

Six days after Judge Byrnes' decision, a friend of the family stopped by Jackie's hospital room. In his usual manner, he took her limp hand in his and cheerfully said, "Hello, Jackie!"

Jackie opened her eyes and smiled warmly at everyone in the room. Through that simple salutation, God called her out of her long slumber and set her feet on the road toward recovery.

Jackie later described her comatose slumber in these words: "I'd wake up and kind of swim to the surface, see somebody, and then I'd fall back again like I was sinking under water. . . . [Now] I feel like a whole new person. I've become a much better person than I was. I'm easier to live with and I'm not unhappy about anything. I'm glad I fought so hard to live. I give thanks to God for being alive."⁶

Jackie Cole's miraculous recovery should encourage pastors and other care givers to continue their ministry with courage and confidence. God faithfully undergirds the labors of love by His care givers. With Him "all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). ■

¹ Richard Ostling, "Is It Wrong to Cut Off Feeding?" *Time*, Feb. 23, 1987.

² Leah Wallach, "Coma Comeback," *Omni*, June 1986.

³ "Talking to People in Coma," *Vogue*, April 1988.

⁴ *Ibid.*

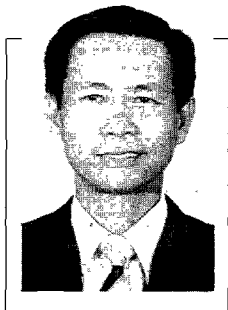
⁵ Joan Tattner Heilman, "The Miraculous Story of a Coma Survivor," *Redbook*, July 1987.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Family—a partnership at work

Victor D. Flauta

In joy and suffering, in planning and working, our family is a partnership now and forever.



A pastor for 25 years, Victor D. Flauta now has the added responsibility of supervising 52 churches in Central Luzon, Philippines.

Partnership started in Eden, and it got a big boost in the words of the wise man: "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him. . . . A cord of three strands cannot easily be broken" (Eccl. 4:9-12, NIV).

I belong to a partnership. It's 22 years old. From the time we were married, my wife and I have considered our lives as a sacred partnership for Christ's ministry. When children came along—four of them—each one became a full-fledged partner of this association. Together we have served; together we have suffered; together we have endured; together we have experienced love, faith, and hope. *Our family is a partnership.*

Business partnership

Right now I am serving as the supervisor of 52 churches in one of the largest Seventh-day Adventist mission districts in the Philippines. Needless to say, I find myself very busy, and at times travel and scheduling restrictions do pose embarrassments, particularly in the church in which I am the pastor. On such occasions my family partners come to my rescue in sharing the Word, arranging for a service, taking a Bible study, or meeting a visitation appointment.

Training our children for such emergencies did not happen overnight; it is a product of years of teaching at home. While our children were still in the elementary grades, we taught them simple ways to give a Bible study. In the process they have

learned to love the Word as well as share their faith. Once I had to leave town on an emergency. This interrupted a series of Bible studies I was having with a business executive. Her interest in truth was at its peak, and I did not wish to have a break at that moment. I asked the lady if my children could substitute for me while I was out of town. My 12- and 14-year-old children studied the Bible with her, and led her to accept the Lord and commit herself to baptism. By allowing them to be partners in God's service I not only made my children feel important, but I was also able to tap their potential to the fullest. A satisfying by-product: my children never complain that I don't spend enough time with them.

Part of my work involves caring for legal activities of the church. In my district only 10 percent of mission property is titled, many properties have no documents at all, and litigation against the church is a constant problem. Even in such mundane matters where only the strict application of the law may prevail, family partners can be a source of support and strength. Once a prominent citizen filed a lawsuit against one of our church-affiliated academies on the ground that he had the legal title to the land. Our position seemed weak. He had the law on his side. What should we do? At my children's urging, we made this case a matter of family prayer and intercession. There may be some weakness in the land title, but the strength and the purpose of the work that the church was engaged in for thousands of young people were beyond dispute. Was it possible for God to intervene in the case and plead with the complainant? Why not? As a family we prayed. We studied God's Word earnestly and prayed for His will to be revealed. Before

long, the one who was thought an impossible complainant proposed an amicable settlement allowing the academy to continue its work. What's more, we saw an open door for gospel witness.

Family togetherness in study and prayer in this case taught me an important lesson: nothing is impossible for God, when we approach Him in prayer. The spiritual highway still remains an effective means to achieve the best in human relations. Prayer, particularly combined collective prayer of the faithful, can soften hearts, untangle difficulties, and achieve the unimaginable. Without family worship and prayer, our family could not have survived this long. The closeness to God, the closeness to one another, that comes from the power of the bended knee work wonders. Our family has made it a practice to pray without ceasing; in times of trouble, whisper a prayer; in times of joy, send up a praise.

Financial partnership

I am the family's finance manager. My wife is the treasurer, auditor, and budget officer. I am the head of the family, but my wife is the heart. We have no particular problem about our roles; we are really partners in keeping the body of the family healthy, spiritual, and strong. Soon after our marriage we decided that my wife would handle family finance, and she has done a good job. The children and I have our responsibilities, particularly when we had to live on a limited income with ever-increasing living costs. Each member of the family is involved in shaping the family budget. The family discusses and votes any expense exceeding a certain amount.

Our children, with a sense of partnership in family budget, began making contributions from their early years. Living within their means and not making demands that cannot be met showed their early understandings of family partnership. As they grew older, they would bring in actual cash by taking some remunerative jobs. Girls took up sewing. Boys went out colportaging, thus supporting the family as well as sharing their faith. We taught our junior partners a promise that is very much a part of our lives together: "There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."¹

Despite all efforts to live within a family budget, there were occasions when the

month seemed longer than the money. Want and shortage are very much a part of life, but it is not a part that should be allowed to become the whole. Life is the larger picture, the beautiful canvass, the ever-expanding horizon, and it should never be measured by what we have or do not have. In our financial stewardship of our family, this lesson holds priority. My wife and I are committed to see that our children have learned this basic lesson in finance: that God shall supply all our "needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19, NIV).

Social partnership

The strength of a home depends on the order and the unity that mark its function. This principle is doubly applicable to a Christian home, for "a well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion."²

A family that prays together stays together. That's an old but true saying. We can reiterate its truthfulness and add that a family that works together and plays together has more fun together, and is likely to be a happy family. Our family is not very good at sports, but we enjoy doing things together. We love gardening. We walk a lot. Occasionally we play badminton. We share our household chores. Spending time together is the glue that maintains family unity.

When our children were still preschoolers we recruited them in the social side of family partnership. We gave them small household duties at first, increasing them as they grew older. On the kitchen door we pasted a work schedule that was agreed to by family members. Each person had a duty to perform, with a time frame to complete the required job. At the end of the week we evaluated the performances and helped each other with suggestions on how we could have better completed our tasks. Appreciation of a job well done was an important factor in making work a pleasure, and we varied the ways we expressed our delight to children—stars against their names on the work chart, small gifts, or just a hug. As the children grew, the work load and pattern also grew, and each took turns caring for household responsibilities under such challenging titles as floor manager (scrub the floor), sanitary engineer (clean the bathroom), chef (cook), landscape artist (yard upkeep), maid (laundry, beds), chaplain (worship leader), etc. In making the work around the

The family votes any expense exceeding a certain amount.

house a delight to children, we have not only solved the problem of housekeeping, but also ensured lessons in family solidarity, dignity of work, accountability, and time consciousness.

As partners in a social unity, we do find ourselves occasionally in conflict with each other. As parents we try to set an example to our junior partners. At the very first sign of possible argument, we have made it a rule to pause and ask ourselves: Is the argument worth it? Is there another way to solve the problem? Why not take time to think it over? Family worship and prayer always provide opportunities for bringing out the very best in family relationship and dealing with problems that hurt.

When conflicts involve children, we try to be fair and listen to each one's version and viewpoint. We want to be fair in everything family members receive or do. We make sure that what we give to the children (clothes, toys, gifts, parties) and what we expect from them (work, responsibility, accountability) do not reflect any bias or prejudice. When we are fair and when we set an example in relationship and living, children find it easy to accept guidance and move beyond interpersonal problems.

Educational partners

Education ranks high in our family priority. The family agreement regarding this has been crystal clear from the very beginning. The senior partners provide the support base, while the junior partners do their parts by fulfilling diligently all their requirements, particularly the academic ones.

As parents we pledged ourselves early in our married life to the shaping of our children's future. We ourselves did not have all the opportunities of a good education, but we knew that our junior partners would not be deprived of the pursuit of excellence. So we planned early the kind of program our children would

have: a Christian education in which the academic and the spiritual, the now and the hereafter, would be nurtured. Our children grew up with Christian education, sustained by a strong home base, and supported by a caring church. Even in preschool days, the family provided the kids with picture books, drawing pads, a chalkboard, and musical instruments to cultivate their talents. The Sabbath school provided an educational medium too. When our children entered high school, they were already translating and teaching Sabbath school lessons. In college we encouraged them to get involved in spiritual, scientific, physical, and social activities. We applauded their triumphs; we shared their defeats; we were there when they needed us, for whatever the reason.

Christian education was costly, but worth everything we invested in it. It helped in the shaping of lives, in the molding of characters, in deciding for eternity. It helped us to experience the fulfillment of the promise made long ago: "Be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his people . . . at all times" (1 Kings 8:59).

The institution of the family, like the Sabbath, had its origin in Eden. Before sin ruptured relationships and brought in the thorn and the thistle, home arrived on the earthly scene as a divine gift. The gift is forever, and like the Sabbath, the family partnership will transcend the barriers of time and find itself rooted in eternity once again. The family is a holy partnership, and by God's grace it can be forever.

My wife and I have taken this concept seriously, and tried to build a home that could go into eternity. What we do with the home today will decide what it will be tomorrow and the day after. How our children reflect the values of Christian grace today will determine the contours of their development tomorrow: "The company they keep, the principles they adopt, the habits they form, will decide the question of their usefulness here and of their future destiny."³ ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), pp. 250, 251.

² _____, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 455.

Moral absolutes

From page 5

choosing of the lesser of two evils or trusting in God. On one occasion David feigned madness before Achish in order to escape. In contrast, at another time when Saul was pursuing him, he fled to Samuel and waited for God to act. On that occasion God's spirit came upon Saul with such power that he forgot his murderous designs and began to prophesy.

God gives us the power, according to our faith, to keep the Ten Commandments. The fact that we do not always keep them does not mean they have failed or that God has rejected us. Our God is a gracious God; He does not condemn us if our faith does not measure up to the ideal. Our salvation is based not on our commandment keeping but on our relationship to Jesus Christ.

As He did for Abraham and David, God desires the very best for us. His unfathomable love means that He can still love us when we fail and that He continues to help us to grow in faith, maturity, and love for Him. ■

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Letter to a son-in-law

Kenneth Cooper

D

ear son:

I left last Monday with considerable concern and regret that we did not meet.

I write this from two perspectives.

First, as a father; second, as a fellow minister. The two perspectives will blend in what I say.

Let me begin by stating the concern, and then seek to engage your mind and attention to the issue.

Your home is in serious danger of becoming a victim of the minister's bugbear. There are grave signs that the frequency of your absence from home is undermining the delicate and precious bonds of family cohesion. Jennifer is clearly feeling the strain, and the children manifest the tensions and anxiety of insecurity.

Please understand that these are not idle words. The reality of the situation surprised and deeply moved me. The family misses your presence. Family bonds are vital but delicate. They must be nurtured in love and devotion. Good, strong, secure families don't just happen because we are Christians. We have to make them happen. Nothing can replace the loving interaction of both parents with the children in every form of filial relationship, including the physical, spiritual, mental, and social. As a minister you know this. The question is Do you practice it? If you do, as I believe you must, then is it adequate?

Remember that if you are to have a sound family life, you will find no adequate alternate to your physical presence in the significant roles of loving husband and father. Your family must experience

your leadership in these roles. Like Jacob, the father must lead the young ones gently and tenderly. As the saying goes, they must know that Father is there for them. If Father does not provide this, they will never get it in the proper setting, and that spells disaster for the developing life.

The opportunity to help shape the lives of Tammi and Justin is fast slipping away. Believe me when I say that such a golden opportunity and privilege lingers briefly and then is gone forever. There is only one chance to truly help shape a life, and that is when it is young. After that, you relate if you can, but you do not shape.

On Sunday morning I was sitting in the garage with Tammi and Justin, and what happened there deeply moved me. The children brought some paper and pencils and said they wanted to write letters. I asked them to whom they intended to write. Both said, "To Daddy." I then asked them what they wanted to say, and they replied, "I hope you come back." Justin then asked me how to spell "Dear Daddy." I told him letter by letter and was surprised to see him write each letter. He wrote the message as I spelled the words. I only had to help him space the letters a little. Tammi had no trouble writing hers.

To me there was a serious message in those little letters. You must not miss that message. I have seen too many children ruined by parental disregard of such signs. Don't let it happen in your case. A minister's children are particularly vulnerable because of his routine absenteeism. Therefore, when you are at home, you must give yourself to your children; otherwise they will get a doubly negative message: (1) Daddy is seldom with us; (2) when he is with us, he doesn't care, and is no fun.

Such a situation can produce the

most unexpected behavior in the children later, and that can be utterly shattering. Soon you will see all the dreams you had for your family vanish before your wondering eyes. The children you thought you loved will drift away and become derelicts without a sense of security and direction. As I write this I am conscious of a few such cases right now in some young ministers' families. Please keep your family where they should be in your love and attention. First God, then family, then one's life-work. That's God's order of priority. On the human plane, life takes preeminence over things, and family life over all other human relationships.

As I indicated on the phone, you can and ought to plan your work programs and itineraries so as to keep a balance. Let your time be spent more in supervisory directorship, with the spadework being done by trained leadership at the local church level. For example, in youth work, Master Guides can be of tremendous help. Trust them and guide them to train and lead others. Don't wear out yourself and your family by assuming the whole burden. A minister who loses his family loses his influence.

Remember, we love you. We want to see the children, Jennifer, and you do well. We want you to succeed in your ministry. Be sober, be vigilant. You owe it to yourself and the family. I will share other things face-to-face. Meanwhile, ease back on the pace, and think, pray, plan, and work with a balance.

God bless,
Dad

The author is an ordained minister and a union education director. Kenneth Cooper is a pseudonym.

Letters

From page 2

Especially the Pharisees would have done so, since their teachings were so nearly identical with his. I particularly urge any of your readers not familiar with the literature to read Ellis Rivkin's definitive paperback *What Crucified Jesus?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984).

Claude G. Montefiore (who was perhaps the most fair-minded and sympathetic of all Jewish New Testament scholars) wrote that the false accusation that the Jews bore some kind of collective guilt for the death of Jesus has been "responsible for oceans of human blood, and a ceaseless stream of misery and desolation." (He wrote that some thirty years before the Holocaust!) To encourage such a dangerous falsehood today is irresponsible and insensitive to an almost unimaginable degree. —John D. Rayner, rabbi, Woodside Park, London.

When God made Israel the instrument through which He would work out His will on this earth, He elevated them above the other nations. The New Testament indicates that when the national leaders of the Jews rejected Jesus' claims and engineered His death, Israel lost that special position or role. In other words, Israel was returned to the same standing before God as any other nation holds.

We believe that all sinners—and that includes all people—are equally responsible for Christ's death. The fact that Jews and Romans actually brought it about makes them no more guilty than anyone else—and certainly does not justify what Christians have done to Jews since that time. —Editors.

What's best for the children?

As a pastor I applaud your article on home schools (September 1990). I think it's time to recognize that parents, not the church, must decide how best to educate their children.

I supported Christian education (i.e., Adventist church schools) before I even had children. My children have attended Adventist schools from the beginning, with one exception. One school year my wife home-schooled our three children. We caught flak for it. A conference committee member told me that when I became a pastor I gave up the right to decide how to educate my children. I disagreed with her then; I disagree with her now.

I know the need for the institution to survive. I know the struggle of church

schools to survive and of churches to help them survive. But pastorally, I am more concerned with what's best for the children and the family. And I am not willing to sacrifice what's best for people on the altar of what's best for the institution. —Gary E. Russell, pastor, Dowagiac Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dowagiac, Michigan.

■ With deference to Daniel Peters' concern (Letters, January 1991), I believe ministers can promote both our school system and home schooling provided they recognize both as manifestations of Christian education. Home schooling is an Adventist option! A rereading of chapter 24 of *Selected Messages*, book 3 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), will show that while Ellen White encouraged the use of common sense in dealing with particular cases, she did not retract her position that a mother-teacher was ideal.

Currently we find that our children's Christian education needs are best met in a home school environment; but I still actively support and promote our church school in board attendance, fund raising, etc. Let's move away from the position that home and school options are incompatible. Many home-schoolers, including non-Adventist Christians, would like to operate as branches of the church school. Moving in this direction could lead to the strengthening of the Adventist school system rather than the opposite, feared by Peters. —J.R.L. Astleford, pastor, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

■ A glance at the facts may quiet Daniel Peters' fears about home schools. Mrs. White's inspired remarks fired the movement. Her counsel regarding every aspect of child development has been endorsed by researchers from Australia and Japan to Stanford, Harvard, Stockholm, and the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.

New research on the kind of home teaching we recommend—balanced, low-stress, low-cost—finds children developing adult-level reasoning and perception by ages 8 to 12 instead of the normal 15 to 20. Home-schooled children average significantly higher in achievement than the conventionally schooled, sometimes more than 30 per cent (as with Tennessee third graders).

And research is clear on socialization: If you want a positive sociability, independent of peer contagion (habits, man-

ners, sex, drugs, etc.), children should be with you much more than they are with their peers. Andrews University and other studies show that in regard to sociability more than three fourths of all American home-taught children score in America's top quartile.

To our knowledge, all church schools that follow a simple formula in serving as umbrellas for home-schoolers are prospering in money and souls. One small Adventist school of 30 students mothers more than 500 home-schoolers, mostly non-Adventist, at a sound profit, with very little overhead. Some provide such services as testing—all with little or no extra investment in personnel and facilities. Depending on the services needed, they may charge \$20 to \$50 monthly per child. —Raymond S. Moore, chairman, The Moore Foundation, Camas, Washington.

Would like correspondence

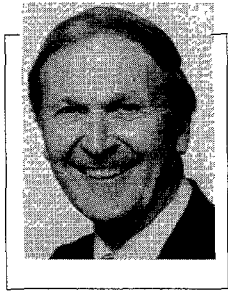
I feel thankful to God for your valuable magazine because it keeps on giving me new experiences that are very useful in my church activities, especially while preparing sermons and while working with the youth.

I am a retired educator and an ordained priest working in the Maharashtra State of India. I have been serving in this ministry for the past 32 years and have been finding it a pleasure to work with the children and youth. One of my assignments is as chaplain of a 60-bed hospital. Your magazine carries very informative and valuable information—for example, September 1990's "How to Feel Another's Pain," "Learn to Love the Difficult," and "AIDS Challenges the Church."

While working in this part of the world, I would like to develop a friendship with a family through correspondence. I would like to share their sorrows and joy. —Sumitra B. James, P.O. Vadala Mission, Talu Newasa, Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra State, India.

Struggling with the message

Re "The (Wo)manly Art of Preaching" (January 1991): Every now and then I come to the pulpit and say, "I'm going to stay close to my notes this morning. God has a precious message for us, and I'm still struggling with it. Let's listen with open hearts, and then we can share later that which the Spirit gives us." Often the sharing of this message is the most nourishing lesson-sermon given. —Scotti Dole, pastor, Church of Religious Science, Barstow, California.



Says who? Quotations in preaching

Floyd Bresee

It was my first year in the ministry, and I was privileged to be working as an assistant to Pastor A. O. Sage. He had just finished preaching and I was standing in the foyer greeting and befriending people as they left. A member of the congregation stepped up and asked if I would answer a theological question.

I was more than willing, especially when his question turned out to be a rather simple one. I knew the answer and waxed quite eloquent in sharing it with him. As I talked, he nodded thoughtfully. I was sure I was putting all his concerns to rest. When I finished, he kept right on nodding, "Yes, I see. That's most interesting. You know, I really would like to ask Pastor Sage that question some day."

I still think I answered the question about as well as my more seasoned supervisor could have. The point is that it made no difference. Since my listener didn't see me as a person of authority, he couldn't accept my answer as authoritative.

Why should you quote?

Quote to add authority. W. E. Sangster advised, "It is when a preacher is offering an opinion upon a subject that is likely to create a controversy in the minds of his hearers that a pertinent quotation in his own support is most useful. Even then it needs to be quoted under a great name." Young preachers probably need to quote more often than do older ones. Less authority, more quotation.*

Quote to say it better. If someone has coined a phrase that says precisely and

memorably what you want to say, quote it.

How should you quote?

Quote understandably. Don't quote too many statistics. Used sparingly, they can be dramatic. Used voluminously, they may be boring and hard to understand.

Poetry can add an artistic touch to your sermon, but you must be sure you're using it because it's meaningful to your listeners and not just because you enjoy it. Most poetry was written to be read rather than spoken. It may be so deep that it needs to be studied and meditated on to be completely understood. You can do that as you read in your study; your listeners cannot while they listen in the pew.

Quote honestly. You can be honest while borrowing a few ideas here and there without giving credit, but you cannot if you borrow a significant number of words or the argument and organization of a chapter without crediting the author.

Honesty and accuracy necessitate careful note-taking as you study. Writing down a complete bibliographical reference is a nuisance, but if you're ever called to question or if you want to re-study the subject later, you'll be glad that you have all the information—including the library you got the book from.

Quote briefly. When you take a book other than the Bible into the pulpit, listeners tend to wonder if it's because you didn't take time to prepare. A book is an almost certain sign you intend to use some long quotations, and listeners turn off to lengthy quotes.

Brevity concentrates. Sit in the sun, and its gentle warmth may lull you to sleep. But take a magnifying glass and

concentrate that same light on one specific spot on your arm, and it'll get your attention in a hurry. Read a long quotation from the pulpit, and you're sure to lull your people to sleep. But concentrate on just one part of that same quotation, and you'll get their attention.

Don't read the whole paragraph if you're really after just one sentence. Don't read the whole sentence if a single phrase carries your thought. Certainly you must avoid using quotations out of context. But the point is that if you are talking about idea A, quote only what deals with A—even if it means you use only a portion of a sentence. Don't allow your quotations to encourage your listeners to wander off onto B, C, or D. Brevity concentrates.

Quote motivationally. A sermon is not a research paper. Preachers are not primarily in the proving business. Yes, there's a time to prove Christ and Christianity. But most of those who listen to your sermons already believe that they *ought* to follow Christ. What they need most is motivation to help them *want* to. Preachers ought to be provers, but they ought primarily to be motivators.

Quote from sources your listeners respect and admire rather than from ones significant chiefly to you. Then your quotations will not only prove—they will motivate. ■

* In a study I did of 50 typical contemporary sermons, I found that they averaged six biblical quotations each. Seventy-five percent of these biblical quotations were from the New Testament and 25 percent were from the Old. There were relatively few quotations from sources other than the Bible. Only one sermon in four quoted poetry, and one in two from other sources.

On Becoming a Counselor

Eugene Kennedy and Sara C. Charles, M.D., *The Continuum Publishing Co.*, New York, 1990, 415 pages, \$27.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Len McMillan, family life coordinator, Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Staunton, Virginia.

Pastors often come in contact with suffering persons—the grieving, confused, immature, or neurotic. This book's 47 chapters set forth basic ground rules for effective counseling of such persons by nonprofessionals and indicate under what circumstances they should refer troubled persons to professional counselors.

A revision of a book published in 1977, this volume discusses such subjects as anxiety, AIDS, depression, drugs, personality disorders, and marriage counseling. It can be read in short spurts or used for sustained study.

Kennedy and Charles believe that the value of nonprofessional counselors lies in their ability to approach counselees on their level. The authors show nonprofessional counselors how to capitalize on this strength. "Understanding is at the heart of all good therapy. . . . Understanding transmitted through the discipline of counseling skills helps bewildered people to see themselves in better perspective."

I recommend this book to all who must counsel troubled individuals but lack extensive psychological training.

Keeping the Sabbath Wholly

Marva J. Dawn, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1989, 217 pages, \$10.95, paper. Reviewed by Steve Willsey, pastor, Capital Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church, Washington, D.C.

Those who read Dawn's personal testimony will become convinced that Sabbathkeeping needs more emphasis in spiritual formation literature. For her it is one of the disciplines of the spiritual life. A 24-hour period, Dawn's Sabbath is for her a retreat in time much as the desert was a retreat in space for the spiritual fathers and mothers of the third and fourth centuries. If all the world would experience Dawn's Sabbath, stress-related ailments would be far less preva-

lent. And God would be better known.

Refusing to enter the debate over which day is the true Sabbath, she chooses rather to present the meaning of the Sabbath as she believes God intended. But her point is not only to help her readers discover the Sabbath. She also gives practical suggestions for receiving the full benefit of this weekly interruption from work. Her suggestions range from rituals like the burning of candles to begin and end the day, to food preparation and worship celebrations.

"The key to experiencing the Sabbath in the richness of its design is to recognize the importance of its rhythm." The rhythm she describes involves six days of work followed by one full day of rest.

In Dawn's belief that any convenient seventh day will do she misses an important element in the Sabbath commandment. God blessed and hallowed the seventh day of the weekly cycle and gave it to humans not only to rest from work, but to acknowledge Him as the Creator. To disregard the day God sanctified and replace it with one we select is to take upon ourselves God's prerogative. Resting from work and dedicating a full day to fellowship with God on the very day He has blessed honors Him. It adds a dimension that one misses in choosing a day simply for the sake of convenience.

Of course, one can overlook the meaning of the Sabbath while proving the rightness of the seventh day. I made this mistake in the early years of my own Sabbathkeeping. I knew I was right about the day, but did not progress much beyond allegiance. The Sabbath became a burden—a day of "Thou shalt nots." I missed the joy that Dawn experiences on her personally selected Sabbath.

Discovering my misuse of the Sabbath liberated me to enjoy the day as God intended it and as Dawn describes it. After all, the Sabbath was made for our benefit (Mark 2:27) by a Creator who understood what a drudge life would be without a change of pace. We can easily imagine the glory of Sabbaths in Eden. Perhaps the Creator kept a regular weekly appointment with Adam and Eve. The memories of the visit and anticipation of the next Sabbath must have given the first couple

great happiness. Experiencing a portion of that weekly refreshment is still the goal of the Sabbath.

Keeping the Sabbath Wholly includes a bibliography of more than 50 entries representing Christian authors such as Samuele Bacchiocchi and the Jewish scholar Abraham Joshua Heschel.

The beauty of this book lies in the author's own personal testimony. In each section—Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, and Feasting—she uses personal experiences to illustrate her message. Because of her enthusiasm, the reader cannot help making a commitment to follow her example. Says Dawn, "To keep the Sabbath means to cherish it, to honor it as the Queen of our days, in consort with the King of the universe." What a glorious difference it would have made in our world had God's people always regarded the Sabbath so.

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Ages 9-12

Kathryn Goering Reid and Marie M. Fortune, Pilgrim Press, United Church Press, New York, 1989, 125 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Kolleen D. Neff, licensed clinical social worker, Monrovia, California.

The authors of this volume, both ordained ministers, speak to the growing awareness that child sexual abuse does happen in the Christian community. They highlight statistics stating that one out of every three girls and one out of every 11 boys will be victims of sexual violence before age 18. Unfortunately, the church's traditional silence on the topic reinforces the illusion that this sort of thing doesn't happen in Christian families. But the authors point out that it does occur, and our denial serves to perpetuate repeated victimization.

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse provides a 13-week step-by-step curriculum for children ages 9-12, to be used in churches as part of a religious education program. The authors believe that the instruction children receive regarding sexual abuse should include a theological and biblical foundation. "Our tradition and Scripture clearly mandate the necessity of care for those members of our society who are most vulnerable. Jesus' words

remind us that as Christians we must publicly stand in solidarity with victims and help in the healing process. . . . The church is God's community of people who care for others."

This course teaches children that God loves each of them, and that He is a comforter to those that suffer. It emphasizes that all people are created in God's image and that children are special to Him. It also addresses misinterpretations of Scripture commonly used to excuse violence.

I found the curriculum well outlined and clearly presented. The authors give useful information about training leaders, preparing the church for a sexual abuse prevention curriculum, and meeting with parents, and they include a sample letter to parents. The appendixes provide facts about such things as the indicators of abuse, how to help a child victim, and how to report abuse. The book also discusses the ethical mandate requiring ministers to report sexual abuse.

Each session guide includes reproducible handouts and activities particularly geared for ages 9-12. The authors present the material candidly but sensitively and do an excellent job of incorporating biblical principles. Furthermore, the authors are aware of the dilemmas, hesitations, confusion, and ambivalence that face clergy regarding this topic. They address the fears and concerns of clergy regarding identifying and dealing with sexual abuse in the church. Because of its clarity, sensitivity, simplicity, and applicability to the church setting, this is one of the best books I have read on the subject.

An Ounce of Prevention

Ira E. Bailie, M.D., Vantage Press, 1988, 158 pages, \$13.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Francis A. Soper, president, Association of Adventist Parents for Drug-Free Youth, Stanley, Virginia.

From observations based on research and his medical practice, the author makes recommendations for improving health and preventing diseases related to lifestyle and nutrition. He makes brief references to the "Adventist advantage," the major benefits in health and longevity to be gained by following the basic health and nutrition principles advocated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Bailie notes his principles are not new. He says, "An ancient manuscript, the Bible, in Genesis 1:29 cites a dietary program that would have no cholesterol, and be low in both total and saturated fat, with reasonable amounts of protein

and ample natural fiber. Perhaps in dietary practices we are coming full circle, as we have in so many things throughout history, and heading back toward the original diet indicated for man by the Master Designer."

Without going into tiresome detail, Bailie suggests in layperson's language, behaviors that lead to a longer and fuller life.

Recently noted

Elton Trueblood: Believer, Teacher and Friend, James R. Newby, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1990, 203 pages, \$16.95, hardcover.

As spiritual leader, scholar, and Christian apologist, Elton Trueblood holds an important place in American religion. No one is better qualified to write about this renowned Christian than his long-time friend and colleague at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. With access to Trueblood and his voluminous works—private and published—Newby has given us a thoroughly researched biography. The fire and spirit of Trueblood's Christocentric faith come through in every chapter.

Though a lifelong Quaker, Trueblood has never been a sectarian Quaker. He always applies the basic spiritual teachings of Friends to the larger Christian community. Newby states, "He realizes that a religious movement serves little purpose if its main attention is focused inward on what is good for the sect rather than outward on what is good for the world."

A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, eds., Harper (Collins), San Francisco, 1990, 578 pages, \$29.95, hardcover.

Using personal recollections from those who are the "living history" of this man, the editors set Bonhoeffer's writings in the context in which they were created and through which they have affected subsequent generations of Christians.

Sex in the Forbidden Zone: How Men in Power—Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers, and Others—Betray Women's Trust, Peter Rutter, M.D., J. P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, 1989, 140 pages, \$17.95, hardcover.

Though Rutter's book was published more than a year ago, the acclaim it is receiving continues to grow. Rutter explores male and female psychology in pro-

fessional relationships where men hold the power. The results are astounding. This is a book every pastor needs to read.

Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E., Amihai Mazar, Doubleday, New York, 1990, 572 pages, \$30, hardcover.

Israeli archeologist Mazar introduces the achievements of archeological research in Israel and Jordan and discusses its implications for our knowledge of the world of the Old Testament. This second volume of the Anchor Bible Reference Library presents a comprehensive overview of each archeological period.

Painted Black, Carl A. Raschke, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1990, 276 pages, \$16.95, hardcover.

With the rise of the occult, especially among teenagers, pastors should be aware of this book by a leading Christian authority on the subject. Ten years ago few people believed that Satanism existed. But now, according to Raschke, it is terrorizing some communities.

The author raises questions concerning the social roots and causes of this movement, its connection with drugs, child abuse, pornography, heavy metal music, and the rise of neo-Nazism. Raschke believes that today's young satanists are not motivated so much by the desire to do evil as they are by a sense of hopelessness about their own lives. He describes four forms of satanism—experimental, occult/cult, self-styled and traditional. Only through understanding how prevalent and devastating this terrorist subculture is, says Raschke, can we hope to stop its rise. "Denying evil strengthens it." ■

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Funeral Ideas

"Death be not proud. . . .

One short sleep past, we
wake eternally,
And death shall be no
more; death, thou
shalt die." —John Donne.

So can a poet sing. But what does a pastor say when death strikes a parishioner, plunges the family into sorrow, leaves someone lonely? How can funerals be transformed into occasions of care and affirmations of hope? Last July we asked our readers to tell us how they infuse that special touch in the funeral service. In this issue we share some of those ideas.

A time to affirm solidarity

In our church community, death is an occasion for the living to affirm the solidarity of faith. It provides time and opportunity for God's family to show that they care for one of their members who is affected by death. In addition to the usual spiritual services involved in the funeral, our church takes immediate interest in caring for the physical needs of the grieving family. As a pastor, I get in touch with my elders, deacons, and deaconesses and organize a support system to help the mourning family and their relatives. We organize teams that will care for meals, refreshments, baby-sitting, sleep and rest, and other household details from the moment of death till a day or two after the funeral is over. A grieving family should not have to be burdened by such details, and they usually appreciate the care shown by members of their extended family. —Rajarathinam Jones, Seventh-day Adventist

Church, Nazareth, Tamil Nadu, India.

■ When a family is gathered to bury a loved one, that moment of grief and loss sometimes leaves them cold to the environment. What is said may not even register on their minds. To ensure a ministry of care and to let the family know that we share their sorrow, I include moments of warmth and support in my approach to a funeral service. One way I try to do this is to have a special prayer with the immediate members of the family, and my prayer is usually accompanied by laying on of hands. Such a prayer service has brought strength and comfort to the bereaved. —R. J. Syms, Christians in York, Nether Poppleton, York, England.

Celebration of a life

I was deeply moved by what three sons (all ministers) had done to mark the life of their father at his funeral service. At the foyer of the church, the sons had placed a table, covered it with green velvet, and arranged on it the tools of his trade—hammer, saw, apron, plane, and level. The sons were proud of their father, a carpenter, who gave so much of his life and time to the church he loved. His skill was his witness.

When my father-in-law died, I adapted this idea for his funeral. He was an expert craftsman—custom jeweler, watchmaker, engraver, inventor. We arranged on a velvet-covered table several items relating to his life work: a jeweler's loupe, an assortment of tools, his first engraving. On

a broad white satin ribbon, we placed the words of Paul: "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed. . . ."

Done with taste, it can be a meaningful tribute to a life well lived. —T. C. Whitehouse, Auburndale, Massachusetts.

Planning one's funeral

More times than not, families have little or no idea about the wishes of the deceased concerning his/her funeral. I circulate a form to my congregation that outlines the basic issues of funeral planning. Each has the freedom to answer or ignore the following questions: Which funeral home do you prefer? Who should be notified at the time of your death? Where should your body lie in state? Should the casket be open or closed? Should the funeral service be held in the church, funeral home, or at another location? Whom would you prefer to conduct your funeral? Are there specific passages of Scripture that you prefer to be read? Do you have any favorite hymns you would like sung? Is there a particular musician you would like to participate in the service? Do you have a preference as to the recipient of memorial gifts?

The opportunity for preplanning can be encouraged in at least three ways. Include a funeral planning questionnaire in a pastoral concern letter. Insert the form with an explanatory article in the church newsletter. Conduct a workshop on the subject. —Robert B. Watkins, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Personalizing the service

Using the Bible of the deceased gives me an opportunity to personalize the funeral service and make it more comforting and meaningful to the bereaved family. Verses underlined, marginal notes, poems, clippings, and end-leaf notations found in the Bible can be a rich source of information in planning eulogies, sermonettes, or prayers for the service. In one well-used Bible I found a notation that the deceased had read the Scripture through every year for a number of years, and I used this information to pay a special tribute to the person who was no more, and also to challenge those living to give heed to the Word. That added a special touch to the service. —Chad McComas, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Corvallis, Oregon.

■ I invite the extended family of the deceased to spend some time sharing their memories of the deceased, usually after the visitation the evening before the funeral and on occasion in the funeral service itself, especially if the family gathering is small and the service is informal. This sharing helps me to focus the funeral service to the needs of the family. It directs the family's attention to how God's love and mercy touched the life of the deceased. It also assists the children to discover strength in family and community togetherness. At times I have seen that such sharing has led to forgiveness and reconciliation between family members. One note of caution: the sharing should be spontaneous and

voluntary, and not coerced. — Ronald C. Christiansen, Hudson, Ohio.

■ Approximately mid-way through the service I ask if anyone present wishes to share with us a word about the deceased. I add that everyone present knew him/her in a unique sense, perhaps because of an experience or conversation shared with no other person. That unique perspective on the deceased is to become a treasured memory. Often a person will step forward and offer a spontaneous recollection that will add to the service a special quality that the clergy cannot provide. If no one seems responsive to my suggestion, I allow a minute of silence during which each person may recall the deceased in the solitude of his/her heart. — Rabbi Daniel

Friedman, Congregation Beth Or, Deerfield, Illinois.

■ I aim to strengthen and support the bereaved through the difficult time of loss and grief. Emotional concern is a sensitive area, and I try to be as helpful as possible. I tell the mourners at home or even during the service that they need not strive to hold back the tears; that emotional expressions in times of death are natural; and that tears are not a sign of weakness but indicative that someone worth loving is sorely missed. Just mentioning this aloud seems to help many mourners, and I believe acknowledging emotions before God is an important phase in adjusting to new realities. — Christine Polhill, Curate, Church of England, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, England.

■ When funeral services for a nursing home resident are held in a funeral home or in a local church, often the nursing home friends of the deceased find it difficult to attend the service. Yet they need to finalize their feelings in connection with the death of someone who had lived with them closely. Our local ministerial alliance worked out arrangements with the nursing home to hold a brief memorial service in the assembly area of the nursing home on the day of the funeral. The minister would conduct a short service, with obituary, Scripture, a message, and sometimes music. Family members of the deceased were invited to join in. The service has a positive effect on the residents and helps them to overcome the alienation that may come as

a result of the loss of a friend. — Eugene A. Perry, Westport Baptist Church, Cleveland, Oklahoma.

Funeral planning sheet

To ensure order, efficiency, and family involvement in the planning of a funeral service, I use a data sheet. I do not know who originated the questionnaire, but I found it helpful and I share it with my fellow ministers. When I review the data with the family, I find the experience therapeutic for the bereaved ones. The life of the loved one stands in a positive perspective, and the family appreciates the opportunity to be thankful even in the midst of grief. — Bradley K. Whited, La Sierra Collegiate Church of Seventh-day Adventists, Riverside, California.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS: WORK SHEET

Service information

Funeral home _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 Funeral director in charge _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 Contact person _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 Date of service _____ Time _____ Place _____
 Graveside _____ Time _____

Basic information

Name of deceased _____
 Address _____
 Date of birth _____ Place _____ Occupation _____
 Name of spouse _____
 Living _____ If no, date of death _____
 Occupation of spouse _____ Date of marriage _____
 Children _____ Grandchildren _____ Great-
 Names _____

Life-centered information

Education _____
 Specialized training _____
 Church affiliation _____
 Social/civic involvements _____
 Hobbies/interests _____
 Awards/recognitions _____
 Cultural interests/involvements _____

Travel/adventure _____

Funeral service information

Officiating minister _____ Assistants _____
 Favorite scripture _____ Song _____
 Musical selections _____
 Soloist _____ Organist _____
 Tribute prepared by _____ Read by _____
 Special reading or poem _____
 Pallbearers _____

Ushers _____
 Sound _____ Recording audio _____ Video _____
 Reserved seating _____
 Order of service _____
 Order of procession _____
 Viewing arrangements _____
 Last respects _____
 Flowers _____
 Graveside details _____
 Opportunity for personal reflections during service _____

Memories and relationships

As you reflect over the life of your loved one, is there something you would like to share that would give a deeper insight into the life of the deceased?
 Personal family relationship _____
 Favorite memories _____
 Humorous anecdotes _____

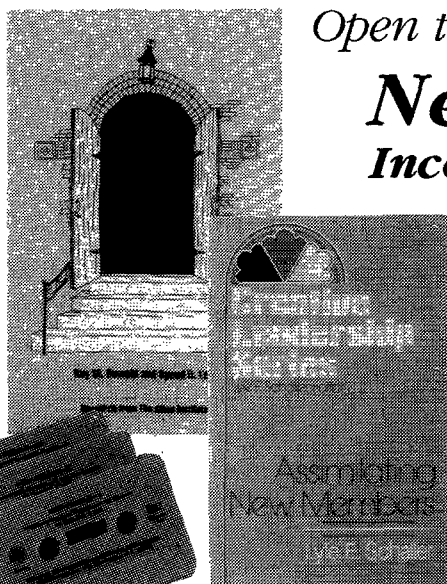


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