

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

July 1991

See Evangelism Section
page 24

GOD'S
WORD:

CASEBOOK

HOLY
BIBLE

OR

CODEBOOK?

Communicating with the comatose

In reference to "Ministry to Comatose Patients" (May 1991): I had an experience some years ago that further substantiates the need for more ministry in this area. The patient was in his 50s, had experienced a cerebral hemorrhage, and had been in the hospital, in a comatose state, for several weeks. During this time there had been no response to me or any of the hospital personnel, including the doctors.

On this particular day I went into his room about 10:00 a.m. and visited as usual, talking about different things that I thought might be of interest. Then I mentioned the family, their concern, and that we were all praying for his recovery. To this point there was still no response, eye movement or otherwise. Then I said, "Remember, God loves you and we love you. Now let's go to God in prayer."

As I began to pray the patient started crying, and there was evidence that he knew me. He moved his body and tried his best to talk, something he had not done previously. A nurse came in, observed the situation, and ran to get a doctor. When two doctors entered the room, I said, "I'll get out of your way," but one of them said, "No, don't leave. You've gotten more response than we could. I don't know what has happened, but your ministry has been much more effective than ours."

The patient never was able to talk, but there was communication with the family that meant so much to them. Since the hemorrhage occurred they had not known whether their loved one understood what they were communicating.

The patient did not recover, but there were several weeks of quality time that was meaningful to all of us.

Indeed all things are possible with God, and He works in mysterious

ways His wonders to perform.—Dan H. Sullivan, pastor (retired), Elwood United Methodist Church, Springfield, Missouri.

Kudos for help for elders

Kudos to *Ministry* for adding local elders to your statement of mission (see "Changes at *Ministry*," January 1991). Laypersons ministering beside, and in the absence of, the clergy hunger for materials that will allow the trumpet of service to be blown in clarity. The *Church Manual* describes adequately the elder's role relative to those of other church officers and the pastor, and divine worship aids are found in abundance in *Celebration! Local elders' service could have "a more certain sound"* with additional guidance specific to their unique functions outside of the pulpit.—Michael Hall, former head elder, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

Message for this "mess age"

Every word of David Marshall's article "Night Clouds at Dawn" (January 1991) was a veritable thunderbolt! What appalls me—and many others, I am sure—is the way we have ignored the problems of alcoholism, drugs, and AIDS among our own members.

Why has the church failed to tackle these issues? Have our pulpits been silenced by lack of concern? Have our homes neglected to teach our children the essential values of an Adventist lifestyle? Modern-day Pharisees and Sadducees will remain as long as there is a church. What we need urgently is a teachable congregation in our churches with equally knowledgeable pastors with a definite message for this "mess age."—Kingsley C. J. Peter, communication director, Pakistan Union of Seventh-day Adventists, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

Missing sentences in NRSV

In a footnote to his article "Recovered: A Lost Portion of the Book of Samuel" (March 1991), Paul Lippi says that the translators of the *New American Bible* and the *Anchor Bible* were privy to information about the missing paragraph following 1 Samuel 10:27, but he completely overlooks the fact that the New Revised Standard Version, which appeared in bookstores in the late spring of last year, has the four missing sentences.

This is a serious oversight and should be brought to the attention of your readers, since the NRSV is bound to become, as did its RSV predecessor, the most widely used translation in the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox denominations that are part of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., which is the publisher of the RSV translations.—Theodore S. Horvath, Wayne, Pennsylvania.

■ *Thanks for the update. Lippi submitted the manuscript for his article to us well before the NRSV was published.—Editors.*

Woolman or Schwarzkopf?

In your March 1991 issue, J. N. Musvosvi and J. D. Newman discussed the concept of servant leadership. They use John Woolman and his use of persuasion to end slavery as an example of the kind of leadership the church should have. I take exception to this.

Newman points out that Woolman spent 30 years ending slavery. I contend he helped perpetuate slavery by his lack of forceful leadership. I believe that the person who can prevent evil and doesn't is as responsible as the person who does the evil. What kind of change would have come had

(Continued on page 26)

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.)

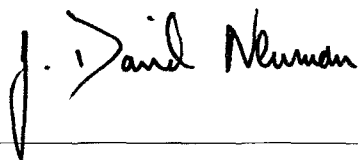
Since the Bible is vital to our understanding of salvation, how should we approach it? Do we allegorize it away so that it has only spiritual meaning? Do we interpret it so literally that we make first-century culture the norm for today? How do we tell when the Bible is speaking to principle or to application?

Alden Thompson's book *Inspiration*, which has just been published, seeks to answer some of these questions. In this month's *Ministry* we are reprinting the chapter from his book that addresses the issue most directly—"God's Word: Casebook or Codebook?"

Some think that *Inspiration* will prove to be one of the most helpful books ever published by an Adventist press. Others, just as sincere, believe it will devastate the church. One thing is certain: it will not leave you unmoved.

We are beginning in this issue a new department for local church elders. The Ministerial Association of the General Conference has now assumed the responsibility for coordinating the training and support of elders as they assist pastors in their work. Jim Zachary, an associate in the Ministerial Association, will take the lead in providing articles for this department. He has written the first article, which appears in this issue: "Pastor-Elder Team Ministry Gets New Support."

I also want to encourage you to complete the evangelism survey found on page 29. We are planning a continuing education course on evangelism and need your ideas for the formation of the curriculum and on possible authors. This course will appear on a monthly basis starting in January of 1993. So please let us know if we have selected the right subjects to meet your needs, and indicate which ones should have priority. Evangelism is the lifeblood of the church.



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Ministry, (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1991, is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A. Subscriptions US\$22.00 for 12 issues worldwide. Single copy US\$2.25. US\$39.85 for 12 issues air mail worldwide. Member Associated Church Press. Second-class postage paid at Hagerstown, Maryland. This publication is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International. Call toll-free 1-800-521-3044. Or mail inquiry to: University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Editorial Office: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts. Office telephone: 301-680-6510

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

VOLUME 64 NUMBER 7



Confused over the basis of salvation

J. David Newman

A recent study of more than 12,000 Seventh-day Adventist young people found that 81 percent of them believe that they “must live by God’s rules in order to be saved.” This church-sponsored study, called Valuegenesis, also revealed that only 28 percent agreed that “there is nothing I can do to earn salvation.” Sixty-two percent indicated that “the way to be accepted by God is to try sincerely to live a good life.” And 44 percent believe that “the main emphasis of the gospel is on God’s rules for right living.”

Why are our young people so confused over the gospel? Whenever a church emphasizes holy living—high ethical and moral standards—it runs the risk of distorting the gospel. While rules and correct behavior are necessary in the Christian’s life, they never constitute the basis of salvation. God saves a person on the basis of the perfect life and death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:9, 10), not on the basis of any contribution the person may have made.

A recent series of Sabbath school lessons on the book of Romans unwittingly added to the confusion. These lessons taught that the new birth is part of justification. This mingling of justification (the forensic) and the new birth (the experiential) presents a very real problem. Questions arise in the mind: How converted do I have to be in order to be saved? Is there enough evidence of conversion in my life to grant the assurance of salvation? How much must I be transformed for God to forgive me?

Once individuals begin this inward

look, taking their eyes off the cross and the objective work of Christ and focusing on the subjective work of Christ in them, they no longer have a fixed frame of reference. When they look at how well they are keeping the Sabbath, how victorious they are over sin, how correct their behavior is, they will be confused over what constitutes salvation.

This is not to deny the importance of the new birth; without it no one will see the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. But individuals cannot and dare not look to the new birth as part of the ground of their assurance in Christ. If they are justified by faith, the new birth will inevitably follow.

People are saved not because they are converted, but because through faith they place their trust in Jesus Christ. God accepts that faith, imputes the righteousness of Christ to them, credits them with the perfect life of Christ, and treats them as if they have never sinned (see Rom. 4:3, 5). At the same time God transforms them through the new birth experience so that they possess the will to live a holy life. The growth in Christ that begins here is the work of a lifetime, never fully realized in this life. But throughout the process, always because of the doing and dying of Christ, God treats the believers as perfect and worthy of salvation.

What is justification?

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* defines justification as follows: “The divine act by which God declares a penitent sinner righteous, or regards him as righteous. Justification is the opposite of condemnation (Rom. 5:16). Neither term specifies character, but

only standing before God. Justification is not a transformation of inherent character; it does not impart righteousness any more than condemnation imparts sinfulness. . . . When God imputes righteousness to a repentant sinner He figuratively places the atonement provided by Christ and the righteousness of Christ to his credit on the books of heaven, and the sinner stands before God as if he had never sinned” (page 635).

When God justifies a person, He declares that person righteous because of Christ. Justification does not make a person intrinsically righteous (see verse 5). Sinners enjoy the assurance of salvation not because their standing rests in what they have done or in what has been done to them, but because it rests in what Christ has done for them (verses 9, 10). He wrought out their victory at Calvary and now offers that victory to all who believe.

When God justifies and transforms an individual, He also begins the lifelong process of sanctification. Every believer will want to live according to everything that God wills. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15; see also John 15:10).* But the believer keeps God’s rules only as a response to having already been justified in Christ, never as the cause or part of the cause of that justification.

Constant righteousness

God continues to declare those who live under the umbrella of justification 100 percent righteous as long as they choose to live under that umbrella. The law no longer condemns them, for Christ fulfilled all the demands of the law (see Rom. 10:4; cf. Matt. 5:17). No

wonder Paul could say "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

Christians are at peace because they trust in the perfect law-keeping of Jesus Christ. They are no longer under condemnation (Rom. 8:1). They no longer feel guilty. Joy fills their lives.

Christians exalt Christ, never themselves. They also become very concerned about victory over sin. They take seriously Paul's words "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Rom. 6:1, 2).

If we adulterate the gospel, if we cause our young people to be uncertain of their salvation, if we lead them to believe that right behavior is an essential part of the basis of their salvation, then we are contributing to what may become their eternal damnation. Then we are in danger of emulating the Pharisees, who were so zealous that they would "travel

over land and sea to win a single convert" (Matt. 23:15), yet despite all their emphasis on holy living "shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces" (verse 13).

Paul reminds us that it is through grace that we are saved, not by works (Eph. 2:8, 9). And grace is unmerited favor. God accepts us not because of some change in us, but because of what Jesus did at the cross. If we accept Him as our Saviour, He will change us. But that change, that new birth, is always part of the result of our new standing in Christ, never part of the cause of that standing.

Rules are important. The church needs to uphold high ethical and moral standards. But—and I want to stress this point—they must never become a stumbling block to people's salvation. May the church live—and not just teach—the righteousness of Christ. ■

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

Father of fathers

David C. Jarnes

Last week Bill Neely, an associate pastor of the church to which I belong, spoke at a couple of the morning workshops here at the General Conference. One of Bill's worship talks focused on being a father, calling my thoughts again to the metaphor of God as our heavenly parent.

Scripture uses this image of God freely, though a cursory survey I did seemed to show that it appears much more frequently in the New Testament than in the Old. In the New Testament, Matthew, John, and Paul use the term most often. By the time John wrote, this term had become so well established that in most cases he seems to be using it as a name; he does not often draw out its meaning.

For the most part the biblical writers use this image to communicate what we can learn about God from this human relationship. "As a [good] father has compassion on his children, so the Lord

has compassion on those who fear him" (Ps. 103:13).* "The Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (Prov. 3:12).

But as I contemplated that worship talk, it was the vice versa that really struck me—what we can learn from God about being good parents.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the character of the father, who represents God, offers some rich and hard-to-live-up-to lessons on being a good parent. First, when his sons reached the proper age, he was willing to grant them the responsibility of freedom. My children are reaching the age at which

that example is becoming increasingly apropos. Granting that freedom does not come easily to me; I probably have tended to err on the side of being overprotective, overcontrolling. I need grace to



follow the example of my heavenly Father.

This parable portrays ideals of parenthood even more difficult to achieve. When the prodigal son erred miserably, the father was willing to forgive. I can say "That's all right" when my children disappoint me, but too often I say it through clenched teeth. Frustration or repressed anger dilute the forgiveness. The prodigal's father holds up to us the high ideal of forgiving graciously, joyfully; of offering an acceptance unshadowed by reservations.

This father offers another lesson particularly meaningful to pastors and others whose professions do not grant them the luxury of regular hours. He was available to his son when his son needed him. Very few of us can be immediately available to our children at any moment. But parents do need to work at being available *regularly*. And this means more than just physical proximity. Working as an editor, I'm generally home most evenings. But when I'm honest with myself, I recognize that though I've been in the same house and even in the same room with my children, too often my mind, my attention, has been elsewhere.

The portrayal of God as a parent in other portions of Scripture teaches us that a good parent is:

- Caring: "Your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matt. 18:14).

- Observant: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matt. 6:8).

- Generous: "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

- A defender or protector: "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling" (Ps. 68:5).

- A good example: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

We, of course, cannot match the example set for us. Thank God that children are resilient! It's important that we exemplify humility and the willingness to say "I made a mistake; I'm sorry." ■

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

God's Word: casebook or codebook?

Alden Thompson

Sometimes Scripture seems to offer contradictory guidance. What model of Scripture best helps us put it all together?



*Alden Thompson, Ph.D., is professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla College, Walla Walla, Washington. This article is a reprint of the chapter by the same name in his recently published book *Inspiration* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1991). Used by permission.*

A casual conversation after church several years ago provides a good introduction to the casebook/codebook question.

A man stepped up to me and volunteered the following comment: "I see that the School of Theology is going to begin ordaining women." He had taken his cue from an article on the topic of women's ordination that had appeared in *Westwind*, the Walla Walla College alumni journal. Based on interviews with the School of Theology faculty, the article reflected the consensus of the theology faculty that women should be ordained. Each interview, however, had included the important qualifier "when the church is ready."

"Ordination is not the responsibility of the School of Theology," I reminded him. "But we do believe the church should move in that direction, at least here in North America."

"But what do you do with Paul's counsel," he returned, "that women are to keep quiet and not have authority over men?" (see 1 Tim. 2:11-15).

"Paul's counsel reflected the culture of his day, not an enduring principle."

"But Paul based his statement on the fact that Adam was created before Eve."

"That was Paul's logic, not necessarily God's," I said, adding then an echo from Ellen G. White's *Selected Messages*: "God has not placed Himself on trial in the Bible in words, logic, or rhetoric."¹

"Wasn't Paul inspired?"

"Of course. But inspired writers always address their own culture—and culture changes."

"But God does not change."

Sensing that it was time to tap into some Old Testament illustrations, I asked about the laws dealing with slavery, citing those in Exodus 21:1-6.

"I see nothing wrong with slavery."

"And polygamy?" I responded.

"What about the law in Exodus 21:7-11 that commands a man to grant full marital rights to his first wife if he takes the second one? Does that still apply?"

"Except for elders and deacons, I find nothing in the Bible that would forbid a man from having more than one wife."

Somewhat unnerved by his self-confident answers, I decided to try once more. "What about blood vengeance?" I asked. "Do you think a man should even the score when a near relative is killed?" (see Num. 35:9-28).

"If we practiced blood vengeance today," was the ready response, "we would have a lot less trouble with law and order."

To my knowledge, this brother did not own slaves, have more than one wife, or practice blood vengeance. But he still felt compelled to argue that a law once given by God should live forever. For him Scripture clearly was a *codebook*.

In our culture today, a codebook is an instrument of precision. When a contractor builds to code, he goes by the book. The minimums are clear; the specifications exact. If he wishes he may install more insulation or provide

more access than the code prescribes, but not less.

Typically a codebook demands *application* more than *interpretation*, obedient *compliance* more than thoughtful *reflection*. It anticipates a straightforward query from the inspector: "Did you follow code?" The answer is a simple yes or no. Proof of compliance is at hand and easily measurable.

Is Scripture like that? In some respects, yes. But I believe there is a better approach for Scripture as a whole. Let me suggest two propositions as a springboard for discussion:

1. *While Scripture clearly contains some codebook elements, on balance, it is more like a casebook than a codebook.*

2. *Believers are reluctant to admit the casebook model for fear of undermining the authority of Scripture.*

We will take up each proposition in turn and explore what it means for the church today.

Casebook more than codebook

I am indebted to one of my students for the suggestion that Scripture is like a *casebook*. The suggestion grew out of class discussions on biblical law. Increasingly I am convinced that the casebook/codebook comparison is fruitful for helping us understand the nature of Scripture.

Whereas a codebook is at home in legal circles and in the realm of the trades and technology, a casebook is often a more useful tool in the behavioral and social sciences. It can also provide the raw data on which certain legal judgments are based. But instead of *mandating* a single, clearly defined response as a codebook would do, a casebook *describes* a series of examples that reflect a variety of responses under varied circumstances. None of the cases may be fully definitive or prescriptive in other settings, but each is described in a manner that could be helpful to someone facing similar circumstances.

In the examples that follow, we will note instances in which the complexities of changing times and circumstances suggest that a casebook approach can provide the right kind of framework for understanding the breadth of biblical material.

Law Codes—The examples cited above in my after-church conversation—slavery, polygamy, and blood vengeance—are all customs supported

by Old Testament law codes but which most Christians would consider inappropriate for Westerners of the twentieth century.

If, however, we look for a specific biblical command indicating that these customs are no longer valid, we will be disappointed. In a technical sense, the brother who accosted me after church was right. Nowhere does Scripture directly condemn slavery, polygamy, or blood vengeance.

One additional example can suffice here to illustrate how the Bible itself adopts something like a casebook approach, in this instance actually reversing the application of a biblical law in the light of different circumstances.

The example involves the relationship between a man and his brother's wife. As part of a list of forbidden incestuous relationships, Leviticus 18:16 specifically commanded a man not to "uncover the nakedness" of his brother's wife. This law formed the basis for John the Baptist's condemnation of Herod Antipas (Matt. 14:3, 4).

However, if a man died without male offspring, Deuteronomy 25:5-10 describes how a brother actually was *commanded* to take his brother's wife and carry on the brother's name. This law, known as the levirate marriage law (law of the husband's brother), was the basis for the Sadducees' trick question to Jesus: "In the resurrection, to whom does a woman belong who has married seven brothers in turn?" (see Matt. 22:23-33).

While the circumstances mandating the exception for levirate marriage were clearly spelled out, a legitimate question would be: Do either one or both of these laws still apply in our day? Regardless of the answer, a casebook approach would seem preferable to a codebook model for accommodating the differences between them.

Proverbs—A rather striking instance of apparently contradictory proverbs occurs in Proverbs 26:4, 5. The first proverb recommends one line of action; the second, precisely the opposite: "Answer *not* a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself" (verse 4). "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes" (verse 5).

Some first-century rabbis found such seeming contradictions troubling, even suggesting that Proverbs did not belong in the canon. A few moments of reflec-

Believers are reluctant to admit the casebook model for fear of undermining the authority of Scripture.

tion, however, will suggest that individual proverbs, by their very nature, are likely to be *generally* true rather than *universally* true. In the world of non-inspired proverbs, for example, we may set two perfectly good proverbs against each other as apparently contradictory: "Too many cooks spoil the broth" versus "Many hands make light work."

What determines which proverb applies? The circumstances in the kitchen, of course. Any cook can think of times when one proverb would apply more appropriately than the other.

As for the biblical proverbs cited, one could conceive of circumstances when a fool should be confronted but other circumstances when silence would be preferable. All that assumes, of course, that we are perfectly clear that we are dealing with a fool.

How could a codebook deal with all of that? It cannot. When more than one application is possible, a casebook offers more help.

Prophetic Counsel—What would a prophet say to the following question: "Should God's people resist a pagan invader or surrender?"

In the days of King Hezekiah, when the Assyrians threatened Jerusalem, Isaiah the prophet counseled resistance and promised victory for the kingdom of Judah (Isa. 37:5-7).

Some 100 years later, in the days of King Zedekiah, Jeremiah the prophet gave just the opposite advice when Babylon threatened Jerusalem: "He who goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have his life as a prize of war" (Jer. 21:9). Understandably, Jeremiah was accused of treason.

We may not understand all the varied

Daniel advocates speaking up and Esther espouses keeping quiet.

circumstances that led God to extend mercy to His people under Hezekiah and withdraw it from them under Zedekiah, though Hezekiah's reputation was certainly superior to Zedekiah's. But we certainly would expect God to adapt His approach to circumstances. And since a variety of factors determines the prophet's response, a casebook approach seems more adequate than a codebook.

The Words of Jesus—A question for Jesus: "What kind of physical preparations and equipment do we need when we are serving in Your name?"

Jesus answers in Luke 22:35-38: "When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now, let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one."

How could a codebook clearly prescribe what we are to take and when? Jesus' answer requires a casebook approach.

Bible Biographies: Public Witnessing—A question for both Daniel and Esther: "How important is it to state one's convictions clearly when under threat?"

Daniel would say: "In one instance, I told the king's servant that we could not eat the king's food. Another situation involved my friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they refused to bow the knee on the plain of Dura, they were thrown into the fiery furnace. But they stood firm. Finally, when King Darius forbade his subjects the right to pray to anyone other than himself, I kept on praying three times a day from my open window. For my convictions, I was thrown in the lions'

den. But the Lord protected me."

By contrast, Esther would respond: "When King Ahasuerus sought a new queen, I obeyed Uncle Mordecai and did not identify myself as a Jew. I was treated as all the other maidens until the king selected me as queen. Even then I did not reveal my identity. Not until the very existence of my people was at stake did I take my life in my hands and admit that I was a Jew."

When Daniel advocates speaking up and Esther espouses keeping quiet, we know we need a casebook more than a codebook.

Bible Biographies: Soliciting Support From Pagans—A question for Ezra and Nehemiah: "Is it appropriate to ask pagan neighbors for protection and financial support for a trip back to Jerusalem?"

Ezra, in 457 B.C., answered no (Ezra 8:21-23).

Ellen White comments: "In this matter, Ezra and his companions saw an opportunity to magnify the name of God before the heathen. Faith in the power of the living God would be strengthened if the Israelites themselves should now reveal implicit faith in their divine Leader. They therefore determined to put their trust wholly in Him. *They would ask for no guard of soldiers.* They would give the heathen no occasion to ascribe to the strength of man the glory that belongs to God alone. They could not afford to arouse in the minds of their heathen friends one doubt as to the sincerity of their dependence on God as His people. *Strength would be gained, not through wealth, not through the power and influence of idolatrous men, but through the favor of God.*"²

Nehemiah, in 444 B.C., answered yes (Neh. 2:7-9).

Ellen White comments: "His request to the king had been so favorably received that Nehemiah was encouraged to ask for still further assistance. *To give dignity and authority to his mission, as well as to provide protection on the journey, he asked for and secured a military escort.* He obtained royal letters to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates, the territory through which he must pass on his way to Judea; and he obtained, also, a letter to the keeper of the king's forest in the mountains of Lebanon, directing him to furnish such timber as would be needed.

...

"Nehemiah did not depend upon un-

certainty. The means that he lacked he solicited from those who were able to bestow. And the Lord is still willing to move upon the hearts of those in possession of His goods, in behalf of the cause of truth. *Those who labor for Him are to avail themselves of the help that He prompts men to give.* These gifts may open ways by which the light of truth shall go to many benighted lands. The donors may have no faith in Christ, no acquaintance with His word; but their gifts are not on this account to be refused."³

Christians who are sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of the world around them can easily conceive of circumstances when it would be wise to follow Ezra's example. Other occasions may call for Nehemiah's response. The casebook of Scripture includes both Ezra and Nehemiah, and we can learn from both.

Apostolic Counsel—A question for the apostle Paul: "What about marriage in these last days?"

"That depends," he says in 1 Corinthians 7. "It is better to be single. But if you are already married, partners have a mutual obligation to grant each other conjugal rights" (verses 1-7).

"If you are now single, even though I would prefer that you remain that way, it is still better to marry than to burn with passion" (verses 8, 9).

"If you are married to a nonbeliever, stay with your partner unless he or she wishes to separate. If the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so. In such a case the believer is not bound" (verses 12-16).

The many variables Paul suggests would seem to fit more comfortably in a casebook than in a codebook.

Summary—In some of the examples just noted, the circumstances relating to apparently contradictory applications are spelled out. This is particularly true of the ancient law codes. Paul's various concessions relating to marriage are also rather well defined, though they do not eliminate the need for significant personal decisions.

In most of the other instances, however, Scripture remains largely silent about the reasons and circumstances that resulted in seemingly opposite actions or reactions. Since inspiration opened more than one legitimate alternative to the believers, they were required to choose a course of action without a

clear-cut command or a specific revelation from the Lord.

That places a high level of responsibility on the individual human being. It raises the fearful possibility of choosing wrongly and rationalizing away our duty to our own detriment and to the dishonor of God. All that is rather sobering.

Let us remind ourselves, however, that in each of the above instances, believers have capably integrated both sides of a seeming "contradiction" into a meaningful pattern of obedience toward God. To answer a fool or not, to solicit support from nonbelievers or not, to witness publicly or silently—all these are serious matters of obedience toward God. But each alternative can be seen as an obedient response in the right circumstances. The difficulty is that no codebook can provide us with the right answer in advance. Instead, we have a casebook with the various possibilities laid out before us. But ultimately, we have to choose our response. God will not do it for us.

And that last point is where the rub comes with many devout believers. Admitting that Scripture is a casebook seems entirely too open-ended. It could be seen as a dangerous invitation to take too much responsibility upon ourselves, which could then lead to wrong decisions that would dishonor God and His Word.

This reluctance to be straightforward with Scripture as a casebook is a matter we must probe more carefully in connection with our second proposition.

The reluctance to accept a casebook approach

Devout believers respect God's authority and the authority of His Word. It is understandable, perhaps, that believers in general are reluctant to say privately or publicly that a particular command or example in Scripture does not apply to them. To risk the possibility of the human will overruling the divine will is not an attractive prospect for someone really serious about obedience. Furthermore, examples can be multiplied of careless Christians who dismiss their responsibilities all too easily with a times-have-changed argument.

But even if we admit the cogency of the previously mentioned examples, the rhetoric from devout believers tends to portray God's Word as providing much clearer guidance than is actually the case when we come down to specific circum-

stances in our lives. Several quotations, gleaned at random from both official and unofficial Adventist sources, can serve to illustrate the fears, longings, and expectations that we bring to Scripture—all of which can cloud our own responsibilities before God and obscure the nature of the decisions we are making.

The fear of relying on humanity is reflected in the following: "We cannot measure right and wrong by our feelings or by what the majority are doing! We need something from outside ourselves to tell us where the truth lies."⁴

An advertisement for some booklets by Ellen White suggests the deep reverence for inspired writings that so many of us hold. The ad describes them as being "inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore faultless in the messages they contain."⁵ The term *faultless* implies a certain transcendent quality overshadowing any need for human beings to interpret and apply.

A longing for consistency can lead us to overlook the fact that some divine commands were temporary and that God has introduced some dramatic changes in the way He has dealt with humanity. Note how the following statement reflects the desire for consistency: "But the Bible itself offers abundant evidence that advancing light does not contradict past light. What was truth in Abraham's day did not become error in Christ's day."⁶

There is a larger consistency in Scripture, to be sure—Ellen White's phrase is "underlying harmony." But a desire for consistency should not lead us to oversimplify the evidence from Scripture. Unless we can tuck the "apparent contradictions" into a casebook, how can we explain such a startling event as God's command that Abraham sacrifice Isaac, to mention just one vivid example?

In connection with the use of Ellen White's writings as a commentary on Scripture, the same source drops a revealing hint of our deep-seated reluctance to admit that human beings must and do interpret inspired writings. A question mark is raised over the person who considers himself "free to determine his own interpretation of Scripture." Why is that dangerous? Because "one's own authority may compete with the gift of prophecy."⁷

But let us be candid about the twin dangers facing the church. Some peo-

Believers are reluctant to say that a particular command in Scripture does not apply to them.

ple, indeed, have a tendency to disregard divine authority. They take the reins into their own hands and do not listen to God's Word. But a much larger number in the church are all too willing to let some authority do their thinking for them—a parent, a pastor, the church, a commentary, Ellen White, even the Bible.

An authoritarian approach to Scripture, one that assumes that all our thinking has been done for us, results in perhaps the greatest irony of all—in *the name of God, we end up relying on an arm of flesh.*

In the aftermath of the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session, Ellen White spoke again and again on the need for believers to study and think for themselves. The following quotation is particularly appropriate when it comes to the topic of Bible study: "Beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of *depending upon men, and making flesh their arm.* Those who have not been in the *habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence,* have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them."⁸

But now let us work toward a concrete solution. If we clearly define Scripture as a *casebook*, then we are admitting that the Bible lays before us the many differing ways that God has guided His people in the past, but *without making our specific decisions for us.*

How then can we know whether to answer a fool or not (Proverbs)? To witness publicly (Daniel), or to keep quiet (Esther)? To make preparations

Scripture will not do our thinking for us. Nor will God.

and solicit help (Nehemiah), or simply to trust that God will provide (Ezra)? To take a sword or not (Jesus)? To marry or to stay single (Paul)?

The answer is brief, beautiful, painful: *We cannot just know Scripture; we have to know God.* And in that very connection I would like to share briefly and in a rather personal way how the casebook approach to Scripture has revitalized my devotional experience. Depending on how you look at it, that three-cornered relationship involving God, His Word, and me has become more simple and more complex, easier and more difficult. The whole process has become more intense and more challenging, and boredom is never a problem anymore.

Approach enhances devotions

I cannot remember when I made the startling discovery that my religious experience was based on a codebook or checklist perspective. Adventists steeped in the writings of Ellen White know all about the big three Christian responsibilities: prayer, Bible study, and sharing. What I discovered in my life, however, was that I was doing these three, not so much for their intrinsic value, but, quite frankly, to keep God happy.

In my mind's eye I pictured Him as a kind of giant scoutmaster with chart in hand. Each day He would mark off whether I prayed, studied my Bible, and shared. Thus in my devotional life, duty led the way and true meaning trailed along behind somewhere. I always had one eye on the clock and felt guilty when I fell short.

As I studied Scripture, however, it became clearer to me that I could not approach people—or God, for that matter—on the basis of a checklist. People and their needs differed greatly. How could I effectively point them to God? Without realizing it, I began

matching people and circumstances from my modern world with the world of Scripture. As I brought the various “cases” in my life into connection with the “cases” in Scripture, a serious dialogue with God became part of the process.

As I see it now, those conversations with Him remind me that my decisions are not mine alone, but His decisions, too. Not that He does my thinking for me or that He makes the final choice, but those conversations do keep Him and His kingdom foremost in my thinking and make it more likely that my decisions will be motivated by the principle of love rather than by the principle of selfishness.

When viewed in this way, prayer is not a substitute for thinking, but an enhancement of the thought processes. A true Christian will use his mind more, not less.

Attempting to visualize what takes place when we pray might help us understand the process better. When I raise this question with friends, the range of suggestions is intriguing. Here are some samples:

a. The radio. We are a receiver playing God's signal. In this model we are passive, God is active.

b. The pilot. God is in the control tower. We must be in touch with Him if we want to land safely, but He does not force us. We choose whether or not to listen and respond. This is a more interactive model and requires greater human responsibility.

c. The filter. Conversation with God acts like a filter on a moving stream. If our prayer life is healthy, the water is pure on the other side of the filter. When our prayer life falters, the stream keeps flowing, but the water coming through the clogged filter is impure.

The last two examples I have found particularly helpful. The pilot metaphor tells me that I must choose to listen and obey. The filter analogy reminds me that life goes on if I do not pray—but the result is impure.

In contrast with my earlier codebook or checklist approach, I no longer see Bible study and prayer simply as a means of keeping God happy. Reading His Word in dialogue with Him lies at the very heart of my relationship to the world around me. And the sharing process has also become natural, for having discovered the joy of communion with

Him through His Word, I find it impossible *not* to share.

This approach to Scripture has significant implications. For example, I can no longer define sin (singular) simply in terms of sins (plural), a list of acts committed or omitted. Sin is also a way of life lived apart from God.

Defining sin in this way means that the question of “sinlessness” or “sinless perfection” no longer commands the same interest as it did before, because we now define our relationship to God in terms of “dependence” on Him. In this respect, Jesus now becomes our perfect example because we learn from Him how to relate to our heavenly Father. His life was one of constant conversation with God about the affairs of life. That can be our life too.

To summarize, I would like to emphasize that it is perfectly acceptable for us as Christians to make human decisions on how we are to live. Scripture will not do our thinking for us. Nor will God. The tendency among devout, conservative Christians is to let revelation speak for itself. We fear that reason can destroy the authority of revelation. *The casebook approach allows us—indeed, forces us—to recognize that revelation and reason must work together. Revelation always deals with specific cases. Reason, in dialogue with the Spirit, determines which of those cases are most helpful in informing the decisions we make day by day.*

A crucial question remains, however: If Scripture as a whole is a *casebook*, do parts of Scripture still have value as a permanent *codebook*?

Yes, there are absolutes in Scripture. And these we must clearly define if we are to know how to interpret the various cases in our casebook.

In the next chapter of his book Thompson identifies which portions of Scripture he considers to fit the codebook model.—Editors. ■

¹ Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, book 1, p. 21.

² _____, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1917), pp. 615, 616. (Italics supplied.)

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 633, 634.

⁴ Joe Crews, *Inside Report*, vol. 4, No. 5 (n.d.).

⁵ *Our Firm Foundation*, July 1989, p. 10.

⁶ John J. Robertson, *The White Truth* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1981), p. 66.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1944), pp. 106, 107. (Italics supplied.)

Ancient ostracon records ark's wanderings

William H. Shea

The Izbet Sartah ostracon may be the earliest extrabiblical source that names a biblical personality and supplements the Bible's account of a historical event.



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In the time of the judges Israel suffered a major reversal when it lost the ark of the covenant to the Philistines for several months (see 1 Sam. 4-7). The Philistines had massed their troops at Aphek, in the central coastal plain. To meet this threat of invasion, the Israelite troops came down from the hill country to their camp at Ebenezer.

Today the ancient site of Aphek lies in a park operated by the town of Petah Tikvah on the east side of Tel Aviv in Israel. Until very recent times the location of Ebenezer was unknown. Thanks to some excavations by archaeologists from Tel Aviv University at a site named Izbet Sartah, we now have a candidate for Ebenezer. This site is located in the low foothills on the eastern edge of the coastal plain, just three or four miles from the site of Aphek. A road, a railway spur, and agricultural fields lie between these two sites. Those fields would have been the location for the encounter between the Israelite and Philistine troops.

In actuality, two battles were fought here. The first resulted in serious losses for the Israelites, but left them with a viable army. The elders of Israel gathered in camp after this defeat and asked the question "Why has the Lord put us to rout today before the Philistines?" (1 Sam. 4:3, RSV). They hit upon a solution to their problem: "Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord here from Shiloh, that he may come among

us and save us from the power of our enemies" (RSV).

This they proceeded to do. They sent to Shiloh, and Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, brought the ark down to the camp of the Israelites. This encouraged the Israelite troops; when the priests entered the camp with the ark, they gave a shout so loud that the Philistines could hear it in their camp. What provided encouragement for the Israelites brought discouragement to the Philistines, who resolved to acquit themselves "like men" on the field of battle, even in the face of opposition from the God of Israel.

When they met on the field of battle the next day, the troops on both sides were surprised by the outcome. The conflict resulted in a massive defeat for the Israelites, the deaths of Hophni and Phinehas, the custodians of the ark of the covenant, and the loss of the ark itself, the very object that they thought was going to ensure their victory. They had brought it to the battle like a magic talisman, attempting to use God for their purposes.

The rejoicing of the Philistines over their great victory soon turned to mourning. When the troops got back to their home territory, the authorities placed the ark in the temple of Dagon, their god, in the coastal city of Ashdod. Disaster resulted, both for Dagon and for the populace. Dagon was found tipped over on the floor in front of the ark. Worse yet, a plague broke out in the city. The people were afflicted with "tumors," probably buboes or swollen lymph nodes inflamed from bubonic plague. The people concluded that these

The ostracon seems to reflect an early stage in the development of the writing of Hebrew.

reverses resulted from having the ark in their midst, and they decided to get it off their hands.

When the people of Ashdod complained, the lords of the Philistines ordered the ark removed to the city of Gath, a Philistine city inland from the coast. When the people of Gath suffered similar afflictions, the ark was taken to Ekron, another inland city of the Philistines. But the people of Ekron refused to accept it, demanding that the ark be returned to Israel. The Philistine lords acceded, and the ark was sent to the Israelites at Beth-Shemesh.

All told, the ark was in Philistine territory for seven months, and the Philistines sent it back with a special offering to appease Yahweh and to avert His plagues.

With the excavation of the site of Aphek and of the probable site of Ebenezer, the question arises whether anything found at either of these two locations sheds light upon this biblical episode. Although the site of Aphek turned out to be very interesting archeologically (it was the residence of an Egyptian governor in Canaan during the thirteenth century B.C.), nothing was found relating to the battle we are considering.

Ostracon of Izbet Sartah

But the site of Izbet Sartah has turned up an object that is of considerable interest in this connection. The site lies on a low hill at the outer edge of the foothills of Israel. At the time of the battle the settlement was not large, consisting only of a small complex of houses. These houses were of construc-

tion typical in Israel at the time of the judges. They consisted of four rooms arranged in a parallel and perpendicular fashion.

In a small courtyard on the north side of the site several grain silos were found cut into the ground and into a rock shelf. One of the silos contained a rather large ostracon. (An ostracon is a potsherd that has been written on, either by pen and ink or by scratching.) This particular ostracon is about the size of the palm of a man's hand. The letters it contains were scratched on the surface of the sherd.

When the ostracon was first found, a discussion ensued among the diggers. Some thought that it had writing on it; others did not. Eventually the fragment was given to two of the most unskilled volunteers to see whether they thought it had writing on it. They decided that it did, so the sherd was saved as a special object.

It took Aaron Demsky, an Israeli scholar, only a week or two to determine that the bottom line of writing on the sherd was an early example of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet. This was a real breakthrough in understanding the text. It provided the key with which the other four lines could be deciphered. Unfortunately, those other lines have proved to be very difficult to read. Most scholars who have worked on the ostracon have given up, concluding the writing to be a practice text produced by a scribe writing the letters of the alphabet in random fashion for practice.

The first clue that the four upper lines comprised an intelligible text came from another Israeli scholar, Aron Dotan. In a published article he argued that the text above the alphabet told of the gift of some garments from one person to another, both of whom the text named. He found the name Baal as a part of the name of one of those persons; he found the word for "garment" at the beginning of the second line, and he found the verb "to come" occurring in three of the four lines of the text. These insights represented major advances toward understanding this text.

The ostracon seems to reflect an early

stage in the development of writing of Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew reads from right to left, but the writing on the ostracon must be read from left to right to make sense of any of its words.

I was led to a study of this text by Dotan's work. At first I interpreted the text in a similar way, as a donation text. However, I suggested that the garments were given to a statue of Baal in a temple rather than to an individual whose personal name incorporated that of Baal. I wrote up my findings as an article and submitted it to a professional journal, which accepted it. As it awaited publication, I came to some different conclusions about the text and withdrew the article.

A graduate student's inquiries about the ostracon led me back to it again. This time I noticed that Dotan and I had misread the first word at the beginning of the second line. We had taken the consonants as *ktn*, standing for the Hebrew word *ketonet*, "garment." Closer



The Izbet Sarteh Ostracon names places and people.

inspection revealed that the word read more accurately as *kttm*, that is, as *Kittim* (with the vowels supplied).

Kittim originally denoted people from Cyprus, but it soon came to mean any people who entered the Near East from the Mediterranean: "Sea Peoples," as it were. Since the Philistines were such a group, I wondered if this text might have something to do with contacts between the Philistines and the Israelites.

Further work on published photographs of the text revealed some place names in the last half of the second line and in the third line. Since two of the names appear in the story of the loss of the ark to the Philistines, I began to think this text might be an extrabiblical reference to that event.

Elucidating this matter has taken a lot of work. I am pleased now to present to the readers of *Ministry* in popular form the results of that research. In this presentation I provide a line drawing of the text and a proposed transliteration and translation. The line drawing (see figure) is taken from a comparison of the photographs of the text that have appeared in scholarly journals and the original in its display cabinet in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

In the transliteration and translation that follow, the slash indicates the break in the middle of the sherd.

Line 1 'el šdy 'atyn / ' apq mšl

Unto the field we came, / (unto) Aphek from Shiloh.

Line 2 ktm lqh 'at l'azr / dgn b'l 'ašdd gt

The Kittim took (it) and came to Azor, (to) / Dagon the lord of Ashdod, (to) Gath,

Line 3 y'rm qryh

(and to) Yearim Kiriah.

word, *Kittim*, mentioned above as a designation for the Sea Peoples, included the Philistines. The verb "to take" follows. From the biblical narrative we may infer that the object taken here must have been the ark. The verb "to come" follows after this, and then comes a preposition (*l'*) that introduces a series of place names.

The first one listed before the break in the sherd reads quite clearly as Azor. The Bible does not mention Azor, but other ancient sources, such as Sennacherib's Annals, do mention it. From these sources we know that it was located in the central coastal plain. Brief excavations at this site have revealed its thoroughly Philistine character.

At the end of the second line, along the edge of the sherd, the name of Ashdod appears. Just below it are the two letters *gt* that stand for Gath. (Ancient texts, including pre-Christian biblical manuscripts, did not use vowel letters.)

The short third line proved confusing until I recognized that the words relate to the place name Kiriath-jearim, except that the writer inverted their order. The inversion of the two elements in the name may have been by design in order to indicate the direction of motion, the return of the ark to Israelite territory. After a very short stop at Beth-shemesh, the ark came to rest at Kiriath-jearim for 20 years. This longer, more significant

stay probably indicates why the text skipped over Beth-shemesh.

Of the four place names written in the second and third lines, three occur in the biblical narrative of 1 Samuel 4-7: Ashdod, Gath, and Kiriath-jearim. The mention of Azor adds to our knowledge of the stops that the ark made traveling through Philistine territory. This stop probably was more in the nature of a way station on the return to the Philistine homeland in comparison with the more prolonged stops in the major cities.

The ostrakon skips over the last Philistine site mentioned in the Bible (Ekron) and also the first Israelite site to which the ark returned (Beth-shemesh). Ekron would only have added to the list

This text also implies a knowledge of the confrontation that occurred between Yahweh and Dagon at Ashdod.

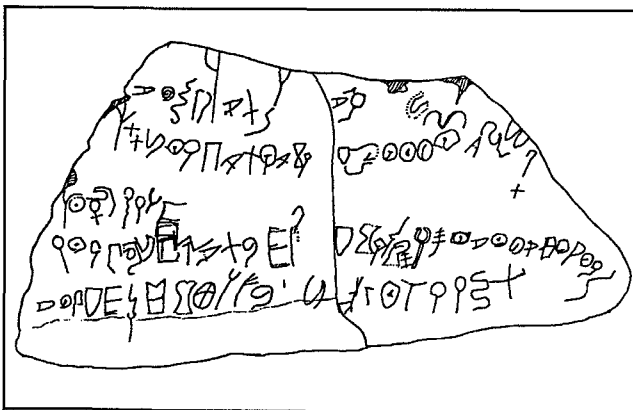
of the sites in Philistia, and the significance of Kiriath-jearim has already been mentioned above. If I have read the difficult portion of the text in the middle of the second line correctly, this text also implies a knowledge of the confrontation that occurred between Yahweh and Dagon at Ashdod.

The first line of the ostrakon, then, refers to Israel's coming to the battle. The second and third lines mention the sites to which the ark traveled after the Philistines captured it, including an Israelite site to which it was returned. The fourth line returns to the scene of the battle to give a more intimate glimpse into the course of events there. The name Hophni, written with a reasonable degree of clarity, appears in this final line of the account. Hophni is described as returning to the camp along with some soldiers to give a report to the elders waiting there. The battle is not over yet, but already he could give a report that portended a disastrous conclusion. In his report he told the elders, "A horse has come [and] upon [it was my] brother for us to bury."

This statement reveals a touch of poignant literary artistry. Seeing Hophni returning to the camp empty-handed, and hearing that his brother was slain, the elders perceived all they needed to know about the fate of the ark. It had been lost in the battle!

Conclusion

By way of a summary we observe that the ostrakon provides the same general outline of the events as does 1 Samuel 4-7. The biblical account naturally includes more than this brief four-line text. Nevertheless, there are some de-



This line drawing clarifies the inscription.

Line 4 r' rglm Hpn 'at lgh / d zqnm sws ba' 'al 'ah lqbrn

The companion of the foot soldiers, Hophni, came to / tell the elders, "a horse has come (and) upon (it was my) brother for us to bury."

Line 5 'a, b, g, d, h, n(!), w, h, z, t, y, k, l, m, / s, p, ', s, q, r, š/š, t

The alphabet.

Deciphering the ostrakon

The first half of the first line can be read with relative ease. The second half is more difficult because of the damaged condition of the sherd. This line tells of the Israelite approach to the battlefield where they subsequently engaged the Philistines.

The first part of the second line is also easier to read than its last part. The first

tails recorded on the sherd not mentioned in the biblical record.

For example, the text notes that Israel's troops mustered out of Shiloh (the location of the tabernacle), about 20 to 25 miles east of Aphek. We can only imagine that Eli offered sacrifice in behalf of the warriors and sent them with his priestly blessing. The text also refers to Azor as the first stop for the Philistine army returning from the battle. The biblical record does not mention this site, probably because it served only as a way station. The biblical record describes the scene at Shiloh when the news of the disastrous defeat was received. But the text indicates Hophni brought more immediate intelligence on the course of the conflict to the elders at the base camp while the battle was in progress.

The end result, later reported to Eli at Shiloh, could already be seen as developing and probably inevitable even by that time. This detail also gives us a relative time frame in which the two priestly brothers died. Phinehas died before Hophni, for Hophni reported his death back to the camp. Hophni then

returned to the battle, where he too fell.

Judging from its contents, a scribe who was well acquainted with the details of the tragic conflict wrote this account of the battle of Aphek and related events after the ark was returned to Kiriath-jearim.

Outside of this text, the Izbet Sartah ostracon, the earliest reference we know of from an extrabiblical source to an Old Testament event is Shishak's inscription on the wall of the Karnak temple in Egypt. There he referred to the campaign mentioned in 1 Kings 14:25, 26. This campaign occurred in the latter half of the tenth century B.C. The Philistine campaign described in 1 Samuel 4-7 and in the Izbet Sartah ostracon occurred in the first half of the eleventh century B.C., or about a century and a half earlier than Shishak's campaign.

The earliest extrabiblical reference to a person known from the Old Testament occurs in several Assyrian texts, which name Omri, the king of Israel who built Samaria as his capital. In this new text we have a reference by name as early as the eleventh century B.C. to an individ-

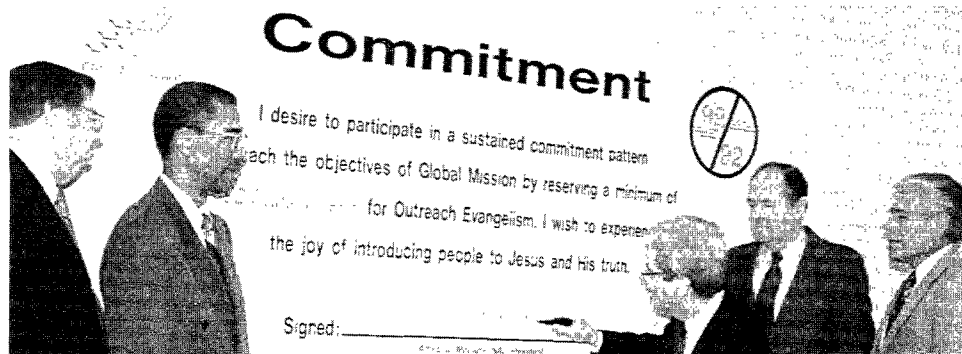
ual Israelite who is known from the Bible, a reference made approximately two centuries before the time of Omri.

So, though difficult to read, the Izbet Sartah ostracon has extended our knowledge of events and persons mentioned both in the Bible and in extrabiblical sources by approximately two centuries. And it has provided us with several new items of information about the important episode described in 1 Samuel 4-7, the battle of Aphek and the events surrounding it. ■

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NAD Operationalizes Global Mission for 1992



Left to Right: Robert L. Dale, Vice President; William C. Scales, Jr., Ministerial Association Director; A. C. McClure, NAD President; George Crumley, Treasurer; Manuel Vasquez, Vice President. Not pictured: Harold Baptiste, NAD Secretary.

The North American Division president, Elder A. C. McClure was the first to sign the enlarged commitment card in connection with the April 17 NADCOM vote to utilize the "92 in 92" Plan.

This flexible concept is a global mission support plan, tailored for leadership and membership. The commitment to God for a minimum of 92 hours of outreach evangelism during 1992 becomes a cooperative endeavor with full-time outreach workers. Commitment can be individualized with regard to talent, projects, place, and timing; and is, according to Elder Robert Dale, "a measurable chewable doable," even in tough territory.

"Introducing people to Christ and His truth," says Elder Bill Scales, "can be a lot of fun for everyone in this simple and flexible plan."

Many NAD Officers, together with union and conference officials, are setting the pace by joining Elder McClure in adopting the commitment. They are discovering that each person, church, conference, or union can adopt and adapt the "92 in 92" concept on a customized basis.

Jar handles reveal Hezekiah's hopes

Randall W. Younker

The seals stamped on jar handles in ancient Judah point to Hezekiah's attempt to unite the peoples of the northern and southern kingdoms and so to restore the Davidic kingdom.



Randall W. Younker, Ph.D., teaches Old Testament at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and directs the Institute of Archaeology and the Siegfried H. Horn Museum of Archaeology at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

When an archeologist recovers an ancient artifact, the first questions usually asked revolve around the object's historical context: What is its age? What circumstances brought about its existence? While many artifacts can be useful for rough dating purposes, those that were used for a limited time period are especially valuable. Archeologists often call such artifacts "index fossils" (I prefer "index artifacts"!).

One such class of artifacts are the *lmlk* jar handles of Judah. These handles from a certain type of storage jar are stamped with a seal that bears the Hebrew inscription *lmlk*, meaning "belonging to the king."

Naturally, the questions that immediately came to mind when these handles were first discovered were When were they made? and To which king did the jars (or their contents) belong? Since these handles appeared to be restricted to certain strata or levels at southern (Judahite) sites, the identification of the king who ordered their manufacture would be of tremendous chronological and historical value.

Initially, archeologists, led by such scholars as W.F. Albright, believed that these handles belonged to one of the last kings of Judah, perhaps King Jehoiachin. Recently, however, a number of technical studies involving ceramic, paleographic, stratigraphic, and historical data have led scholars to believe that the jar handles actually date from the time of King Hezekiah. This inference would be especially significant because the

handles could thus serve as index artifacts. They would date precisely the destruction layers of cities throughout Judah that had been destroyed by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in either 701 or 688 B.C., events well known from biblical and extrabiblical sources.¹

While there has been a growing consensus that the jar handles do indeed date to the time of King Hezekiah, a couple of problems have not yet been resolved satisfactorily. First, it has been noted that although all the seals feature the inscription "belonging to the king," some display a picture of a four-winged scarab under the inscription, while others depict a two-winged (sun?) disk. Why would a king display two different royal emblems on his seal?

Second, and even more curious, is the distribution of these seals. Eighty percent of the royal jar handles found in the central hills of Judah (for example, around Jerusalem) display the two-winged disk motif. Just the opposite is true of those seals found in the Shephelah (for example, in the area around Lachish). Here, 80 percent contain the four-winged scarab.

Hezekiah and the fall of Israel

Before attempting to explain either the simultaneous use of two different royal motifs or their unusual distribution, it will be helpful to review the historical situation at the time Hezekiah became king of Judah.

Just prior to Hezekiah's ascent to the throne, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the overwhelming forces of Assyria (722 B.C.). The conquest undoubtedly resulted in a large migration

During Hezekiah's reign Jerusalem underwent an incredible expansion.

of refugees from the north into Judah, an influx that several lines of evidence, both biblical and archeological, point to. For example, 2 Chronicles 31:6 describes the "people of *Israel* and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah" (RSV), and who brought their tithes to the Lord following Hezekiah's reinstating of the Passover service at Jerusalem. Many, if not all, of these "men of Israel" who lived in Judah migrated south around the time Samaria and the kingdom fell.

The book of the prophet Micah contains a similar reference to an Israelite presence in the south. The first chapter makes it clear that the prophet is concerned that the sins that brought down the northern kingdom will infiltrate Judah and bring a similar fate: "For her [Samaria's] wound is incurable; and it has come to Judah" (verse 9, RSV). These sins included worship at inappropriate places such as high places and false sanctuaries.

Of particular interest is verse 13, which reads "Harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lachish; you were the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion [Jerusalem], for in you were found the transgressions of *Israel*" (RSV). This verse suggests the presence of an Israelite sanctuary or high place at Lachish. Y. Aharoni, an Israeli scholar, argues from this text that there was indeed an "illegal" sanctuary at Lachish at the time of the Assyrian conquest, a claim for which certain archeological evidence appears to offer indirect support. While corruption from the north was always a

concern of the Judahite prophets (see, for example, Amos 5:5; 8:14), these verses in Micah seem to describe the situation after the fall of Samaria.

Archeological evidence also suggests an Israelite presence in the south. Inscriptions found at Kuntillet Ajrud contain the name Samaria and personal names written with the ending *-yw*—a suffix typical of Israelite names. This seems to indicate that the inscriptions were written by people from the northern kingdom rather than by the native residents of Judah. Paleographer André Lemaire has indicated that these inscriptions were written around the time of King Hezekiah.²

Excavations in Jerusalem reveal that during Hezekiah's reign the city underwent an incredible expansion in a short time. According to archeologist M. Broshi, near the end of the eighth century (that is, 722-701 B.C.) the city's population increased from about 8,000 to 24,000. The "Broad Wall" also points to this expansion. According to the Israeli archeologists who excavated it, this wall, built during the late eighth century B.C., probably was intended to incorporate an unwalled suburb that had grown upon the Western Hill (the Upper City) of Jerusalem.

Of further interest is the fact that this wall was built on top of some late eighth century houses located on the edge of this western suburb. Some archeologists associate this construction with both Isaiah 22:9-11 and 2 Chronicles 32:2-5, 30, passages that describe Hezekiah's preparations for the coming of the Assyrians.

Additional evidence for Jerusalem's expansion comes from recent survey

work that has discovered a large number of farm units on the hills surrounding Jerusalem. These units also appear to have been constructed at this very time, probably to feed the increasing population.

The only reasonable explanation for such a demographic surge in Jerusalem is a mass immigration into the capital from Israel and outlying Judahite regions as they came under attack from the Assyrians. Obviously Jerusalem could not absorb this demographic surge by herself, so most of the refugees must have been relocated either in new settlements or, more likely, in already existing towns.

From Hezekiah's perspective, the most logical towns in which to place this influx would be those in strategic locations along the border in the lower hills to the west of Jerusalem. First, the most secure towns and cities within the heart of the kingdom were no doubt already occupied by native Judahites, leaving little room for a large number of newcomers. And second, and more important, Hezekiah would have wanted to strengthen the defenses of the border cities, particularly those on Jerusalem's vulnerable western approaches. The numerous refugees would be just the thing to swell the manpower in these areas. Hezekiah probably provided refuge in exchange for aid in defending his kingdom at key locations.

Adopting Israel's royal seal

Keeping in mind the foregoing arguments for the settling of a large number of Israelite refugees at key locations in Judah, we can now return to the problem of Hezekiah's simultaneous use of the two-winged sun disk and four-winged scarab as royal emblems of Judah.

Several years ago A. Douglas Tushingham published a couple articles on the *mlk* seals. He suggested that the four-winged scarab motif represented the royal emblem of the northern kingdom of Israel, while the two-winged sun disk was the royal emblem of Judah.³ He based his conclusion on several lines of evidence. First was the discovery of nine identical four-winged scarab seal impressions in the excavations at Samaria. The depositional context of the nine identical seal impressions seemed to suggest



Seal impression: the two-winged sun disk

that they came from the palace or the royal archive.

Second, neither the seal nor the impressions carry an inscription, implying that the symbol must have been of such prominence that whoever encountered it would immediately recognize its significance.

Finally, the fact that a similar motif occurs on the numerous stamped jar handles from Judah, along with the inscription *lmlk* ("belonging to the king"), substantiates the idea that Israel used the four-winged scarab motif as a royal motif.

Tracing the history of the two-winged sun disk, Tushingham showed how it too was a royal emblem and suggested how it could have become the royal insignia of Judah.

But Tushingham was left wondering why Judah apparently employed *both* royal motifs *simultaneously*. He concluded that it was part of Josiah's attempt to reconstitute the kingdom of David. In other words, using both of the seals was a way of expressing that the two kingdoms had been united into one monarchy once again. (Perhaps a parallel may be drawn from ancient Egypt, where the Pharaohs used the royal emblems of both Upper and Lower Egypt after the two regions were united under one throne.)

Tushingham's answer was, of course, framed in harmony with the scholarly consensus that considered the *lmlk* seals to be dated to the end of the seventh century B.C. rather than the eighth. In view of the most recent analysis of the handles, however, it now seems more appropriate to examine the time of Hezekiah for the proper historical context. Although several scholars have already attempted to explain *how* the *lmlk* jars could have been used during Hezekiah's reign (for example, containers for royal provisions for troops), no one has yet, in our opinion, provided a satisfactory explanation for the simultaneous use and unique distribution of the two different motifs.

As already noted, about 80 percent of the *lmlk* seal impressions found in the hill country have been the two-winged sun disk. In the low hills to the west (the Shephelah) about the same percentage are the four-winged scarab. If indeed the two-winged sun disk is the royal symbol of Judah and the four-winged scarab is the royal emblem of Israel, this distinct concentration can now be seen to reflect the geographic distribution of native Ju-

dahites and resettled Israelites within the kingdom of Judah.

Again, as noted above, we surmise that the heartland of the kingdom (and the most secure area) would be already heavily occupied by native Judahites. In this region we find the heaviest concentration of the two-winged sun disk seals (nearly 85 percent at Ramat Rahel just outside of Jerusalem, for example). Sites in the Shephelah, on the other hand show a high concentration of four-winged scarab seals (for example, Lachish—85 percent). Here we would expect a greater number of Israelite refugees to be settled. In other words, whatever the official function of these *lmlk* jars, the official seal of Judah was impressed upon them in areas of high Judahite concentration, while the royal



Seal impression: the four-winged scarab

seal of Israel was used where there was a large contingent of Israelites.

We would agree with those scholars who suggest that the jars contained provisions for military garrisons stationed throughout the country, rather than supplies for the population at large. It seems reasonable to assume that garrisons stationed in areas of high Israelite concentration would be composed mostly of Israelites. The reverse would be true in regions of high Judahite concentration. We believe the seal distribution reflects this concentration.

It is not difficult to find reasons why Hezekiah would utilize the two seals in this way. One reason for using the Isra-

Photographs on pages 16 and 17 are reproduced from *Discovering Jerusalem*, published by Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers. Used by permission.

Hezekiah's use of Israel's royal seal would be a way to lay claim to the throne of Israel.

elite seal in areas where Israelites concentrated might be that Hezekiah simply wanted to employ an emblem that would be recognized immediately by the newcomers as "royal" or "official."

Maintaining administrative order during the potentially confusing time of resettlement may have played a role in the selection of this symbol of authority. The large and sudden influx of people would require a number of trained administrators. Undoubtedly a number of officials fled south when the northern kingdom fell (I doubt they all fell on their swords!). It would be only logical for Hezekiah to take advantage of their skills. They were trained and the refugees would recognize and accept them as leaders. Their presence would reduce the risk of friction that might result if Judahite administrators were put directly in charge of Israelite refugees. Hezekiah wanted the loyal support of these newcomers.

At the same time, the employment of the Israelite seal would tend to establish Hezekiah in the minds of the refugees as their new lord and protector. By adopting the royal seal of their former kingdom, Hezekiah was in effect saying "I will be your king (and protector) and you shall be my people." Thus the adoption of the royal emblem of Israel may have been a way of gaining the respect, or at least of respecting the sensitivities, of the Israelite refugees.

But the most likely reason for Hezekiah's use of Israel's royal seal is that it would be a significant symbolic way to lay claim to the unoccupied throne of Israel. That Hezekiah possessed the strength and courage to push out beyond the constricted borders of Judah is made clear in 2 Kings 18:7, 8, which de-

scribes Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria and his invasion of Philistine territory. An Assyrian text N. Na'aman published a little more than 20 years ago apparently also speaks of this rebellion. In the text, Assyrian king Sennacherib accuses Hezekiah of capturing a royal city of the Philistines (possibly Gath).

Obviously, if Hezekiah was willing to attack the Assyrian vassalage of Philistia to his west, he would have no qualms about extending his authority over the territory of the fallen kingdom of Israel to the north if an opportunity presented itself. In view of Israel's historical relationship to Judah, this makes good sense. It may, therefore, be more than just a coincidence that *lmlk* seal impressions have been found at Jericho and Gezer, both border cities that were formerly within the territory of the kingdom of Israel. The presence of the royal seals could be interpreted as a Judahite attempt to move into and to gain control over former Israelite territory.

Hezekiah's invitation to the Israelites to join in the special Passover festivities at the national Temple in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 30) may provide additional evi-

dence of his desire to claim the fallen throne of the northern kingdom. While the biblical record clearly shows that Hezekiah's action was motivated by piety, this invitation by a Judahite king had important political implications. In what better way could Hezekiah exert his claim, spiritually and politically, of being the only legitimate king over "all Israel"?

Hezekiah's adoption of the royal emblem of Israel can now be seen in the context of two important factors. Both Israel's fall and the large number of refugees fleeing south would provide Hezekiah with a perfect opportunity to do what many Judahite kings had undoubtedly dreamed about since the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam: to reunite the Davidic monarchy. By inviting people from north and south to one grand, unifying Passover service at Jerusalem, and by adopting the royal symbol of the northern kingdom, Hezekiah was both legitimizing himself as the one true king of all Israel and positioning himself to restore the Davidic kingdom.


Obviously, Hezekiah did not succeed in his plans for unification. One won-

ders whether the Lord would have blessed his efforts to that end if he had not failed the test with the Babylonian ambassadors (2 Kings 20:12-19). Although the king did not achieve his goal, the desire did not die. His great-grandson Josiah set out to do precisely the same thing when the opportunity presented itself. Unfortunately, an untimely death cut short the righteous Josiah's attempt, and the Babylonian conquest of Judah a few years later finally extinguished the bright hopes for the restoration of a united Israel. ■

¹ As these two dates suggest, we are allowing for the possibility that Sennacherib conducted two campaigns against Judah, rather than one, as most scholars currently assume. For a recent discussion on the two-campaign theory, see W.H. Shea, "Sennacherib's Second Palestinian Campaign," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104/3 (1985): 401-418.

² For a discussion of the Kuntilet Ajrud inscriptions and their date see A. Lemaire, "Who or What Was Yahweh's Asherah?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 10/6 (1984): 42-51.

³ For Tushingham's discussion of the *lmlk* royal jar handles, see "A Royal Israelite Seal" and the "Royal Jar Handle Stamps" (parts 1 and 2), *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 200/71-78: 23-35.



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Pastor-elder team ministry gets new support

J. H. Zachary

The General Conference Ministerial Association is taking on the task of coordinating training and support for local church elders.



J. H. Zachary is an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work which the Lord did for Israel” (Joshua 24:31, RSV). The last part of this verse sounds ominous. The picture is familiar. One by one all the leaders who were eyewitnesses to God’s power in the Exodus movement had passed away. Those who saw the deliverance at the Red Sea or witnessed the display of God’s power on Sinai or experienced the drying up of a flooded Jordan were no longer there. The scene had changed. A terrible crisis loomed ahead. Would Israel continue to serve the Lord? That was the big question as Joshua and his colleagues came to the end of their lives.

There were, of course, new leaders at the helm, but they apparently were not encouraging Israel to lead lives that were committed to the living God. The post-Joshua story suggests that men who should have formed a bulwark against evil actually led the way into the paths of disobedience. The result? Three hundred years of backsliding, and humiliating suffering at the hands of enemies.

What Israel needed then was a strong, committed spiritual leadership. The need is no less urgent today, particularly in view of the rapid growth of the church in Third World countries.

Caring for 32 churches

Recently I received a letter from a former student of mine. He now pastors a district of 25 churches in a developing

nation. His members are engaged in planting three additional churches. At a district meeting his elders expressed concern for five villages in their territory that have not yet heard this message. They want to enter those villages before political conditions make it impossible to do so. So the young pastor will soon have 32 churches with more than 1,500 members to supervise and nurture.

He is not alone. In many developing countries, pastors oversee multichurch districts in which they cannot visit their congregations more than once every two or three months. The current policies and budgetary constraints of the church add to the difficulties posed by church growth. The situation is particularly acute in areas of the world where animist tribes are becoming increasingly responsive to the gospel. Congregations in such circumstances, where the economy is based on an agricultural barter system, cannot generate the finances to meet the church’s policies for hiring a pastor.

Yet in many such areas the majority of the membership is involved in evangelism. The resulting upsurge in growth continues to compound the challenge confronting church administration, that of supplying pastoral services to the congregations.

Such situations do have their blessings. With their pastor living in a distant village or city and unable to visit for weeks at a time, laymen must lead out in the work of the church. In most of these areas lay participation in church activities involves as much as 75 to 95 percent of the membership.

As the church service ended, the elder received some magic amulets that were a source of temptation.

While teaching at Mountain View College, I witnessed again and again the significant contribution lay elders were making to keep the church growing and strong. The local district pastor near the college had more than 45 churches in his district. Ministerial students and local church elders did most of the work of pastoring these congregations.

On one occasion I drove my jeep up to one of his little village churches. When I arrived, carabao carts were already parked near the church, with the animals tethered nearby. As I looked across the fields I saw little groups of people headed toward the church. Each group was led by one of the local elders. During the prayer service earlier that week, the church board had decided to begin a visitation program aimed at the missing members. Arriving at the church early Sabbath morning, the little teams had reached several homes by daybreak. They had conducted family worship with the missing members and now were bringing them to the worship service.

How thrilling it was to see the elder lead out in a commitment service for these missing members. As the church service ended, the elder received some magical amulets and other objects that were a source of temptation to one of the reclaimed persons. The entire congregation gathered around as these items were committed to the flames. A spirit of revival had engulfed that congregation that day.

Elders organize evangelism

I have sat in meetings where elders organized an evangelism task force to

enter a new area. They selected their best lay preacher, provided him with a modest stipend, and sent him off with a small team of believers to plant a church in a new area. When harvesttime came, a new congregation would be ready to join the sisterhood of churches—all a result of lay work.

In some areas, difficult circumstances attend the lay elders in their ministry. On one occasion at the completion of a seminar for elders and pastors, a young man handed me a note he had received. It read: "Do not revisit my village again, or you will die."

The young man explained, "My brother and I recently completed an evangelistic meeting in this village. We must go back to strengthen the new believers. Please pray for us."

It is just such courageous men and women who are lighting up unentered areas with the gospel, and who are nurturing the church.

And yet in far too many areas of the world we have not tapped the strength of our dedicated, committed lay elders. Often we ask no more of them than to announce a hymn, offer a prayer, or call for the offering. They could do so much more to serve their congregations. To enlist their service, all we need to do is to provide training and support and give them the opportunity to exercise their spiritual leadership.

While the needs of elders in developing nations are obvious, the challenges facing those who hold this office in developed nations is equally as great. Elders must provide their congregations a wide range of spiritual services. They have the responsibility of nurturing the members of their congregations, for instance, and urgently need equipping to strengthen this part of their ministry. Elders can effectively support their pastors in closing the "back door" of the churches through a personal ministry to their congregations.

Elders serving in North American and European churches where their pastors serve as many as four and five churches urgently need similar support for preaching and giving adequate leadership to their flocks.

We may now have just that opportunity. After consulting with church administrators and the Church Ministries Department, the General Conference Ministerial Association has agreed to take on a new responsibility—that of coordinating the training and support of

local church elders. The objective is to develop strong, committed, witness/nurture-oriented pastor-elder teams that will provide just the spiritual and professional leadership our churches are waiting for.

In cooperation with the Church Ministries Department, the General Conference Ministerial Association is taking steps to support the ministry of elders in two important areas: supplying tools and clarifying roles. (The newly formed Elders' Committee and the committee for developing the elders' handbook [described in two of the following paragraphs] includes representatives from the North American Division and General Conference Church Ministries departments as well as from the Ministerial Association.)

Tools for elders

Work has already begun on an elders' handbook. Formatted like the *Minister's Manual*, the handbook will serve as a guide and resource book to aid elders in carrying out their duties in the local church. A reading committee comprised of members from around the world will be involved in the preparation of the manual. A companion kit of training materials will also be available for conference leaders and local pastors to use in training elders.

Recognizing the elders' need of continuously updated information, the sharing of concerns and ideas, and discussion of issues, the Ministerial Association has asked *Ministry* to publish monthly a department dedicated to this vital aspect of church leadership. The first column will appear in the September 1991 issue of *Ministry*. All church elders are invited to become regular subscribers to and readers of the

Elders must provide their congregations a wide range of spiritual services.

church's premiere professional journal for clergy.

The Ministerial Supply Center at the General Conference will assist in making materials and equipment available for elders' use.

Long-range plans of the Ministerial Association also include producing a manual that will help elders in the preparation of sermons. Itinerating district pastors can get by preaching the same sermon several times, but their elders must have something new to preach every week!

The role of elders

If elders need tools to minister adequately, clarification of their role is also vital. While all of our elders can be great spiritual leaders, they are a varied lot. Some of them cannot read or write; others are doctors, lawyers, or engineers. They serve in widely differing circumstances. Some rarely preach; others preach on more than half the Sabbaths in a year. Are there biblical principles of leadership that can meet the varying needs that exist in the world church? We need a clear biblical statement as to the meaning of ordination.

The elders' handbook being produced not only will provide information about the practice of this ministry, but it will look at its biblical foundations. Answers will no doubt lie along the lines the apostle Paul delineated for us in the model for the pastor/elder teams he established.

Some parts of the church are leading the way in attempting to meet the needs of lay elders. Two conferences in the South Pacific Division are providing *Ministry* to all their church elders. During the past quinquennium the Far Eastern Division took an action making local church elders associate members of the conference or mission Ministerial Associations. The Central Philippine Union recently adopted a goal of training 5,000 elders. The South Philippine Union Mission has a four-year cycle for the training of their elders. And for several years now the Papua New Guinea Union Mission has been operating a training school for elders.

Effective training and use of lay elders is indeed the answer to the demands that growth exerts on local church leadership. ■

Ministering to families with handicapped children

Karen Sue Holford

More than architecture, it is the attitude of the church that needs to be restructured as we address the issue of ministering to the handicapped.



An occupational therapist and a mother of two children, Karen Sue Holford enjoys teaming up with her pastor-husband in family ministry in south England.

Kate and Mark had just been through the incredible experience of the birth of their first child. It had been a long and painful labor. Kate had opted to go without any pain relief, and by the time she delivered she was at the end of her emotional resources.

Tired and exhausted but with the smile of the satisfied, she looked up to see the face of her child at that magic moment for which every mother waits. She was shocked at what she saw. Hannah had a cleft lip and palate. Kate was devastated. It had never occurred to her that she might have a baby that was not perfect.

Our baby, Bethany, was born 12 hours earlier in the same hospital. Since as a professional I encountered handicapped children daily, the thought of having a disabled or imperfect child had crossed my mind many times, together with thoughts about how I would respond and cope.

As soon as I realized that Kate was on the same corridor as I was, I rushed to see Kate and her baby. Kate and I had attended prenatal classes together. We had the same love for our Lord, and we were good friends. Now Hannah created a different sort of bonding between us—one of exploring the difficult and the hard to understand.

Kate and I spent the next week together, in the same room. We talked a lot about God, about Hannah, about why there is pain and suffering and deformity.

Kate and Mark went through many

As a pastor you may be involved in such situations quite frequently.

ups and downs over the next few months. Every time someone came to see Hannah for the first time, Kate would have to prepare that person and explain about Hannah's lip. After corrective surgery Hannah is now just like any other 2-year-old. A slight redness just above the lip is all that remains. Although she may need speech therapy, and perhaps further surgery before she starts school, she is quite normal and beautiful.

Kate and Mark are fortunate in that Hannah's deformity was correctable. So are many other birth defects. But there are also many problems that are not correctable, that may require a lifetime of care and support.

Correctable or not, a birth defect turns birth from a moment of joy into a period of shock and sadness. The mother, particularly, has a tendency to feel vulnerable, insecure, and angry.

She may experience guilt and attribute the defect to herself—her lifestyle, diet, or perhaps some activity she was involved in. Depression may follow. Questions about God, the future, and oneself are not uncommon.

As a pastor you may be called in and be involved in such situations quite frequently. What should you do? How would you bring a touch of the reality of God's loving care to the people concerned? Is there a role for the local church to play in the ministry for the handicapped?

The role of the pastor

There are at least three simple tasks a pastor can perform as he attempts to minister to families that experience sudden shock as a result of a birth defect or handicap.

1. Listen. Your presence with the hurting family is in itself a symbol of solidarity. You need to remain unshockable, as feelings expressed will be intense. The parents have probably heard all the opinions of the specialists. The couple may pose questions you cannot answer. They may not require any particular advice, unless, of course, they specifically ask for it. They would not like to be told their feelings are wrong. They need not be reminded that their questioning of God is inappropriate—they will find that out themselves. What they do need is love, acceptance, a listening ear, and the prayerful support of a caring pastor and a loving congregation.

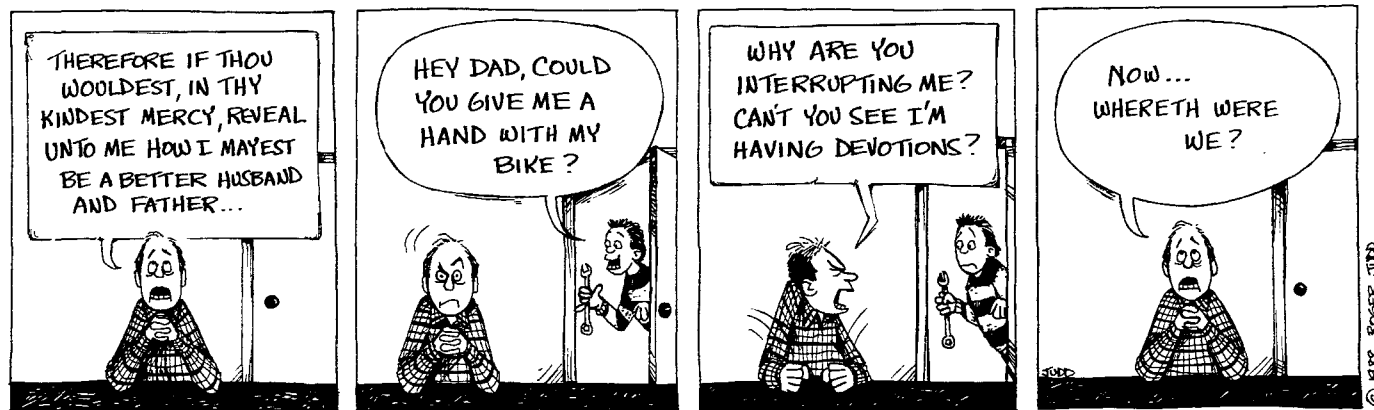
To dish out Bible passages to fulfill your own desire to say something may not have the desired effect. This is no occasion for a theological presentation on the meaning of suffering. However,

if the situation should warrant, you may whisper about ordeals that life is made up of. What greater ordeal than the one on the cross, when Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus was able to ask this question when He was facing the biggest ordeal of His life. That question did not necessarily indicate a lack of faith in God, but did point out a strong relationship with Him, a relationship that makes it possible for us to approach God with our problems. We are not called upon to accept blindly our trials as if we are pawns in a cosmic game. Our God is big enough to handle our questions.

2. Do not attribute the handicap to God's will. God does not desire that any child should be handicapped. He created everything perfect, and would have liked His creation to stay that way. He feels with us in our pain and distress. Jesus spent much of His ministry relieving the suffering of the handicapped—whether they were born that way or became that way because of sickness or injury later in life. To tell parents that their child is handicapped because of the will of God (or even to imply that this is so) is cruel, and misrepresents God.

3. Create an atmosphere of support. At the first opportunity after obtaining the consent of the parents, you may want to inform the congregation of the facts of the situation, with tact and sensitivity. Something like this would be appropriate: "We all know Jim and Sarah have been looking forward to the birth of their new baby. Well, the baby has arrived, and it is a lovely little girl—Rebecca. However, all is not well because Rebecca has spina bifida, and this means that she will probably not be able

BEYOND BELIEF



to walk, and will need surgery and lots of special care and attention. Jim and Sarah need your love and support. You can offer them this by listening to them, by praying for them, and by letting them know that you are thinking of them. They need someone to take care of their dog for a few weeks, and may appreciate it if we would mow their lawn. Would some of our ladies be willing to can or freeze the fruit growing in their garden, so it does not go to waste? They do need our love and support and immense sensitivity.”

Support is something the family will need on an ongoing basis. Emotional and practical support is crucial. The family will face many crises as they try to cope with the situations created by the handicapped child. Studies indicate that four out of five couples who have a handicapped child break up. This shows just how stressful the situation can be on the marital relationship. Finances involved in providing continuous treatment, special schooling, and respite care also stress the family. Caring for the child may cut deeply into the time and energy the family has to invest in other needs.

Siblings also may have to make adjustments. They too need time and attention from their parents, and may feel jealous because their handicapped brother or sister receives so much of their parents' attention. These feelings can lead to both resentment and guilt, and the children may feel unable to express themselves for fear of sounding selfish or adding to the stress their parents suffer. If financial resources are being stretched to help care for the handicapped sibling, then the other children may feel afraid to ask for financial assistance when they need it.

The role of the church

As a church we need to think about how we can serve the families who are having to cope under these difficult circumstances. How often we find that the church is ready to do much for the handicapped by choice (those who cripple themselves by indulging in alcohol or tobacco or drugs), while neglecting those born with deformities. We speak of Jesus as our model in ministry, and yet how much our individual and corporate commitment to the handicapped differs from His! As a church we advocate Christian education and equal opportunity for children whatever their

abilities, but in practice handicapped children may find that our schools cannot accommodate them.

And yet there are simple ways by which a local church can help families with handicapped children.

1. Provide counseling. You may not always be able to establish professional counseling care, but providing a pair of listening ears in times of stress and need can be extremely helpful. It is even better if the counselor is skilled in working with such families and has learned or experienced the types of stresses and questions that may surface. Your counseling center may not be able to provide all the answers, but if it can be a starting point, your church will have done much to ease the burden already.

2. Establish a resource center. A small library of well-written books and pamphlets with practical information and guidance on how to cope with the handicapped can be helpful. Choose books written especially to help families with a handicapped member; those written by the handicapped or their families are better. Establish files with information on topics related to the handicapped. Watch for information on temporary care, vocational training, support groups, special vacation schools or camps, financial assistance, etc. Encourage church members to be familiar with the resource center so as to be of assistance to those who might need help.

3. Organize a support group. Is there a support group for families of handicapped children in your area? If not, start one. Contact professionals who have the skills to help facilitate such a group. A regular meeting once a month, at a time and place convenient to those interested, with carefully selected speakers and programs, and with a time to talk and share, provides the basis for a good support group. Encourage the members of the group to support one another positively so that the sessions aren't spent in just complaining. There will be a need to share complaints and hard times, but for the most part the group sessions should consist of pressing for the positive and looking to the future.

4. Set up a play group. The church can organize play activities or a kindergarten for children of mixed abilities, both handicapped and nonhandicapped. This helps children accept one another, learn, and develop their skills. It also

The church is ready to do much for those handicapped by choice, while neglecting those born with deformities.

provides a social setting for the often isolated handicapped preschooler. To begin with, parents, especially those of handicapped children, may accompany them until the organizers get to know the children and their special needs and capabilities. The group need not meet more than once a week, and should be run by someone who has had training in medical or teaching areas. If you can get an occupational therapist to advise on equipment, games, and activities, you are off to a good start. Local schools and churches may help you with volunteers, toys, and equipment.

5. Involve the school. In its philosophy and policy, is your local church school committed to the inclusion of handicapped children? Can you help fund the necessary adaptations to the building and the special equipment needed so that handicapped children can enroll and be cared for with dignity? Are there non-Adventist parents in the area who would want to send their handicapped children to your school if it were possible? Can you provide specially trained teachers to meet the needs of these children, and also teaching assistants to ensure individual care?

6. Budget for ministry to the handicapped. Is your church able to finance projects for handicapped children and their families? Do you have a fund that could buy a vital piece of expensive equipment, assist the handicapped children who want to go to camp, or provide for a weekend away for the parents? Make caring for the handicapped a part of your church budget.

7. Involve the whole church. Is your

church ready for handicapped persons? Are there barriers of architecture or prejudice or fear of the unknown or feelings of inadequacy among your members that make handicapped persons uneasy and unwelcome in your midst? Could you alter the washrooms so that there is easy access for a wheelchair? Could you place suitable bars and faucets at the correct heights to facilitate their use by the handicapped without embarrassment? An occupational therapist would be able to provide technical advice in this area. And what about your Sabbath schools, Pathfinder Club, and other church activities? Are these open and the rooms accessible to handicapped persons?

More than the physical plant, it is the attitude of people that needs to be restructured in any effective ministry for the handicapped. One activity that can help members understand a little of what it is like to be handicapped is to get them involved in a perception session. Ask each person to draw a picture of himself or herself and then pass the drawing to another person, who is to indicate a handicap for the person pictured. For example, a scribbling on the eyes would indicate blindness. The pictures are then returned and the members list all the activities they currently enjoy that would be difficult or impossible if they had their designated handicap. They could also list the activities they would still be able to do, and add more that they would be interested in taking up if they were handicapped in this way.

Ask the participants to reflect on how they think they would react should they experience such a handicap now. You might also ask them to role-play parents with handicapped children and to list their feelings, reactions, needs, and expectations. The group may also consider Jesus' approach to the handicapped, and devise positive ways of enhancing the ministry of the church to the handicapped.

Our Christian calling demands of us that we rid ourselves of prejudice toward the handicapped. We need to open our lives and our churches to accept more readily the handicapped so that we can share with them the love that Jesus has for them and the concern He showed the handicapped when He was on this earth. ■

Evangelism survey

We need your help in planning a continuing education course on evangelism in *Ministry*. Which areas of evangelism constitute your greatest need? Please check 12 of the suggested topics listed below or add some of your own in the space provided. Just make sure that the total of what you check and add equals 12. Then please complete the additional data asked for at the bottom of the survey. Return by December 31, 1991.

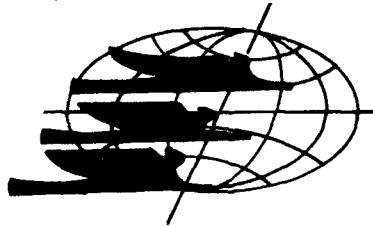
- The priority of evangelism (why? what it is)
- Getting an audience (learning needs)
- Demographics and advertising (how to collect data, and design materials)
- Getting the church ready (member involvement)
- Evangelistic preaching (style and structure)
- Small group evangelism (in church, home, community)
- Friendship evangelism (developing friends, reaching relatives)
- Sequence evangelism (different felt needs series)
- Telemarketing (use of telephone and mail/post)
- National evangelism (simultaneous start-up and materials)
- Metropolitan evangelism (simultaneous in one city)
- Media evangelism (radio, TV, newspaper, etc.)
- Evangelizing non-Christian people
- Health evangelism
- The local church as the center of evangelism
- Assimilating new members
- Preventing dropouts
- Evangelizing cities (methods)
- Evangelism through worship services (attracting nonmembers)
- Intercessory prayer evangelism
- The Holy Spirit and evangelism
- Relating doctrine to human need (relevance of doctrines)
- Winning backsliders (learning to care)
- The pastor's role in evangelism
- Lifestyle evangelism (doctrine as related to health, family, stress, etc.)
- Art of getting decisions (in meetings/homes)
- Developing pre-campaign interest
- Tent and open-air evangelism (use of simple aids)
- The baptismal service (candidate preparation and creative forms)
- Visual aids in evangelism (sophisticated and simple)
- Multicultural evangelism
- How to make Christ the center of every presentation
- Marketplace evangelism (targeting specific groups)
- Training laity for evangelism

Age _____ Ethnic group _____ Country of work _____
 Circle one of the following: pastor, evangelist, departmental worker, administrator, Bible worker, layperson, other.

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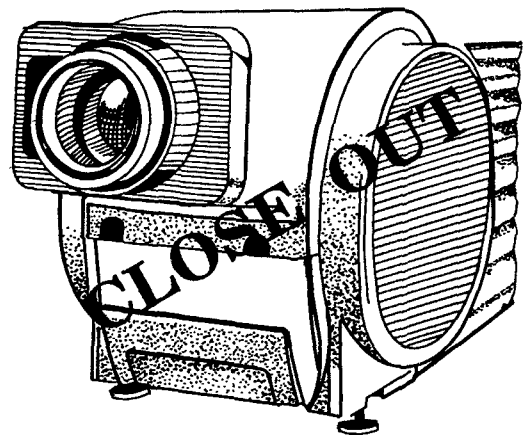
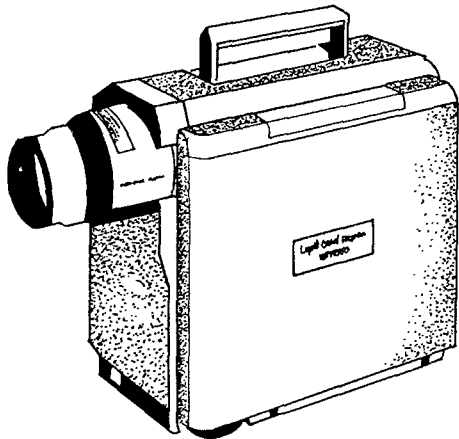
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Letters

From page 2

the Christian church stood unilaterally against slavery?

Servant leadership or consensus management, as I think the secular press would label it, breeds mediocrity. Granted, leadership that loses touch with its constituency is doomed to failure, but on the other hand, leadership must lead. I have a hard time seeing General Schwarzkopf using consensus management in Iraq.

There is a time and a place for the kind of leadership these articles describe. But let's not limit the church to this kind of leadership.—Norman Yergen, Hillside-O'Malley Seventh-day Adventist Church, Anchorage, Alaska.

■ Thank you for your excellent articles on servant leadership and the one by Dave VanDenburgh. I firmly believe in servant leadership. Christ set the example for us. Would it be too much to say then that we are either servant leaders or self-serving leaders? It is easy to get so caught up in our own "vision" that we forget to serve the needs of the congregation.

One of the best advantages of being a servant leader wasn't mentioned though. Pastors who are servant leaders will *never be lonely pastors* because we will be *with* our people as we lead them, rather than *over* them—thus revealing the true spirit of Immanuel, "God with us." We will be free to grow with our people without any pretense of being less human than they are. True servant leadership creates an environment of confidence in the pastor professionally *and* personally, because of leadership by example and involvement, not just exhortation.

Thank you for serving us with articles that challenge us and encourage us to represent Christ to our people.—Paul Coneff, associate pastor, Camarillo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Camarillo, California.

A straw man?

All those who work with words know the effectiveness of setting up a straw man only to dismantle it in service of one's point. I must object to Rex Edwards' straw man, whom he

names "Roman Catholic ecclesiology" ("As Wide as Humanity," May 1991). His characterization of Catholic teaching was inaccurate, inadequate, and unfair.

Rather than citing the chatty, perhaps even apocryphal, remarks of "a priest" or "a cardinal," Edwards would have done better to quote the official self-understanding of the Catholic Church. In the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, Edwards would have read these statements:

● "All those, who in faith look toward Jesus, the author of salvation and the principle of unity and peace, God has gathered together and established as the church" (p. 9). The church is all of the baptized, not merely the hierarchy, and we are constituted the church by God, to whom we respond through faith in Christ. This point is repeated over and over in the Vatican II documents, making it a keystone of Catholic ecclesiology.

● "As He had been sent by the Father, the Son Himself sent the apostles, saying, 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. . . .' The church has received this solemn command of Christ from the apostles, and she must fulfill it to the very ends of the earth. . . . Each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability" (p. 17; cf. p. 33). To quote Pastor Edwards: "The commission belongs to the whole church." We Catholics couldn't agree more!

● "In order to shepherd the people of God and to increase its numbers without cease, Christ the Lord set up in His church a variety of offices which aim at the good of the whole body" (p. 18). To quote Pastor Edwards: "It is the church that gives the ministry its being—not the ministry, the church." Again, official Catholic teaching concurs.

● "Among the more important duties of bishops, that of preaching the gospel has pride of place" (p. 25; cf. *Decree on Priests*, p. 4, for the same statement regarding presbyters). Pastor Edwards wrote: "[The minister's] primary function is the preaching of the Word." We Catholics have the same understanding regarding the primacy of preaching for ordained ministers.

● "The baptized, by regeneration

and anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a . . . holy priesthood. . . . The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer, and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation, and active charity" (p. 10). Pastor Edwards wrote: "The priesthood of believers is the vocation of the whole church to intercede and witness." For a final time, Roman Catholic ecclesiology concurs.

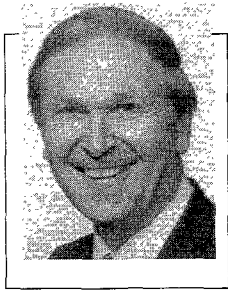
Because I agree with most of his major points regarding a proper understanding of Christ's church, I deeply regret Mr. Edwards' inaccurate portrayal of Catholic ecclesiology for polemical purposes.—Stephen V. DeLeers, associate pastor, Saints Peter and Paul Congregation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

■ I have just read your January issue (1991) and found it inspiring, challenging, and helpful! I was delighted to note that you offer this magazine as a gift subscription to ordained clergy. I would very much appreciate being included on your mailing list for future issues. I am an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church, presently serving as a chaplain to adolescents here at the Pine Rest Christian Hospital.—Chaplain Jake Heerema, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Thanks

I wish to thank you for sending me the *Ministry* journal. I have found it to be very helpful in its understanding of life. The articles are direct and challenging to one's faith in these last days, looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus. I thank you again for your kindness in thinking of others, for we all can learn from each other the truths of the gospel. May the Lord bless you abundantly in your work for Him.—John Appleby, The Church of God, Wheeler Street, Hull, United Kingdom.

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Should you try narrative preaching?

Floyd Bresee

The funny thing about homiletics, specialists in religious oral communication, is that they don't communicate much with one another. They don't even get together enough to agree on definitions.

For example, what types of sermons are there? You can easily find a dozen sermon types discussed in books on preaching, but everybody's list is different. Worse yet, homiletics define the same words differently. We shouldn't draw our lines too sharply: a sermon may include more than one type. But sermons do tend to fall into about three basic categories: expository, topical, and narrative/biographical.

Determining sermon types serves a more important purpose than establishing correct homiletic theory. These sermon types involve three very different approaches to sermon preparation. You can quickly determine which sermon type you use by asking yourself how you go about preparing a sermon. If you're an expository preacher, you likely begin by settling on a passage of Scripture. If you're a topical preacher, you probably start by picking a subject. If you're a narrative preacher, you tend to begin by choosing a Bible character or incident. And where you begin has an overwhelming influence on where you end up.

My recommendation is that you experiment with each sermon type. Experimenting will help revive your interest in preaching. Besides, congregations crave variety. Nobody plants a whole garden with only one color of flowers.

Experimentation keeps the preacher alive. Variety keeps the congregation interested.

"Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2)! All preaching should be based on the authority of Scripture. I've eliminated the textual sermon from my list of sermon types because of its weakness here. The textual sermon is typically based on only one or two verses of Scripture. It tends to be a springboard sermon, using the Bible merely as a starting point from which the preacher sails into the stratosphere. Expanding 15 words from Scripture into 5,000 words from the preacher isn't biblical preaching.

Do not choose one of the three suggested sermon types purely because it seems more biblical than the others. That just isn't necessarily so. I want to illustrate with the one often presumed to be least biblical—narrative/biographical preaching.

Effective narrative preaching

Narrative/biographical preaching normally centers on the story of a Bible character or incident. Narrative preaching typically places the story in a contemporary setting, with the preacher sometimes telling it in the first person. Biographical preaching is closely related but usually places the story in the setting in which the Bible character lived.

The Old Testament prophets and those who wrote the Bible were master storytellers, as was Jesus. Alton McEachern observed, "The gospel itself is made up principally of narration. It is a series of accounts of people, places, and happenings, not simply rational arguments. Modern preaching ap-

pears to have reversed the percentages: while the gospel is nine-tenths narration, most of our sermons are nine-tenths exhortation."

Narrative preaching is practical. The writers of the Bible clothed its theology in the flesh and blood of living characters.

Narrative preaching is interesting. However, therein lies a danger. Listeners may go away only entertained and not enlightened.

Narrative preaching is subtle. It tends to convey its spiritual lessons implicitly rather than explicitly. So, again, be careful. The audience may not be learning what you think you're teaching.

Some suggestions for keeping narrative preaching both biblical and effective:

1. *Begin with the biblical facts.* Find out everything the Bible has to say about the person or incident.

2. *Add historical facts.* Learn all you can about the times the account deals with.

3. *Add an informed imagination.* Jesus did, in His story of the rich man and Lazarus. But make sure your imagination does not violate the biblical account and the historical facts.

4. *Teach the lesson the Bible is teaching.*

Should you try narrative preaching? You might first attempt it in only part of a sermon to see whether both you and your congregation can be comfortable with it. You should probably not settle into preaching only narrative sermons, but using them occasionally can add spice to the sermonic diet.

We'll discuss the ongoing dispute over expository versus topical sermons in a later column. ■

If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored?

Tim LaHaye, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1990, 192 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by Robert Peach, director, Kettering Clergy Care Center, Dayton, Ohio.

This book brings to the forefront a subject usually left for the back hallway of the church, the quiet corner of the pastor's conference, or the anguished closed-door session of the church council. How should the sexual sins of the clergy be handled?

LaHaye's answer to the question he asks in the book title surprised me. Knowing LaHaye as a conservative author, I assumed his answer would be negative. It wasn't. He believes ministers who have sinned sexually can be restored, but only after a restorative process.

LaHaye begins with the expected horror stories of ministerial infidelity. He cites a survey indicating that 33 percent of the 300 clergy polled confessed to "sexually inappropriate behavior with someone other than their spouse." He also advances his ideas about why ministers (male) succumb to sexual temptations. He proposes 13 responses a church can make, and gives a compilation of Scripture texts about restoration.

The most useful part of the book for me was the responses offered by 13 well-known, mostly conservative (LaHaye calls them Bible-believing) clergy leaders. LaHaye asked for their opinions on the question of restoring ministers to service after sexual infidelity. The variety of thoughts, scriptures, and procedures gathered from these respondents should be in the hands of any church leader considering a policy or response to this clergy problem.

One goal of the author is to get churches to implement, before the problem arises, a plan on how to deal with it. To meet this need, he presents an eight-step model for restoring fallen ministers.

LaHaye uses a straightforward, didactic style. The prose can be somewhat wooden, but the well-organized content adapts to quick perusal. He assumes that ministers are male and spouses are female and that marital roles are con-

ducted from a male headship basis. Female clergy will feel excluded.

This will be a controversial book, but it should facilitate discussion of a subject that needs the church's careful thought and active attention.

Bones of Contention: Controversies in the Search for Human Origins

Roger Lewin, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1987, 348 pages, \$19.95, hardcover. Reviewed by A. A. Roth, Geoscience Research Institute, Loma Linda, California.

Paleoanthropology, the science that focuses on human evolution, has long been known for its changing conclusions. This volume adds another deprecating dimension to its unstable image.

The author, a former research news editor for the journal *Science*, has done his homework carefully. He uses extensive referencing of material and interviews with some of the main players in this drama of the ages.

The book chronicles recent wars over hominid fossils and attempts to analyze the reasons for so much acrimony. Lewin attributes the wars to several factors, including (1) the personal involvement of humans studying their own evolution, (2) the passion to find new fossils, (3) the pitifully small inventory of fossils in the hands of a possessive few, (4) the influence of preconceived ideas on what one sees, (5) the competition among paleoanthropologists for funds and to become "king of the mountain," and (6) the subjectivity of deciding what is a valid species. (In recent years the number of species has been reduced from more than 100 to about a half dozen by combining invalid species.)

Lewin reports on the Landau theory of human evolution. At Yale University, Misia Landau worked out a pattern based on traditional folk literature. Landau suggests accounts of human evolution follow this pattern. Such a theory does not bode well for the paleoanthropologists' objectivity. They are understandably reluctant to accept the idea that they may not be purely scientific.

In this volume Lewin uncovers the principal skeletons in the closets of pa-

leoanthropologists, focusing on a number of controversies: 1. The Taung child fossil,—found in South Africa, was first rejected and now is accepted as an important ancestor in human evolution. 2. The Piltdown hoax remains the great unsolved whodunit in science. This fabricated skull came from a modern human cranium and an orangutan's jaw, yet held an honored place in the human evolutionary tree during the four decades it fooled scientists. 3. Scholars developed Nebraska man based on a tooth that turned out to belong to a type of pig. 4. The early descriptions of Neanderthal were distorted toward primitiveness. 5. Scientists fought a bitter battle over the matter of dethroning *Ramapithecus* from being a human ancestor to being merely a relative of the orangutan. 6. They also carry on a heated and complex debate over the dating of a key volcanic layer associated with important remains in East Africa. 7. Most recent is the controversy between Richard Leakey and Donald Johanson over the evolutionary position of the newer *Australopithecus afarensis* fossil finds. 8. Lewin also includes milder conflicts concerning the basic force behind human evolutionary advancement.

Lewin keeps his writing at a nontechnical level, skillfully weaving science into the book's historical background. The author does a commendable work in ferreting out unpublished attitudes and emotionally charged incidents. Shouting matches, accusations, insults, and slamming doors reveal science at work. We see scientists as no more cool, calm, and calculating than the rest of us.

The book shows how preconceived ideas freely influence interpretations and speculation. For example, referring to descriptions of *Ramapithecus*, he states: "Here, then, was a very complete picture of an animal—not just what it looked like, but also how it lived. And all based on a few fragments of upper and lower jaws and teeth." *Ramapithecus* is now considered to be a relative of the orangutan rather than being part of the evolutionary line of humans.

The anthropological novice may find it difficult to keep up with the ever-changing saga of human evolution. Changes occur in the arrangement of the putative ancestors, the classification of specimens, and even in the characteristics of a species. Louis Leakey once changed the definition of the genus *Homo* to include a smaller-brained animal.

The book reflects science's humaneness. It notes, for instance, one paleoanthropologist's charge that Leakey viewed "his" fossils as being the important, direct ancestors of humans, while regarding the fossils found by others as of lesser importance.

While Lewin does not disclose his personal beliefs, he implies confidence in traditional scientific views. But he also candidly questions how humans achieved superiority, noting particularly the problem of the origin of their higher mental attributes.

I find the most significant contribution of this book to be not so much the cautions deduced regarding paleoanthropology, but the admonitions suggested for science as a whole. Lewin warns: "And scientists, contrary to the myth that they themselves publicly promulgate, are emotional human beings who carry a generous dose of subjectivity with them into the supposedly 'objective search for the Truth.'" And: "There is a degree of uncertainty in science that is not often made public, because it is contrary to the mythology of what science is supposed to be like."

Science has become powerful because it works well in many areas. People easily extrapolate that success into all areas that science deals with. Thus they become blinded to the pitfalls lurking in the shadows. Science that deals with the past often deals with nonrepeatable, non-testable events. It is particularly susceptible to the problems outlined in this book, but all areas of science can be distorted by preconceived ideas.

Those who believe in Creation will wonder why the biggest bone of contention of all—namely, whether humans evolved or were created—is not considered in this book. This is an understandable omission because naturalistic science does not recognize Creation as a possibility. Lewin does point out human specialness and the tension created concerning the origin of our higher mental powers.

A 1982 Gallup poll reported that 44

percent of adults in the United States believed God created humans within the past 10,000 years. Science's refusal, then, to consider the possibility of Creation can scarcely be considered casual. If it is argued that Creation is not worthy of consideration, one has only to point to the plethora of unworthy "information" that has decked the halls of paleoanthropology for more than a century. In the opinion of this reviewer, this omission reflects the bias of a science that does not allow for any possibilities beyond its own closed system.

While paleoanthropology's findings in the past two decades have been impressive, readers who believe in the evolution of humans will not find much comfort in this book. It leaves the impression that the last chapter of the saga is a long way from being written. This insightful volume should be read by anyone interested in the human dimensions of science.

The Selfish Gene

Richard Dawkins, Oxford University Press, New York, 2nd ed., 1989, 332 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by Ella M. Rydzewski, editorial assistant, Ministry.

Besides being a lecturer in zoology at Oxford University, Dawkins is a witty and clever writer. He also exemplifies subjective science at its worst.

Science as a religion may have found its own concept of original sin in Dawkins' thesis described in *The Selfish Gene*. We are "survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes." Dawkins comes across as a very good example of his own thesis. But rather than preserve genes, Dawkins seems programmed to preserve human evolution. He may be only trying to get our attention, but nevertheless he undoubtedly believes it when he says: "Living organisms had existed on earth, without ever knowing why, for over three thousand million years before the truth finally dawned on one of them. His name was Charles Darwin. . . . We no longer have to resort to superstition when faced with the deep problems: Is there a meaning to life? What are we here for? What is man?" He goes on to quote zoologist G. G. Simpson: "The point I want to make now is that all attempts to answer that question before 1859 are worthless." Dawkins states: "Today the theory of evolution is about

Shouting matches, accusations, insults, and slamming doors reveal science at work.

as much open to doubt as the theory that the earth goes round the sun."

To Dawkins all living creatures behave in such a way so as to preserve the selfish gene. The selfish gene is not just one bit of DNA, but all replicas of it. Its goal is to be more numerous in the gene pool. "Basically it does this by helping to program the bodies in which it finds itself to survive and to reproduce."

Dawkins holds out a spindly branch of salvation in spite of his dismal discovery about natural selfishness. "Our genes may instruct us to be selfish, but we are not necessarily compelled to obey them all our lives. It may just be more difficult to learn altruism than it would be if we were genetically programmed to be altruistic." Humans, "alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators."

Though the material in the book is well written, understandable, and interesting, Dawkins' greatest contribution is his living proof of the arrogance of science. He shows his disdain by stating that "philosophy and the subjects known as 'humanities' are still taught almost as if Darwin had never lived. No doubt this will change in time." This author of *The Blind Watchmaker* gives the Christian a chilling foretaste of what the future may hold for unbelievers in the gods of science.

Dawkins leaves us with deeper questions concerning belief in human infallibility. In view of the large spans of time attributed to human evolution, isn't it amazing we have developed this all-encompassing theory just since 1859? When we think of the immensity of space and the microscopic bit of it we inhabit, how incredible it is that we can claim with such certainty that it all began by chance. This takes more arrogance than that of all the religious zealots of past ages combined!

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Remember the names of thy church family . . .

. . . in order that the effectiveness of thy ministry may be long and enduring in the church which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Is this one of those commandments you would love to keep but somehow find it difficult to do so? Your parishioners call you by your name and you can't quite reciprocate? Well, if your church is a small- or medium-sized one, try building a family photo album. Get the church to approve the idea and then start with a large three-ring loose-leaf notebook, with sheets of paper protected by clear plastic. Assign a page to each family, asking them to place on it a photograph of themselves with identifying information: names, address, telephone, special interests, talents, and hobbies.

In addition to using the album to acquaint yourself with your members better, you may leave it on a table in the church foyer for others to use.—Glenn F. Schwerdt, Warrenville Bible Chapel, Warrenville, Illinois.

Before you move

You have accepted a new assignment and are preparing to move. In the frenzy of packing and saying goodbyes, don't forget to leave a folder of helpful information for the incoming pastor.

Your successor would appreciate looking over a list of personal hints: a good family doctor and

dentist, the closest hospital, a suggested hairstylist, the nearest pharmacy, the most helpful library, a good Christian bookstore, and shopping suggestions.

Also helpful would be an indication where the church bank account is and from where church supplies are ordered. Make sure that the incoming pastor gets a street map of your town and a complete church directory, including the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all members and a list of present church officers and committees.—Betty Robertson, St. Louis, Missouri.

Look up and sing!

Congregational singing is a vital part of worship, and a growing number of churches are turning to high-quality color transparencies to induce their parishioners to look up and sing joyfully. The Community Seventh-day Adventist Church, Madison, Wisconsin, has issued 200 songs on transparencies for use with overhead projectors. The songs range from traditional hymns to gospel praise songs to lively choruses, and even Christmas carols. Laser-printed and quality controlled, the transparencies are priced at US\$1 each. Orders for the entire set of 275 transparencies receive a special price of US\$189.75 (69 cents per transparency).

Churches that use transparencies should, of course, abide by relevant copyright laws (see Shop Talk, March 1991). For

more information, write to Ron Gladden, P.O. Box 7310, 3505 Highway 151 North, Madison, WI 53707.

Assisting the visually impaired

At our church we use our computer to make available our church newsletter and bulletin to visually impaired and blind members. Here's how it works. We do the newsletter and bulletin on the computer with a word-processing program. We print them in the usual way, but also save the text on a disk as a DOS file. We then send this disk to one of our blind members. He and his wife, who also is blind, read the disk with a speech synthesizer. Since his wife is in the choir, she finds it useful to have the order of worship in braille, and her husband produces this for her from an ASCII file on disk. With the right printer, it should also be possible to produce material in large print for members with poor vision.—Fred Gissoni (member) and John E. Jones, Jr. (pastor), Crescent Hill United Methodist Church, 201 South Peterson Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky.

Party garners office supplies

Ours is a small church with little or no regular funds to purchase needed office supplies. We have solved our problem by having an "office party." A few weeks before the party date we post a sign-up

sheet in the foyer for members to volunteer to supply items for the church office. The sheet lists the items the office needs. Example:

Ballpoint pens (2 boxes): _____
 Copy paper (2 reams): _____
 Envelopes (5 boxes): _____
 Paper clips (5 boxes): _____
 Stamps (1 roll): _____
 Staples (3 boxes): _____
 Three-ring binders: (4) _____

The fill-in sheet helps avoid duplicate gifts and enables us to divide up the needs so as not to overburden or embarrass anyone.

The party is a social get-together with games, refreshments, and music. Everyone has a good time, and we usually receive more than adequate supplies for the church office.—Gary Manzella, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

\$25 for your ideas

We'll pay you \$25 for your ideas as to how pastors can make their ministry less taxing and/or more effective, provided that these suggestions do not involve a product or service that you are selling. (We'll consider the latter for publication also, but we won't pay for the privilege of using them!) Send your ideas to *Ministry*, Attn. Shop Talk Editor, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. U.S. citizens, please include your Social Security number. We pay for Shop Talk items upon publication.

Two Special Opportunities to Allow The Holy Spirit to Sharpen Your Ministry Skills.

Boulder, Colo.
Oct. 13-16, 1991

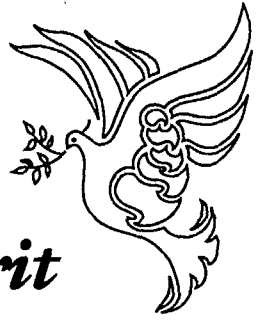
Across North America and overseas many pastoral families, lay leaders, denominational leaders and churches are experiencing an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Miracles of grace are taking place. The first International Adventist Prayer Conference held in Oregon 1990 has resulted in ministries and congregations revitalized in a remarkable way.

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If you can answer "yes" then come to this "Upper Room" prayer conference.

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- **Elder Tercio Sarli**
President, Central Sao Paulo Conference, Brazil
- **Janet Rowe, M.D.**
Pediatric nephrologist, Ft. Lewis, Wash
- **Elder Chad McComas**
Pastor and periodical article author
- **Elder Jerry Page**
President, Pennsylvania Conference
- **Janet Page**
Coordinator of Women's Ministries Pennsylvania Conference
- **Elder Kevin Wilfley**
Pastor and author of "Studies on the Holy Spirit"
- **Elder Garrie Williams**
Ministerial Director and Holy Spirit Fellowship Leader, Oregon Conference. Author of How to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit - and Know It

Sunday, October 13 — 7 p.m. to Wednesday noon, Oct. 16
Boulder, Colo., SDA Church

International Adventist Prayer Conference (IAPC) Registration Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Church _____ Phone (____) _____

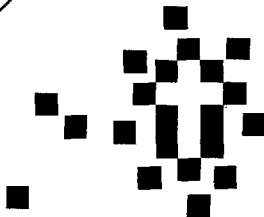
Each registration includes \$15 non-refundable deposit. Registration also includes one vegetarian buffet per day plus study materials.

- Enclosed is \$85 Early Registration (before Oct. 1)
 Enclosed is \$99 Regular Registration (after Oct. 1)
 Enclosed is \$65 for each accompanying person with full-paying registrant.

Make checks payable to IAPC, Oregon Conference of SDA
13455 S.E. 97th Ave., Clackamas, OR 97015

We emphasize this is no ordinary conference!

Boulder, Colo.
Oct. 16-19, 1991



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Boulder, Colo., SDA Church, 5:30 p.m.
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Elder Walter and Carol Williams, host pastoral couple, Boulder SDA Church. You will hear from the pastors and lay leaders inspiring stories of the Holy Spirit's working in the many small group ministries in this church. You will also meet and learn from such successful small group leaders as **Dr. Craig Dossman** who grew the Ephesus Los Angeles Church from 85 to 850 and is now pastor of Brooklyn Temple; **Dr. Roy Naden**, Professor of Religious Education, Andrews University. His material on spiritual gifts is invaluable for small group ministries, and **Milton Adams**, a senior theology student at Walla Walla College who has organized over 40 small groups on campus.



Plenary Speakers and Workshop Presenters Will Include:

- **Miguel Cerna** — *Pastor Norwalk Spanish SDA Church. The story of 1,200 baptisms in eight years. Vice President Southern California Conference.*
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- **Dr. Kurt Johnson** — *Church Ministries Director Oregon Conference, author of Small Group Evangelism Guide.*
- **Tercio Sarli** — *President, Central Sao Paulo Conference, Brazil.*
- **Gordon and Cheryl Retzer** — *President, Rocky Mountain Conference*
- **Monte Sahlin** — *North American Division associate Church Ministries director.*
- **Dr. Clarence Schilt** — *Loma Linda associate pastor, author of Handbook for Small Groups*
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Questions Concerning These Two Conferences?

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