

MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors

April 2006



Behold, how good
and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell
together in unity!
It is like the precious
ointment upon the head,
that flows down upon the beard,
that is upon the beard,
that is upon the beard,

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“WE ARE CALLED TO BE SUPPORTIVE TO THE WOUNDED, FRIENDS OF THE CRITICAL, AND IN GENERAL EXHIBIT AUTHENTIC HUMILITY AND GRACE TO THOSE AROUND US.”

White Memorial Church—a model

Having served at the White Memorial Church as part of my twenty-five year ministry in urban Los Angeles, I would like to comment on the positive direction Pastor Downing is leading the White Memorial Church (see “The challenge and future of urban ministry: the case of White Memorial Church,” December 2005).

As many of us who have studied urban ministry know, the number of “First” churches in the inner city which have been abandoned are legion. Many of these once large and influential congregations have dwindled away because they were not able to respond to a changing social and generational context.

The White Memorial Church began as the essence of an institutional congregation—a church built by Adventists, for Adventists. What Larry has insightfully done at the White Memorial is slowly but methodically shifting the church from an institutional to a community-based church. He has accomplished this by looking realistically at the long-term potential of the church, diversifying the pastoral staff to reflect the multicultural landscape and bringing in outside resources to fund the community programs.

I believe that many of our churches in Los Angeles and beyond could benefit from a similar approach. May his tribe increase.

—Pastor Jim Park, Ph.D., assistant professor of discipleship and church growth, The Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines

Scapegoat revisited

The letter under title “Interesting...” (February 2006) will cause unnecessary dispute among Seventh-day Adventists. It also will give fuel to evangelicals because

they will say “the Adventists are at last coming our way!” For years they have been telling the world that the two goats of Leviticus 16 each represent Christ. Are we now opening the door for the evangelicals to side with us? Are we allowing our beautiful sanctuary doctrine to become distorted?

Letters of this nature should never be published in *Ministry*, unless at the same time we respond in clear biblical terms that such a writer is wrong. What will non Adventist ministers say when they read such a letter? Must they conclude that we ourselves are not clear on the matter?

Sorry to be disappointed in *Ministry* this time.

—Pastor Jan T. Knopper, New South Wales, Australia

I was surprised to read the letter by Daniel J. Drazen in *Ministry* (February 2006), in which he maintained that both goats of Leviticus 16 represent Jesus. His views certainly do not represent those of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Perhaps he is also unaware that there are Jewish scholars that share views that parallel those found both in accepted Adventist publications and in the writings of Ellen White.

—Leonard P. Tolhurst, retired Theology Department chairman, Pacific Adventist College (now University), Papua, New Guinea.

Editor’s Note: Daniel Drazen’s seemingly problematic phrase in his letter to the editor (February 2006) is, “...we see that both the Lord’s goat and the scapegoat (Heb: Azazel) were identical in all respects.” The editorial staff does not perceive that Drazen is equating both goats with Christ; rather, that both goats are physically “identical in all respects.” Hence, the statement in his next paragraph that “the assignment of which goat was to be

for the Lord and which was to be the Azazel was done by the High Priest drawing lots.” Drazen distinguishes that each goat represents a different entity.

Thank you for your December 2005 article “The scapegoat and the law of malicious witness.” It is an excellent summary: clear, concise, and sensible.

With the exception of a minor mistake in the second paragraph—some of the blood of sacrificial offerings was sprinkled “in front of” or “toward” the sanctuary veil rather than upon it (see Lev. 4:5, 6, 17, 18)—I fully agree with the author that Satan’s role in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, and the pre-Advent judgment, can indeed be clarified by the judicial process of “malicious witnessing” set forth in Deut. 19:16-19.

It helps to understand how and why Satan’s accusations against God’s people, as well as against God’s right to grant grace to those clothed in the righteousness of Christ, are found groundless. Christ has taken away my guilt, but Satan, the accuser of those already acquitted by Christ’s redemption, deserves to bear his own responsibility as the instigator of evil.

One last word: I hope no one will accuse George Rice of launching some wild new idea. Others, such as Roy Castelbuono, Richard Davidson, and Roy Gane, have come to the same conclusion.

—Raoul Dederen, emeritus professor of theology, Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States

Believers behaving badly

Most of James Cress’s article, “Believers behaving badly” (February 2006) is underlined in our copy of *Ministry*.
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The ultimate reference point

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER



Not so long ago a pilot friend and I were flying a small plane over snow-covered northern New York. After some time, my friend asked me if I would like to take control. And I took him on his word, because I've always been intrigued by the art of flying. Why not have some fun? Confidently I held the controls and pulled up the plane's nose because it seemed that we were losing altitude. I *felt* we were losing height, but my friend gently told me to look at the instruments. The opposite was the case. For safe flying, keeping focused on that reference point—the instruments—is a must. The instruments tell the pilot the altitude, the direction, the speed, and many other details needed for secure piloting.

Reference points are vital in every area of life. Before the coming of satellite navigation, sailors depended on stars and lighthouses as their reference points. Without such help to chart the direction and course of sailing, ships could go off course and get lost in the high seas.

In many countries, I have noticed a small, usually round, metal device driven into the ground, with numbers and letters stamped on it. This is a surveyor marker, without which property boundaries cannot be properly delineated.

If markers and reference points are so vital in mundane aspects of life, how much more in those areas that affect our eternal destiny. Lately, I have been reminded of one such reference point. A few feet from my office is the Biblical Research Institute of the church. Every time I pass by that office, I am confronted by a reference point—a large open Bible safely locked in a beautiful display case. It is a 1770 edition of a German Bible translated by Martin Luther, left open to Job 1. I often stop and read a few verses, even though it does not read like modern German. Never mind the language, but it reminds

me of one vital reference point without which my life's journey would be chaotic, directionless, and meaningless.

As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, and as a minister of the gospel, I find the Bible to be my ultimate reference point. For it is God's Word. It tells me who I am. It tells me what I am. It shows me how I can be saved. It provides the most reliable map for my journey here in life and for the eternal life to come. As Paul wrote, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, NKJV).

No one exemplifies the importance of God's Word as a reference point in life as Jesus. At the outset of His ministry, when the tempter confronted Him to choose a path other than what was ordained by His Father, Jesus countered and defeated Satan with the powerful tool of "It is written" (Matt. 4:3–10). Or consider Jesus' powerful modeling in Nazareth—how He turned to the Word as the definer of His mission. We often refer to Luke 4:16–30 as an example in Sabbath-keeping. That it is, but Jesus outlines to His hometown congregation that His mission is the fulfillment of the divine Word, prophesied by Isaiah. Luke's narrative shows how natural it was for Jesus to pick

up the scroll—His Father's Word—and read it. Jesus "found the place where it is written." After reading a passage, "He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down." It all seemed so natural—so Jesuslike. "The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him." Their ears, I believe, were tuned to the Word of God. If only they had stayed focused on the Word, they would not have become "furious" at Jesus. But, that happens whenever we fail to focus on God's Word, the ultimate reference point—we experience disaster.

The Bible is not only a reference point; it is a positive reference point. God uses it to bring reformation into our lives and into the life of the church. History testifies that whenever God's people focus on His Word, reformation occurs. Josiah found the Book, and a great return to the Lord occurred (2 Kings 22; 23). What would Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, or the Wesley brothers have been without the Word of God? In our own history, what kind of theological detours would we be traveling if we did not focus on the Word of God? Whenever we're tempted to follow such detours, the Word of God provides the reference point and brings us back to where we ought to be.

Two articles in this issue deal with essential theme of unity. Unity is not only essential—it is God's plan for His people. But, ultimately, unity can be achieved only if the Word of God is the sole reference point for the church. Without that reference point, where will we end up?

In our daily life, reference points are essential. Without them, life would be chaotic. Our spiritual journey will be successful only if the Word of God is our reference point. Sometimes we will be challenged to know what the Word says, but under the guidance of the Spirit, God will reveal His words of life. That's God's promise. ■

God's anointing for unity

Peter Harper



Peter Harper, a retired minister, writes from Young, New South Wales, Australia.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133:1-3, KJV).

Many Christians ignore Psalm 133. Occasionally, over the years, it flits across our consciousness—our Bible falls open at that page, or our fingers find it in our search for something else, and we generally skip over it to more familiar passages.

Recently, however, when preaching in a church with a long history of doctrinal and personal divisiveness, I applied myself to this enigmatic psalm. It has a hard shell, but the kernel satisfies, rich in taste and nutrients.

A psalm of community

This psalm seemed appropriate to the worshipping community of Israel when they gathered in Jerusalem for the great national feasts. "From far and wide they have come to dwell in the holy city throughout the days of the great festival. The gathering is a sign of a greater reality: the communion of saints, the society of love under God."¹ But not only there. Ellen White comments: "In the cave of Adullam the family were united in

sympathy and affection. The son of Jesse could make melody with voice and harp as he sang, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' "² In peril from Saul, David could still praise God for the presence of family and other supporters.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is." God says unity is good, but at the slightest excuse, we demonstrate how bad it is. God says unity is pleasant, but too often we find it unpleasant, confronting to our personal instincts, distasteful to our pride of place and opinion. It is good and pleasant when we dwell together in—disunity? One would think so, judging by the ever increasing number of Christian bodies around the world. Every one of them has its own perspective on God's truth. How easily we use sacred doctrine to certify and sanctify a distinctive position.

Because Scripture describes unity as good and pleasant, are we then to seek it for its own sake? Unity for its own sake as a goal to reach so easily becomes a good work, a moral penchant. But dwelling together—whereby unity as a quality of communal existence becomes a reality—is another matter entirely. By implication, we must conclude that when we dwell together in disunity, we cannot do so in God's favor, nor can we expect His blessing.

"It is like"

David, in Psalm 133, compares unity among God's people to oil and dew. But not just any oil or any dew. It is likened to the anointing oil with which Moses anointed Aaron as high priest and compared to the dew of Hermon that somehow comes down upon the mountains of Zion. We read in Exodus 29:1-9 and Leviticus 8:1-12 how Moses anointed Aaron, to sanctify or consecrate him, to set him apart for God's holy purpose.

What God gives always has the potential of immeasurable liberality. The oil was made by people to God's instructions, but the anointing came from the Most High through Moses. It was His enabling, empowering gift, not just for Aaron but for all Israel. Moses did not put a few drops on Aaron's head. He poured it on; it ran down through his hair, over his beard, down the edge of his garments—representing the fullness of blessing from heaven the Lord of heaven had in store for all His people. Unity is not something we decide upon, nor legislate, nor even work to achieve; it is received as a divine gift, for us to honor, treasure, and hold as a sacred trust. All Israel was gathered as one body that day before the tabernacle; it was body ministry—from Head-to-agent-to-priest-to-people.

The anointing from God Himself ratified the faith act of anointing with oil, effecting a spiritual

authorization not otherwise comprehensible. Just so, Christ gave us the gift of the Spirit, authorizing and empowering His people for His ministry. Although contrary to human nature, just as oil applied to a need soothes and heals, so the ministry of the Spirit resonates in the submissive heart (2 Cor. 10:5). As a gift from God, the anointing upon Aaron was fitting for ministry just as Jesus said of Himself (Luke 4:18, 19). The literal oil Moses poured on Aaron signified the pouring out of the Spirit from the hand of God, while the Spirit the Father poured on Jesus appeared as a dove (Matt. 3:16). In each case the sign given speaks of the peace, healing, and reconciliation that the heart of the Father directs through His priest to His erring children.

Walk worthy

We receive God's gift of unity in our calling; Paul exhorts us to have a walk worthy of the calling with which we were called (cf. Eph. 4:1). In verse 2 he enumerates the essential elements of that walk that even bespeak the soothing effect of oil; verse 3 lays on us the privilege of doing all in our power to "keep the unity" God has gifted to us. Then in verses 4–6 he tells us there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all—seven times he emphasizes "one." The same emphasis can be found in 1 Corinthians 12:13–27. Second Timothy 1:9 says God called us with a "holy calling," and Hebrews 3:1 reminds us of our "heavenly calling." In all this there exists that keen sense of ascendant quality, of the nature of that relationship with which we are endowed as derived exclusively from the throne above but willed to the church as its blood-bought legacy.

Yet it's a package deal. We cannot pick and choose what we take from our Lord and Master. Moreover, we are not given doctrinal unity; instead, we have a responsibility to work through it under divine guidance. We receive a spiritual unity, the "unity of the Spirit" that is gifted to us and we are expected to keep.

The value of unity

In the Godhead we discover perfect and infinite unity, and what exists in the Godhead God desires to see in Christ's

WE CANNOT PICK AND CHOOSE WHAT WE TAKE FROM OUR LORD AND MASTER.

church. It can be a fraction only, humanly tender and susceptible to wounding, *but it must be the same kind*. Just as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit honor one another, so must we. In our individual focus of worship and service toward the Godhead, we are to find the sacrificial self-denying unity of the Body of Christ—and nowhere else. "In Him we have redemption" (Eph. 1:7, NKJV); in Him we are called with a "holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9, NKJV).

According to the psalm, David compares unity to the dew of Hermon, and also to an anointing upon a bonded gathering of believers. All-embracing, it somehow falls on the mountains of Zion. Perhaps the psalmist plays with words in his illustration, for it seems Sion, not Zion, was a name for Mt. Hermon (meaning sanctuary) among the local people (Deut. 4:48; 3:9). The dew of Hermon was unusually heavy due to the atmospheric phenomena created by the enduring snowcap.

Dew falls silently, blanketing everything. It comes down, gently, bringing refreshing, new life, sparkling in the sun. Dew is from heaven, as is the Spirit. God commands it just as from His Word came His creation. Dew equalizes with no Gideon-like discrimination. In a congregation during the sermon there may be movement, restlessness, or children whimpering. Then focus is on the message, and a sudden quietness descends—a stillness such as one fears to disturb. The mind and heart instantaneously focus on the words of the messenger, and we are "shut in" as one body with the Lord.

In the upper room, the followers of Jesus waited, and it came at last—the falling of the Spirit. A coming never arrives without a waiting or expectancy. The Spirit comes to endorse the unity, not to initiate it. He comes to inspire with conviction, to enfold with authority, to burden with love, to enlighten with vision. In the spiritual realm, all these are foreign and external to us mortals, not

amenable to human manufacture except as sad imitations. We do not produce them, but we are to establish the conditions upon which we receive them.

Our responsibility

God has "commanded the blessing" (Ps. 133:3, KJV), and in this sense *to command* or *to bring a blessing* means "to anoint." We seek His authorization. But the blessing will not come, the anointing will not alight, the oil will not be poured out, the dew will not fall from heaven while we negate our responsibility.

One simple fact we find difficult to accept: Churches grow or die because of the people who are in them, not because of those outside. Of course, demographic and other factors may exert an effect, but the aforementioned bottom line remains. The demographics of Jerusalem at and after Pentecost were hardly favorable to the infant church. Yet the power of the Pentecostal witness ensued as much from their being "all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1, KJV) as it did from the alighting of the tongues of fire upon them.

The remarkable teaching Jesus gave His disciples, found in John 13–17, is a profound admixture of divine and human responsibility. The divine initiates and empowers, but there remains our response. How thankful we can be that God measures the heart desire. If we translate that desire into observable terms such as Paul suggests, nothing on earth shall limit God's anointing of selfless kindness, of preferring others to ourselves, and of an acute sense of the Body of Christ to which we belong. Then, and only then, we will fully receive the blessings expressed in this wonderful little psalm, so often neglected yet so sorely needed today. ▣

1 J. H. Eaton, *Psalms* (London: SCM Press, 1967) 294.

2 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1958) 658.

Pastoral fatigue— you can live with it

Clifford Owusu
Gyamfi



Clifford Owusu Gyamfi is the youth director of the Valley View University Church, Accra, Ghana.

You have been a successful pastor. In the years you have been in ministry, you have done everything possible to make your church the ideal one. You have spent several hours a day in preparing for the Sabbath sermon, and in turn you have received your congregation's appreciation. After all, preaching—biblical, convincing, and appealing preaching—has always been the pastor's first task. Your church has grown, so much so you had to think of expanding the facilities. Meanwhile, two worship services have become a must. The tithes and offerings have increased, and the conference treasurer has written you commending the church for its commitment to good stewardship. A regular part of your ministry, pastoral visitation lengthens your day into the evening, at times making your spouse and children speak of how much they miss you during supper time. You promote interchurch fellowship regularly, and this, of course, has bettered the church relations with other faith communities. All in all, you are a seven-day pastor, each day having no particular hour limit.

But lately, after a few years of such rigorous routine, your family and your church notice some changes in you. Your spouse misses those attentions and closeness that once marked your marriage. Your children hardly see you during the week. Some members have remarked that you repeat in your sermons. In fact, one day one of your closest friends confided that your preaching lacked the old sparkle. The pastoral motivation

is no longer the same. You feel tired and worn out—so much so, you wonder whether it is possible to be so busy about the business of God that you have not taken time to speak to Him or read His Word as much as you should. A dryness seems to have crept upon you.

You are not alone. You have a condition common to many clergy: pastoral fatigue. It affects many pastors, cutting across all educational and cultural levels, gradually weakening your pastoral motivation. All spiritual activities become lax. And stress takes over.

But take heart. You can overcome fatigue and not let stress control you. Here are ten suggestions.

1. Never do it alone. Disciple-making continues as part of a minister's call. We are called to make disciples, to preach, teach, and baptize. That's our great commission, but we are not called to do the job alone. Remember Jesus sending two-by-two teams in the first evangelistic outreach He launched (Luke 9:1, 2; 10:1, 2)? With strength gained by sharing responsibilities, train your church members as partners in church ministry. Give them the chance, and they will surprise you. If you want to die early, of course, you can do it alone.

2. Enjoy your family. Take time to be with your family; your spouse needs you. No amount of ministry to the congregation will ever minister to the needs of your spouse and children. Your children want to know they have a full-time parent—to share their homework, to ask a question, to play their favorite game, or just to be close. You cannot afford to disappoint them. When it comes to your spouse, let the magic of the early dating never be forgotten.

3. Remember your friends. You, as a minister, are set apart for a holy cause, not for a lonely walk. You need not be alienated from friends; take time to call or visit them. They have stories to share, and so do you. They have problems, and so do you, and when you share them, life will not be as stressed. Don't make yourself as kings and rulers who should always receive visitors. Jesus in the midst of His busy activities never forgot His friends (Luke 10:38; John 11:11; 12:1, 2).

4. Practice the gift of listening. As pastor, you are expected to preach and preach well. But you need to hear God's Word, too. Take time to listen to someone else preach. Such food for the soul not only feeds you but relaxes you with a different perspective.

5. Rest awhile. You are a human being, not a machine. Even machines need periods of rest. Our bodies wear out more rapidly when we work

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while we are tired. We must work for the master; nevertheless, we need strength to do so. Some pastors set aside one day

a week as a family day—to be with the family, to relax, to rest—a good habit. Taking vacations is important. There's

...And the doctor prescribes

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One could perhaps paraphrase Gilbert and Sullivan and sing “a pastor's lot is not a happy one.” Stress, burnout, and depression bedevil many a pastor of God. “Whether this happens because of unrealistic expectations, from a gritty congregation, or from the harsh and hurtful circumstances that the pastor often encounters, makes little difference to the pain both the pastors and their families experience.

Studies have shown different levels of stress among the clergy, with Protestant clergy reporting higher levels than Catholic priests. Women rabbis reported the highest stress levels. Interestingly, sexual misconduct appears to be associated with high levels of stress.¹

Clergy working with parishioners who are facing severe trauma may experience what has been called *compassion fatigue*. The number of hours worked with trauma victims in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks related directly to the

burnout of the clergy involved. Also, people who worked closely at “Ground Zero” in New York City had more stress burnout than those who were working in a support role from a distance.²

Of course, pastors may be wounded by the horrendous content and emotional loads of their parishioners. But wounds suffered in one's own life experiences also affect others. Pastoral work is often unappreciated, and sometimes even deprecated, by the congregation, adding further injury.³

How is it that clergy—who began their careers with very significant levels of compassion, optimism, and idealism—burn out?

The individual brings his or her past to the congregation, and this means for many a type A personality: high idealism, perfectionism, and—yes—a degree of narcissism. Church structure, with its bureaucracy, sometimes poor administrative support, and difficult local conditions, can try such personality types quite severely.⁴

Job stress, fatigue, alienation, or depression are all components of—but not the same as—professional exhaustion. The latter often encompasses frustrated hopes, a sense of inadequate control, and depression.⁵ For clergy, such feelings can cause guilt; after all, isn't the Christian experience supposed to bring joy and peace?

nothing holy about working through the year without taking a break. God gave us health to be preserved in order that the other gifts of ministry may be exercised fully. Get sufficient sleep. Be an example of healthful living. Freshness of the body gives freshness of the mind and spirit.

6. *Receive spiritual nourishment.* Morning devotion should be your first priority as you invoke the presence of God in your life. Ask for strength and directions. Cast all your cares and worries upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). You need the spiritual nourishment that comes from personal devotions.

7. *Enrich your soul with music.* Along with worship and prayer, learn to enjoy music. Listening to good music effectively combats pastoral fatigue. Music soothes and calms the body, relaxes the mind, and elicits enthusiasm within the body. Have tapes or CDs of hymns in your car, and let the richness and the

As stated in the article, pastors need to recognize that they are not called to control the church. Pastors and members working together—it is a team approach. They need to recognize that they cannot solve everything. They need to become structured in their planning so that they can clearly define work and time off. Pastors would do well to take a regular day or two off each week and then work the other days according to a schedule. Neglect of one's prayer life can lead to a sense of worthlessness, especially when one is supposed to be a spiritual giant. A real interest in the details of the lives of parishioners has saved many a “too heavenly” pastor from being “no earthly good.” Learn about the day-to-day activities of others' lives, and you will enrich your own. Showing deep interest in another's work and finding out the hopes and dreams of others is true ministry and helping to minister.

- 1 A. J. Weaver, K. J. Flannelly, D. B. Lawson, C. L. Stapleton, G. H. Koenig, *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counsel*, Winter 2002, 56(4):393-403
- 2 K. J. Flannelly, S. B. Roberts, A. J. Weaver, *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counsel*, Fall 2005, 59(3): 213-24
- 3 J. J. Means, *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counsel*, Spring 2002, 56(1):41-9
- 4 W. N. Grosch, D. C. Olsen, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, May 2000, 56(5):619-32
- 5 A. Iacovides, K. N. Fountoulakis, S. Kaprinis, G. Kaprinis, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, August 2003, 75(3):209-21

assurance of such songs minister to you without any investment of extra time on your part.

8. *Exercise regularly.* Here's what the Microsoft *Encarta* Encyclopedia 2004 Edition entry for "exercise" has to say: "Aerobic exercise—such as running, walking, biking, and skiing—can help keep stress levels down. Because aerobic exercise increases the endurance of the heart and lungs, an aerobically fit individual will have a lower heart rate at rest and lower blood pressure, less reactivity to stressors, and quicker recovery from stressors. In addition, studies show that people who exercise regularly have higher self-esteem and suffer less from anxiety and depression than comparable people who are not aerobically fit." Design an exercise program that you can do on a regular basis.

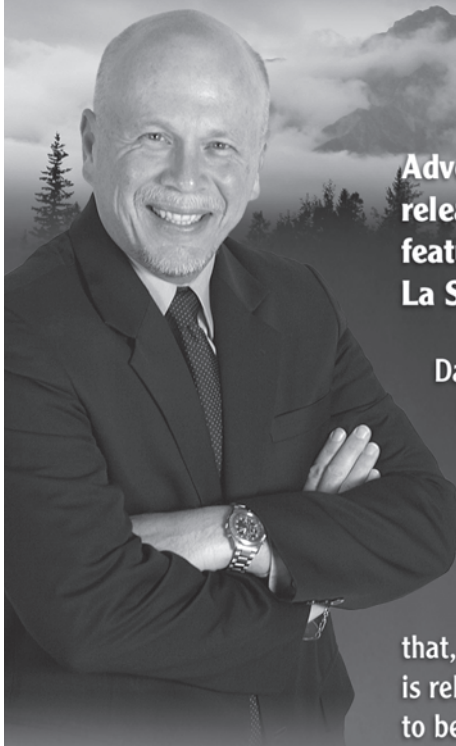
9. *Talk to somebody.* Whenever you feel stressed out, take time to talk to someone you trust. A good therapy in itself, such talk should not betray confidences of others or even personal feelings that you should keep to yourself. A good person to talk to would be a ministerial colleague in whom you have confidence. Or cultivate a buddy system in which two pastors can get together just to talk and share their burdens, and then pray for each other.

10. *Claim the victory.* "Let not your heart be troubled," is the ultimate counsel of the Savior (John 14:1–3). And the counsel is given in the shadow of the Cross and within the context of the ultimate promise of the coming kingdom. Victory over sin and all its effects, including fatigue and stress, is already ours. All we need to do is to claim that victory in Christ and make it a permanent part of our life. He who has called us is faithful and just and is ready to finish a good work in us. Read these verses to nourish your soul: Psalm 94:17–19; Luke 12:25, 26; Philippians 4:4–9; Hebrews 13:6. Live with these and other precious promises, and fatigue will be a thing of the past.

Looking for ways to deal with fatigue? These are some of the approaches I use. Once you realize the importance of managing fatigue, you need to design an approach that will work for you. You will be blessed, and your ministry will be a greater joy. ■

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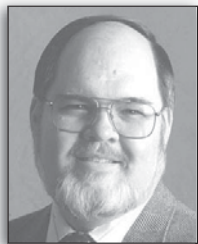
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Unison, harmony, or cacophony: How much pluralism can a church tolerate?

John Brunt



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Editor's note: In 2004 the Seventh-day Adventist Church sponsored a Faith and Science Conference. In April 2005, the first papers from that conference were published along with the response of the church as voted by the Annual Council in October 2004. Since then, other adaptations of papers from the same conference have been published. This article is another adaptation from a paper presented at the Faith and Science Conference.

How much theological diversity should the church accept among its members and ministers? Perhaps a metaphor can help shed light on this question. The metaphor, from the world of music, compares unison, harmony, and cacophony.

Of these three, unison is the easiest. If all sing together on one note with no variation, the music is easy, but it is also boring. On the other hand, cacophony, in which one hears a plethora of sounds with no meaningful relationship among them, is unpleasant and confusing. Once I was in Chicago during a street music festival. I heard some wonderful music, but all too often, groups were so close together that I heard several at the same time, so that while I was trying to listen to some delightful Israeli folk songs, the strong, thumping beat of hard rock dance music across the street made it difficult to enjoy the experience to its fullest.

The greatest music is the music of harmony, whether a hymn, a Bach prelude and fugue, a barbershop quartet, or a Beethoven symphony.

But harmony is by far the hardest to achieve. There's more than one note. Not every voice and/or instrument is putting out the same sound or pitch, and yet it all must fit together into a meaningful whole. My thesis is that the church's theological communication should have harmony. We should not all sing in unison in the same voice, but neither should we burst forth in cacophonous confusion. What would this mean?

Ellen White on Scripture

My model comes from Ellen White, who admits that there is diversity in Scripture, but rather than being embarrassed by this fact, she celebrates it. To some early Christians, even the fact that there was more than one Gospel was a source of embarrassment. Tatian rolled the four into one in his *Diatessaron*. Marcion accepted only Luke. Irenaeus argued that there had to be four Gospels; no more, no less, based on the four directions of the compass and the four pillars that uphold the earth.¹

Ellen White, however, gives a different perspective on why there are four Gospels. She argues that we need more than one Gospel writer because the minds of people differ. "Why do we need a Matthew, a Mark, a Luke, a John, a Paul, and all the writers who have borne testimony in regard to the life and ministry of the Saviour? Why could not one of the disciples have written a complete record and thus have given us a connected account of Christ's earthly life? Why does one writer bring in points that another does not mention? Why, if these points are essential, did not all these writers mention them? It is because the minds of men differ. Not all comprehend things in exactly the same way. Certain Scripture truths appeal much more strongly to the minds of some than of others."²

For Ellen White, this principle of harmonious diversity applies not only to the Bible but to us: "The same principle applies to speakers. One dwells at considerable length on points that others would pass by quickly or not mention at all. The whole truth is presented more clearly by several than by one. The Gospels differ, but the records of all blend in one harmonious whole.

"So today the Lord does not impress all minds in the same way. Often through unusual experiences, under special circumstances, He gives to some Bible students views of truth that others do not grasp."³

The diversity of voices about Jesus in the New Testament, however, does not mean that the early church accepted every voice about Jesus. There were gospels, like the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Peter, that were not included. But those that were included, according to Ellen White,

have an underlying harmony. *Underlying* harmony means that it is not on the surface. It is not immediately visible. It is not in unison. But underlying *harmony* also means it is not cacophony.

Let's take a look at three biblical examples that speak, in one way or another, to this question of unity and diversity. From these three examples we will attempt to draw some concluding principles.

Biblical examples

Example 1: Philippians 2. Philippians chapter 2 is one of the most debated Christological passages in Scripture. The hymn in this chapter has been debated to the point where blood has literally been spilled over the interpretations of expressions such as the "likeness of human flesh," "emptying Himself," "the appearance of a man," et cetera. Yet, the metaphysical nature of Christ is clearly not Paul's stated intent in this passage. The purpose in Philippians is very different, and if we listen carefully, it is remarkably clear. Open your Bible and carefully read Philippians 2:1–11.

Paul's intent is clearly to talk about the attitudes that we should have toward one another. Jesus Christ is used as the perfect example of the ideal attitude. It is His attitude, rather than His nature, that is in discussion here. Paul is not trying to describe the various ways that the nature of Christ is either human or divine, and how they are related. And yet even in Adventism, we hear this passage used in vigorous and sometimes vitriolic debate over the sinful versus the sinless human nature of Christ. How ironic that a passage designed to call us to follow Jesus' example in humility and good will toward each other has become a source of conflict and ill will between theologians and church members.

Example 2: The atonement. The atonement has been one of the most hotly debated topics in Adventism over the years. As some argue for a forensic atonement and accuse those who differ from them with teaching a moral influence theory, those accused of teaching a moral influence theory deny it but point out the dangers of forensic atonement. I don't need to rehearse the details. You are familiar with them.

When we look at Scripture, however, we see a variety of pictures for the atonement. None is comprehensive nor exclusive; rather, each one is a window. Paul used many words, "adoption," "reconciliation," "justification," "redemption," and each of these words was a picture word used as an illustration. Unfortunately, we no longer see the pictures and think of them as theoretical terms. But for early Christians, adoption would have brought up the picture of a child being brought into a new home; justification, of a lawsuit where the judge set things right by vindicating the oppressed; redemption, of a slave being set free.

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If we venture out to other writers, we find other kinds of pictures. In John 12:32 Jesus says, "I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men to myself." There is a double entendre in the expression *lifted up*, a term that was a technical term for crucifixion but could also mean "to be exalted." For John, Jesus' very crucifixion was His exaltation that drew human beings to Him. This picture is somewhat different from Paul's, and yet is complementary.

Nevertheless, I have heard intense arguments between Seventh-day Adventists over which of these images is the real explanation of the atonement. I have been tempted to say, "You know, you sound just like John, and you sound just like Paul in what you say that is positive and nonpolemic. Maybe both of your perspectives need to be heard." It would seem that the task of the theologian is to help people learn from each picture, rather than to hold up one picture and denounce the other pictures and those who advocate for them. Yet this is often what we do.

We will never all agree on precisely how the atonement works, yet our uncertainty about this should never detract from our certainty that Jesus Christ is our Savior.

Example 3: The two Creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2. We are so influenced by our scientific age that much of what we talk about when we look at the two Creation stories is an attempt to harmonize what we see as apparent differences. In fact, there are differences in detail, yet those seem small in comparison with differences in the way they portray God. In Genesis 1 the Creator-God is a transcendent God. He never touches any of the creation, He only speaks. His majesty, power, distance, and otherness are all emphasized. In Genesis 2 we see an immanent God, who puts His hands in the mud, tenderly molding His creation. The emphasis is on closeness and tenderness and nearness.

Now some critics think it is unfortunate that we have two Creation stories. It is the accident of some editor who put two disparate stories together without realizing that they didn't belong in proximity. These critics could not be more mistaken. I believe that by divine inspiration, the two stories are together precisely because they are different. No one portrait can capture the infinite magnificence of God. You could fill the whole world with portraits, and you still couldn't capture all of God. But God has given us different portraits to help us understand.

These two portraits emphasize two sides of God and are meant to go together, for God is both transcendent and immanent at the same time. He is the majestic "Other" who has the power to overcome even death. He is the close, intimate Father, whom we can call "Abba" and who walks with us. Both portraits are true. Both portraits are necessary.

When we focus on the first story, we naturally sing out,

"I sing the mighty power of God,
That made the mountains rise,

That spread the flowing seas abroad,
And built the lofty skies;

I sing the wisdom that ordained The
sun to rule the day;

The moon shines full at His command,
And all the stars obey."⁴

When we focus on the second story, we are more likely to sing,

"I come to the garden alone, While the dew is still on the roses;

And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses.

And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own,

And the joy we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known."⁵

There are times when we need to sing one more than the other, but both should be part of our experience. Perhaps another hymn brings the two together.

"Lord of all being, throned afar, Thy glory flames from sun and star;

Center and soul of every sphere, Yet to each loving heart how near!"⁶

In Genesis 1 we see the Creator-God as the center and soul of every sphere. In Genesis 2 we see that He is yet to each loving heart how near.

Principles

I now wish to draw from these examples some principles for how the church relates to issues of certainty and diversity.

One: There is diversity in Scripture and there should be diversity among us. Why do we need a Matthew, a Mark, a Luke, a John, and a Paul? Because the minds of people differ. The minds of people still differ, and God is still a God who embraces and uses different people with different perspectives.

The minds of people differ for different reasons: culture, temperament, cognitive processes, childhood experiences, education, and socialization. If we think the goal of the church is to attain unison, we will be sadly disappointed. Some will emphasize the transcendence of God, while others will emphasize God's closeness. No one person will show it all. But different personalities will show different aspects and make our understanding richer, even though we will always, until the kingdom, see through a glass darkly.

Two: There is underlying harmony in Scripture and there must also be among us. The church can never say "anything goes." There are practices that cannot be tolerated within a Christian framework. Paul made that clear in 1 Corinthi-

ans 5, when one member was having an incestuous, sexual affair. There are also beliefs that are destructive and must be opposed. In the same letter, chapter 15, Paul shows that if we accept the idea that there is no resurrection, ultimately our entire faith will be in vain. There are certainties. These come from the clear teachings of Scripture, where we see the underlying harmony below the diversity. Diversity does not have to mean cacophony. There are basics to which we must all be committed. Even though we sing in different notes, our singing must still set forth the truth of the gospel and be in harmony with its message.

Three: A wholistic view of Scripture must be our guide in deciding where to draw boundaries. No one passage or section of Scripture but an appreciation for the wholism of Scripture with its diversity must guide us. This means that our view of God as Creator must include all the portraits of the Creator-God in Scripture, from Genesis 1 and 2 to the Psalms and Isaiah and Job and John and Hebrews and Colossians. We must always ask if any given view is within the range of Scripture or is opposed to basic principles of scriptural teaching. Is it consistent with the underlying harmony of Scripture? One, for example, cannot deny that Jesus Christ is our divine human Savior, that the Sabbath is His sacred gift to us, that God truly is our Creator and Redeemer, or that we exist by His will and not by chance, and still hold credibility within the community. There must be basic boundary issues that define us, but these must be based on a wholistic view of Scripture that appreciates both the Bible's diversity and its underlying harmony.

Four: Priority must be given to clear issues of scriptural intent rather than inferred conclusions from Scripture. It is not wrong to infer from Scripture, but the more intentional Scripture is on an issue, the more that issue is a candidate for a boundary issue.

Look, for instance, at Philippians 2. What we infer about the nature of Christ from these several terms that Paul uses in the hymn celebrating Christ's willingness to humble Himself is not a

good candidate for a boundary issue. This subject is clearly not Paul's intent. Nowhere, in fact, does a scriptural writer say, "Now I am going to tell you about the natures of Christ and how they are related." Anything we say about this must be inferred, and therefore a good bit of tolerance for diversity must accompany this issue. But, what Paul says about the way we should treat other people in this passage is painfully clear. We cannot ignore Paul's intent. And so we should hold people accountable for their attitudes toward each other.

Five: We must be accountable for the way we treat people. Too much of our theological enterprise is driven by ego. We are socialized into an adversarial relationship that is not all that different from our legal system. We are academically successful when we prove ourselves right and prove others wrong.

What if, however, we were to adopt an attitude of mutual trust that made the assumption of goodwill among fellow believers? What if we were to ask not, "How does this person differ from me and therefore err?" but, "What can I learn about God from this person's perspective, that is different from mine, but may be part of God's harmonious symphony?" What if we were to adopt an attitude that said, "Just as I look for the underlying harmony of Scripture, I will look for the underlying harmony between my position and the positions of my fellow believers who differ from me"? Then perhaps we might be more successful in presenting an appealing, harmonious sound to the world. ■

1 AH 3:8 (ANF 1:428).

2 Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press, 1913), 432.

3 *Ibid.*, 432, 433.

4 Isaac Watts, "I Sing the Mighty Power of God," *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1985), no. 88.

5 C. Austin Miles, "In the Garden," *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1985), no. 487.

6 Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Lord of All Being, Throned Afar," *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1985), no. 17.

God's mighty acts in a changing world (Part 2 of 2)

Jon Paulien



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In the February 2006 issue, we surveyed recent philosophical changes that pose serious challenges to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Nevertheless, the emerging postmodern condition reveals the mighty hand of God, who never leaves Himself “without witness” in any culture. We reviewed eight major developments in postmodernism that exhibit God at work. But these changes in the mainstream societies of the West require a considered response from the people of God.

The shift to postmodern thinking naturally affects the way people approach faith and their relationship to faith-based institutions. The Seventh-day Adventist Church will certainly not be able to continue with business as usual in a postmodern world. Jesus gives a glimpse of the Adventist dilemma in Matthew 5:13–16. There He articulates two types of Christian community: One is based on the model of a city/fortress; the other is based on salt.

In the fortress model of evangelism, the saints are safely enclosed in protective walls with strong gates. They avoid undue influence from “the world” and safeguard the integrity of the community. From time to time, however, the citizens of the fortress will hold a “crusade” by opening the gates, sending out the army, and snatching up a few captives! The captives are brought back to the fortress, the gates are slammed shut, and all is well in Fortressland. But we live in a world where the captives are becoming fewer and the casualties larger as a result of this approach.

In the salt model of evangelism, on the other hand, the salt mingles with the food and melts in to the point where one can hardly tell what is salt and what is food anymore. But the result of this process is that the entire dish tastes better. With the salt motif as an incarnational model, the saints go out into the world and make it a better place by their presence.

I am not suggesting that the church discard the fortress model of evangelism. The fortress model worked extremely well in the age of Christian modernism and continues to work well in areas where a large number of Christian modernists can be found, including immigrant cultures in North America, Europe, and Australia. But the increasing impact of postmodernism on the mainstream cultures of the world can be better met by the incarnational model of outreach.

The salt model points the way to a work for postmoderns that will engage the church and society in a productive interaction and has the potential to rekindle the fires of outreach that have gone cold in the mainstream cultures of the West. As I ponder the salt model in the light of the emerging postmodern condition, I see nine changes to traditional Adventist outreach that may be necessary if we wish to participate in the mighty acts of God in the face of the challenges of postmodernism.

1. From public to relational evangelism

Traditional Adventist outreach uses public meetings as the crucial factor in spiritual “regime change.” But postmoderns are not usually comfortable in that kind of a setting. They are not likely to come to the typical Adventist evangelistic series, nor are they likely to be moved by it if they do come. Experience teaches that postmoderns are best reached one on one, through friendships and mentoring relationships. One-on-one relationships allow people to explore unfamiliar ideas at their own pace in a safe environment.

Unquestionably supported by Scripture, such a shift in strategy describes mentoring and discipleship at the heart of the Great Commission proclaimed by Jesus (Matthew 28:19, 20). With only one main verb in Matthew 28:19, 20, that particular verb does not express a command to hold public meetings. Instead it is a command to “make disciples.” While meetings can be an aid to mentoring relationships, the relationships themselves are the primary evangelistic strategy presented by Jesus in this passage.

2. From short-term to long-term

Recent Adventist evangelism is a short-term project. A local church invests in public meetings,

tries to move people to baptism in several weeks, and then breathes a sigh of relief for the next year or two. And this strategy can reach people when they are at a point of transition, as is the case with most immigrants. But a clear lesson learned from the New York Project, attempted in the aftermath of September 11, is that mainstream Americans do not join the Adventist Church in a matter of four to six months. It takes a long-term investment (at least three to five years) to make an impact in the mainstream culture.

In the past, we have not shown much patience for this kind of approach. But the model of Jesus' earthly ministry suggests that patience in evangelism should be the norm rather than the exception. Jesus Himself, the most effective mentor the world has ever known, invested three and a half years in just twelve people and even then suffered a dropout (Judas). We should not expect things to move more rapidly with postmoderns in today's world.

3. From our agenda to felt needs

Traditional Adventist outreach, based on a clear sense of what outsiders need to learn from us, includes giving it to them the way we think they should hear it, and if they don't get it, it is "their problem." Postmoderns, unfortunately, have proven quite disinterested in our traditional agenda for their souls. They don't feel that the answers we provide address questions that matter to their lives.

A more successful approach involves listening before we talk. Through listening we can discover the felt needs in the mainstream community and meet them in the power of the gospel. Paul articulated such a felt-needs approach in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23. Become all things to all people in order that you might save some.

4. From church-based to neighborhood/workplace-based

In the typical Adventist approach, meetings are held at the church building. Even if they begin in a public hall, they are moved as soon as possible to the church venue. But postmoderns are not likely to come to a church, even if they have an interest in the topics being presented. Waiting for them there is a losing proposition.

On the other hand, people live in every neighborhood and work in every workplace with Adventists located in the same neighborhoods and workplaces. To be successful in the Western world, you need to meet people where they are. So a move toward neighborhood and workplace outreach is a step in the right direction.

Paul endorsed this type of approach when he used his skills as a tentmaker to meet the mainstream people of his day. Spending large amounts of time at a tent workshop in the middle of town enabled Paul to meet many people who would never have come to a synagogue. Paul truly met the people where they actually were.

5. From one way to a multiplicity of approaches

The typical Adventist evangelistic approach does not significantly differ from that which was used at the turn of the twentieth century. Though there are variations, the overall approach stays fairly consistent. Those to whom it appeals respond very well, but in the Western world, at least, the percentage of people that find it relevant seems to be declining fairly rapidly.

Postmoderns are as diverse as snowflakes. The beautiful thing is that such diversity can be countered with the kind of variety bequeathed by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12–14). Truly Spirit-filled Christians do not fit into a cookie-cutter mold. They are, in fact, rather unpredictable (John 3:8). The variety of the Spirit's gifts will lead to a multiplicity of approaches to meet the various mindsets and felt needs of the postmodern seeker.

6. From a conversion to a process focus

Traditional Adventist evangelism focuses on conversion and baptism. Imagine a continuum that goes from –10 to +10. Minus ten designates a person who has absolutely no knowledge of God. Plus ten designates a fully devoted follower of God, with the zero point as the point of conversion and baptism. Traditional evangelism focuses on getting people from minus into plus territory, and success can be measured only when there are baptisms as a result. But mainstream westerners tend to be far deeper into the minus continuum than the

typical evangelistic "interest." This means we have little or no impact in the mainstream community.

Salt evangelism, on the other hand, can occur even with no immediate baptism in view. If a person moves from –8 to –6 on the scale, successful evangelism has occurred. The key to a process focus includes encouraging the people with whom we work to begin or to continue moving in the direction of Jesus. And process evangelism is not limited to reaching secular people. The idea of process is also relevant to the "plus" side of the spectrum, nurturing baptized saints into a more fully devoted discipleship.

The book *The Desire of Ages* makes it clear that Jesus was dedicated to process evangelism. The best biblical examples of process are found in the way He handled both Judas and Peter. In both cases the journey was fitful and full of digressions and dead ends. Yet Jesus continued to work with both of them and eventually succeeded with Peter. Jesus' patience with long, slow conversions continues as a good model for working with postmoderns.

7. From church to community

Adventists have grown accustomed to the idea that a community of believers has to have a building to meet in that has the identification of a "church" and looks like a church. But postmoderns do not think of "church" in positive terms. At some point in their experience they have been burned by the church idea. In Britain, among other places, many postmoderns will cross the street rather than walk by a church. The very style of the church building can be a turn-off. So an Adventist community seriously interested in reaching postmoderns will consider new models for community. The models that are being tried include cafes, health centers, gymnasiums, and "house churches."

This may seem painfully radical to you, and perhaps even heretical. But you might be shocked to find out that the oldest known church building in the Roman world, usually dated somewhere between A.D. 250–300, is located at Dura-Europus in Syria. So for more than two hundred years the early Christian church flourished without church buildings. Our fixation with such structures today is a legacy of

Constantine, a character we don't normally take as a model of sound New Testament thinking. In New Testament times most churches seem to have met in the largest home available to the members in that area. Thus other forms of community are not contrary to Scripture.

8. From church-controlled to God-controlled

Moving to long-term, relational, and process evangelism—not closely tied to traditional church structures—moves things a little out of our control. The traditional process goes to great pains to track people from first contact through interest to evangelistic series to baptism. Although this procedure is effective with Christian moderns, postmoderns will more likely go through a conversion process difficult to track and to enumerate. The process may include entities not tied to the church or even encounters with other religions.

It will not be easy for us to give up some of our control of the conversion process. We may find it hard to trust that God will use our efforts to His glory even if we never see the final outcome of our labors. The biblical model of control was suggested by Paul when he said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:5–7). Sometimes we will reap a harvest from the work of others; at other times, others will reap a harvest from ours. Perhaps in this generation the concept of "sheep-stealing" will lose its negative reputation and will be recognized as the norm.

9. From exclusive to inclusive

I have felt for more than a decade that the Seventh-day Adventist Church faces a crisis of identity. On the one hand, we desire a relatively small, focused, doctrinally pure church with consistent standards of lifestyle. On the other hand, we believe that God wants us to go into the whole world and reach out to all kinds of people. But reaching out to all kinds of different people will require flexibility and an inclusiveness that will make the first goal rather difficult to attain.

We face a tension between exclusiveness and inclusiveness, between a focus on pure teaching and the openness of grace. If we concentrate on purity, we

will become smaller and more idiosyncratic. At its extreme, such an approach would result in a community more like the Amish than the mainstream culture. But if we concentrate on "becoming all things to all people" (1 Cor. 9:22, 23) we may become a "great multitude" that exhibits a wide variety of worship styles and standards.

It seems to me that we have, as a group, tried to run a route down the middle, thus losing the potential benefits of either approach. Perhaps it is God's ideal to pursue both sides of this seeming dilemma (and the Hebrew mind often said Yes to such dilemmas). But with God's hand truly involved in the emerging postmodern condition (and I laid out my case for this conclusion in the previous article), we will need to become more inclusive and open in the way that we deal with others. We may need to give greater attention to the statement of Jesus, "He that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50; cf. Mark 9:40).

Conclusion

As hinted already in the previous paragraphs, there are two ways that the Seventh-day Adventist Church can respond to the evident signs that God has a lot to do with the emerging postmodern condition. On the one hand, we could see in these developments the call of God to move out of our comfort zone and reach postmoderns where they are. This challenges us to approaches that will require significant sacrifice on the part of local congregations and will no doubt

engender strife and confusion in some places. But we should not expect to have significant success with postmoderns if we do not make substantial changes.

On the other hand, we could take the approach that God has called us to be a pure, doctrinally focused community whose task is the preservation of truth and the demonstration of high standards. We could trust that God will use other Christian bodies to do the front line work of bringing postmoderns to a basic knowledge of Jesus Christ. We could perhaps trust that one day God will do a miracle, shifting the mainstream cultures of the West to the place where our answers will meet their questions without our having to make significant changes. Perhaps such a strategy will be successful, but history and experience tell me that we will likely be permanently left at the margins of society.

Rather, a growing base of evidence that God continues to do a mighty work in this world exists. I would prefer to be in the center of what God does in the world, not at the edges. So from now on I want to reach out to anyone of any background who wants something better for their life. I want to build bridges to other people and other communities rather than build walls to keep them from disturbing my comfort. I want to heal hearts rather than break them. I want to learn whatever God wants me to learn in order to be more effective wherever in the world He leads me. And I hope, when all is said and done, that I will have captured just a little of the spirit of Jesus. ■

Two Biblical Options for a Postmodern World

Fortress	Salt	Biblical Basis
Public	One to one/relational	Matt. 28:19, 20
Short-term	Long-term	Jesus' ministry
Our agenda	Felt needs	1 Cor. 9:19–23
Church-based	Neighborhood/ workplace-based	Paul's tent making
One way	Spiritual gift-based/ multiplicity of approaches	1 Corinthians 12–14
Conversion focus	Process focus	Peter, Judas
Community as church (church = building)	New models for community (homes, pubs, cafes)	No churches until third century A.D.
Church-controlled	God-controlled	1 Cor. 3:5–7
Exclusive	Inclusive	Luke 9:50; Mark 9:40

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Pastor Jimmy and Shereen Ferguson / Baltimore, Maryland



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Preaching with a translator

Chantal J. Klingbeil



Chantal J. Klingbeil is assistant professor of English at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Cavite, Philippines.

Editor's note: A significant number of our readers are asked to speak through translators either in their own country or in other countries. We hope that this article will make their presentations even more effective.

The European pastor needed an ice-breaker. At opening night on his first evangelistic series in a rural African village, a sea of serious faces stared up at him. So he told a joke. His trusty translator sprang into action. A few people in the audience nodded solemnly; everyone else remained serious. One look at the pastor's face told the translator that radical action must be taken. "Our illustrious speaker has just said something he thinks is funny. Let us not embarrass our guest who has come so far to speak to us. Laugh right now!" Giggles, smiles, and then a wave of laughter broke out. The ice was broken—the day saved by the translator.

In an age of global mobility, the Great Commission still urges us to preach to "all nations" (Matthew 28). This often means speaking through a translator. Sometimes it even means preaching through three or four different translators. And, clumsy as it often seems, it works. God's Word is heard. Hearts are touched, and people turn to God.

Chances are that sometime in your ministry, at home or abroad, you may be asked to preach through a translator. Here are some suggestions (picked up over the years on several continents)

that can help make your sermon more transparent and easier to translate.

Tips for preaching with translators

Know your translator. If at all possible, spend time with your translator before the sermon. You can quickly judge your translator's knowledge of your language and simplify your language structure if necessary. You will also be giving your translator time to get used to your accent and manner of speaking. Ideally, the translator should have a copy of your sermon a few days or weeks before. If this is not possible, try at least to give the translator a quick outline of the sermon so that the translator will know where you are going. You want to be careful about the translator looking at the manuscript or outline during the sermon delivery. The manuscript or outline may actually distract the translator from hearing you.

I remember trying to do a last minute translation to German from a Spanish sermon. We had no German Bible handy, and the preacher based his sermon on a Bible text that spoke of "persevering faith." Unfortunately, I couldn't remember the German word for "persevering." The whole point of the sermon was an exposition of the perseverance part of faith. How I wished that I had an opportunity to review that key word before the sermon.

Watch the time. A translated sermon is generally twice as long. So for a forty-minute time slot, your sermon should not be more than twenty. In many cultures time isn't an issue, so you will be able to preach for an hour or more without any problems—and that's good news. Just ask beforehand how much time you have. If you only have a certain time slot, it may be easier to make a new sermon than to prune your longer one. Also, a lot of preachers save time by not reading Bible passages but letting the translator directly read the passage in the target language. I have also seen preachers and translators mark their Bibles before the sermon with slips of numbered paper to make finding the Bible texts easier and quicker.

Speak slowly and clearly. Your translator has to listen to you, understand each word, and guess at where you will be going with this idea and think of the best translation all at the same time. By speaking a little slower than your normal pace, you give the translator more time and make the job easier. Speak loudly enough for the translator to hear clearly without drowning out the translation. I have heard some sermons in which the preacher shouts, leaving the translator barely

audible. This is particularly noticeable when no amplification system exists.

Keep your sentences short. Not all languages are structured the same. Some languages have the verb near the beginning of the sentence while others have it near the end. Your translator will need a complete clause in order to translate. For example “towering above the world’s misery” will be more difficult to translate than “towering above the world’s misery stands the cross.” The translator now has the option of changing the sentence around and structuring it properly in the target language.

Establish a pause rhythm. This gives the translator a clear space to translate. The translator can keep pace and won’t have to try to jump in every time you pause for a breath.

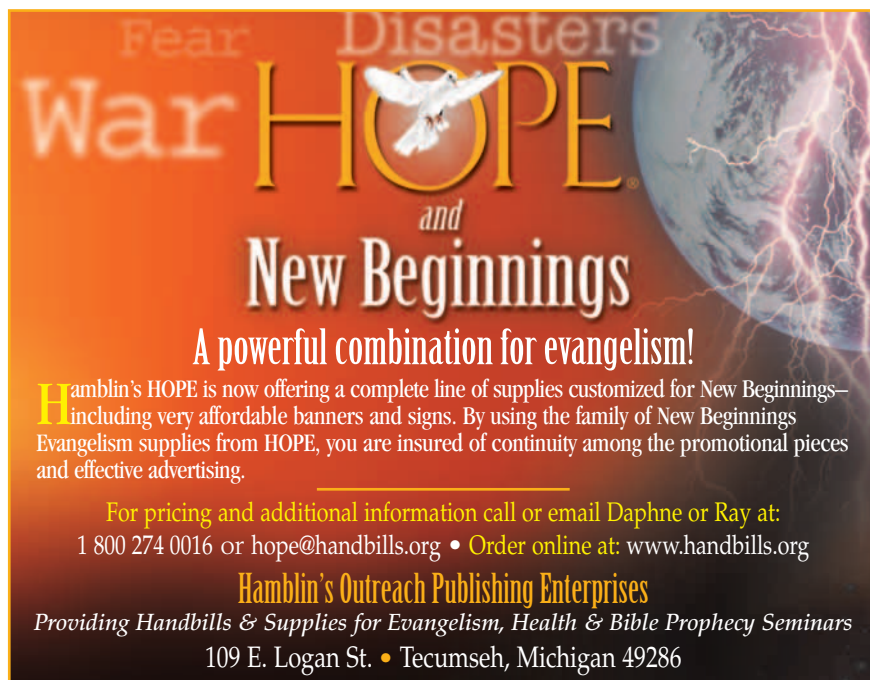
Pay attention to the translator while he or she translates. Some preachers jokingly refer to their translators as their “interrupters.” The truth of the matter is that the preacher can be the interrupter and sabotage the message by paging in his Bible or adjusting his tie while the translator speaks. Anything that distracts the audience should be avoided. Quietly looking at your notes or looking at the translator would probably be best.

Things to avoid

Idiomatic expressions definitely season a good sermon. However, they can be extremely difficult to translate. Your translator will need a near natively like ability in your language to do your sermon justice if you make extensive use of idiomatic expressions. What is a translator supposed to do with an idiomatic expression like “keep in touch” when, clearly, touching is out of the question because the person plans to leave the country?

Word plays are excellent ways of making a point stick but, of course, do not easily translate. We recently heard a preacher here make the point that Christianity is not another “-ism” like “communism or socialism.” Fortunately, it worked in the Spanish translation, but it may not always be that way.

Humor is not only linguistically but also socially bound. Even with a good translation, a joke may simply not be funny in another language. While teach-



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ing English to my students in Peru, I told an English joke. No one laughed. I then proceeded to explain the joke. Still, no one laughed. My husband is German, and I was born in South Africa. In Peru if a joke is not funny, they call it a “German joke.” I had just about given up on my joke when one of the students mischievously announced that he thought that South African jokes were even worse than German jokes. Now that was a joke that they appreciated. It must have been ten minutes before the laughing died down and we could continue with class.

Certain *Bible passages* are generally well known, and the preacher often quotes them without actually looking up the verse in the Bible. This is generally not a good idea when preaching with a translator. The audience and translator may not be familiar with the quoted verse, and its use may seem quite out of place. For example, a non-Christian translator and a Hindu audience may be surprised and puzzled by the unexplained quote of John 3:16.

Care should also be taken when using well-known *Christian writers* without having the reference handy for the translator to read, because this creates two problems for the translator. Firstly, there is a sudden dramatic change in style.

The translator who has just adjusted to your sentence construction may now be thrown into eighteenth-century English. Secondly, the vocabulary changes dramatically. A preacher recently inserted the well-known C. S. Lewis quote, “Pain is God’s megaphone to a dead world,” into a sermon on the prophecy of Daniel. The translator had obviously never heard of C. S. Lewis or megaphones; thus, the translation of the phrase lost its punch.

Watch the measurements. Although this may be obvious, I find over and over again that preachers forget that not all the world thinks in their monetary currency, yards, meters, and inches. Also that unexplained reference to picnicking in July—for people living in the Southern Hemisphere—sounds very cold and wet.

Conclusion

These pointers will be very helpful when preparing a sermon to be translated or when preaching with a translator. God can, and does, often use two people, a preacher and a translator from different worlds. Within moments the two blend into one, and we no longer hear a preacher and a translator, but rather the voice of God powerfully pulsating through the audience. ■

Hands and hearts touching—the work of a missionary

Gary Krause



Gary Krause lives in Burtonsville, Maryland, United States, with his wife, Bettina, and baby daughter, Bethany. He is director of the Office of Adventist Mission at Adventist World Headquarters. For mission resources and more information about Adventist Mission, please visit www.adventistmission.org.

A young African mother-to-be awaited the arrival of her first child in a public hospital in Arua, Uganda. She had experienced a long, hard labor. Lying on her hospital bed, she could only whisper, amid the contractions, “God will help.” Nearby stood Seventh-day Adventist missionary Kristina Muelhauser—patting her arm, encouraging her. Finally, they took the mother-to-be away for a Caesarean section.

Kristina lives in Arua with her husband, Darrel, and their youngest child, Harmony. Darrel directs ministerial training for the Adventist Church in south Sudan. Kristina home-schools Harmony and helps as a midwife in the local community.

In the evening, Kristina returned to the hospital to check on the baby. Family members—all Muslims—surrounded the happy young mother.

The next morning Kristina returned to check on the mother and was shocked to discover that the baby had died during the night.

“The mother lay still in the bed with her eyes closed, shutting out the other 40 women and their babies who were in the same room with her,” says Kristina. “My heart felt like lead.”

Kristina rushed home and found a soft little white hat with yellow tulips that she had knitted many years earlier—part of a hospital project for mothers whose babies had died. She had kept it for that purpose, and now the moment had come.

She tucked the little hat in her bag and rode her bike to the hospital. The baby’s grandmother

stood, sadly, at the end of her daughter’s bed. She spoke no English.

Kristina told the nurse the hat was for the baby. The nurse was surprised, but explained to the grandmother what Kristina wanted to do. Women in other beds and student nurses quietly watched.

“The African Muslim women here cover their heads, but not their faces,” says Kristina. She continued, “I could easily see the tears flowing down the cheeks of the dear grandmother as she uncovered the baby’s head. Together, Muslim and Christian, we put the little hat on, our hands and hearts touching.

“The mother had not moved or opened her eyes through all of this,” Kristina adds. “She lay still in the bed, silent in her grief and pain. I asked the grandmother to bring the baby for the mother to see her one last time. The mother opened her eyes. Tenderly I patted the round little cheeks of the baby, and then the mother’s, as we all wept quietly together.”

Hands and hearts touching

God didn’t sit in heaven, flip a switch, and send us hope. He didn’t do it by celestial remote control. He personally brought hope to us. God didn’t just send instructions from heaven. He came among us. Like a true Shepherd (Pastor), Jesus lived among His sheep. He had human skin, breathed air, walked our earth.

Today, Seventh-day Adventists share their message through the Internet, television, radio, and mass public meetings. These are all worthy means of outreach. But they don’t come close to the power of the personal touch of another human being. That’s why our communities still need pastors. That’s why our world still needs missionaries of compassion, who have the pastoral touch.

At times Jesus ministered to large crowds. But just as often He met alone: with Nicodemus at night, or with a woman in a Samaritan village. “He went journeying from town to town and village to village, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:1, NEB). After He left, His message spread rapidly through personal contact.

A tradition of mission

Today Adventist missionaries are widely disbursed: Brazilians in Burkina Faso, Hungarians in Kuwait, Filipinos in Swaziland, Canadians in Madagascar, Pakistanis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Argentinians in Bangladesh, Australians in India, Americans in Indonesia. In fact, the Muelhauser family working in Uganda

and south Sudan, and nearly one thousand other Seventh-day Adventist overseas missionaries (including spouses), demonstrate a long tradition of commitment by the Adventist Church to international outreach.

The first official Adventist missionary, J. N. Andrews, found his mission field in Europe in 1874. But before him there had been other “unofficial” Adventist missionaries—lay people who, on their own initiative, headed overseas to share the good news about Jesus.

Abram La Rue, a shepherd and wood-cutter from California, had a burning ambition to take the good news to China. He wrote to the General Conference but was told that at 65 he was too old. Moreover, they didn’t have the money to send him. Not discouraged, La Rue negotiated

According to Dr. Raymond Moore, “He treated nearly every important ruler of China from the founding of the Republic, not to mention unnumbered ambassadors, senators, and princes of invention and industry around the world. Yet he regarded these accomplishments simply as doorways to greater service—the uplift of the underprivileged, the feeding of the famished, and the tender healing of the unfortunate sick.”²

Stereotypes of mission

Today there is widespread cynicism about missionaries, and not without some cause. At times missionaries have been insensitive to the local culture. Popular books and movies such as *The Poisonwood Bible* and *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* promote the stereotype of missionaries

peace and love of Jesus in their hearts and are working as Global Mission pioneers. Jesus makes a difference.

In South Pacific islands such as Papua New Guinea, Adventist villages stand out. These “seven-day” villages are known for having no pigs and for being neat and clean.

Travel writer and novelist Paul Theroux describes paddling his kayak among the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea and arriving at a village. “What distracted my attention was the good health of the villagers, in particular their good teeth,” he wrote.

“One of the villagers invited him to stay in their village: ‘The missionary will show you a place.’

“‘Where is the missionary?’

“‘I expected to see a *dim-dim* [white man] in a black frock, but instead I was greeted by a Trobriander in a T-shirt and bathing suit.’

“‘I am the missionary,’ he said.”

Theroux, a religious cynic, later listened to John (the missionary) give his testimony.

“‘I was blind. I spent many years as a blind man,’ he said. ‘Then I became a Seventh-day Adventist and I learned to see. Paul, would you like to learn how to see, like your namesake, on the road to Damascus?’

“So they were Seventh-day Adventists. That obviously explained their good teeth. They did not smoke or drink. The younger ones did not chew betel. No pig-eating.

“‘Do you want to convert me?’

“‘Yes. I do.’

“‘I’ll have to think it over, John. It’s a pretty big decision in any person’s life.’”³

Jesus still makes a difference in people’s lives. When you visit villages where animism holds sway, you get a taste of the extent to which fear dominates the lives of hundreds of millions of people. These people live in trepidation of the spirits and spend their energies trying to appease them. The good news about Jesus turns their lives around, bringing peace, hope, and the joy of salvation.

A worldwide commitment

The Seventh-day Adventist Church finds its strength in mission. Its commit-

TODAY THERE IS WIDESPREAD CYNICISM ABOUT MISSIONARIES, AND NOT WITHOUT SOME CAUSE.

his way onto a ship where he could work his way to Hong Kong. He arrived there in 1888 and began preparing pamphlets for distribution. Fourteen years later the first official Adventist missionary, J. N. Andrews, arrived. La Rue witnessed the first six people baptized in that part of Asia, and he died one year later.

The honor roll of distinguished Adventist missionaries is long. Consider, for example, Harry Miller, best known for inventing commercially viable soy milk, and his wife, Maude, both Adventist doctors in their early 20s, who headed to China in 1903, turning their backs on prestigious medical careers in the United States. Harry was such a prodigy that John Harvey Kellogg traveled by train to Chicago to try to talk him out of leaving America.

It’s hard to overestimate the impact Miller made in China. Clarence Hall, senior editor of *Reader’s Digest*, compared Miller with David Livingstone, “whose dedicated skills indelibly marked the maps with Christian humanitarianism throughout the world’s far places.”¹

as cultural imperialists, riding roughshod over local peoples and their customs. What right do we have to impose our views on other people? Respect their cultures and their religions.

To a certain extent this attitude has infiltrated the church. Many have lost their vision for the difference Jesus can make in the lives of people. They’ve lost sight of the mandate Jesus gave His followers to help people physically and spiritually. While we should always treat others who think differently from us with respect and Christian charity, we have a commission and privilege to share the love of Jesus. It must be done with care and cultural sensitivity, but it must be done.

People all over the world have become “new creatures” through the power of Jesus. He casts out fear. He brings hope. He gives a new reason for living. He changes the way we treat each other. He brings love into our families.

In Indonesia a man used to join his fellow tribesmen in beheading their enemies. Today he and his family have the

ment includes a worldwide humanitarian work, an international volunteer program, satellite television and shortwave radio blanketing the globe, a huge publishing program, thousands of schools, a large network of hospitals and clinics, the Global Mission pioneer program, and hundreds of overseas missionaries.

Through the years, Seventh-day Adventists have generously supported missions through their tithes and mission offerings because they believe the gospel commission. They believe we're called to help the less fortunate, the poor, the sick, and those who don't know about Jesus.

Unfortunately, giving to mission offerings has declined. It seems that those who gave a dollar into the offering plate 15 years ago still put a dollar in today. In the 1930s, when Seventh-day Adventists gave ten dollars tithe, they also gave six dollars to mission offerings. Today, we give just thirty-eight cents for every ten dollars tithe. At the same time, giving to

one's local church has risen to nearly four dollars for every ten dollars of tithe.

For decades now, Adventists have talked longingly of "finishing the work." But declining mission offerings prevent the church from starting new work in new areas, reduce the number of foreign missionaries, and restrict the mission we've been called to accomplish. In a sense, mission is expensive. But it's not an optional extra if we're serious about going into all the world.

Of course the dynamics of mission have changed over the decades. Today, indigenous believers have taken increasing responsibility for mission in their territories. But the experience and gifts of missionaries from other parts of the world are still vital in helping to provide direction, skills, and training in areas where the residents are still relatively new in the faith.

The joy of service

The story of Adventist Mission around the world centers not on the story of

highly educated super-Christians performing exceptional feats. It's the story of everyday people such as you and me who answer the call to touch the lives of others in the name of Jesus.

Kristina Muelhauser says she and her family are just ordinary people. She never had any great desire for overseas mission service. She didn't have any desire to leave their family and cozy home in northern Maine, United States. But all that has changed in the joy of service. "I can say that I have given up nothing in coming to Africa," she says, "but have been more blessed than anything that I could have given." ❏

- 1 Quoted in Richard A. Schaefer, *Legacy: Daring to Care*, <www.llu.edu/info/legacy>.
- 2 Raymond S. Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller* (Harper and Brothers, 1961), xii.
- 3 Paul Theroux, *The Happy Isles of Oceania* (Ballantine Books, 1993), 116-118.

"Treading the Ground"

Those working on the cutting edge of mission—reaching unreached people—know the challenge of adapting to different people, cultures, and mindsets.

Accompanying Harry and Maude Miller on their boat to China in 1903 were two other young Adventist doctors, Arthur and Bertha Selmon. Upon landing in China, the two young couples began learning the language and adopting local customs. They wore Chinese dress, and Miller and Selmon even shaved off their hair and began growing pigtails.

They had never attended a missionary training institute. They had probably never studied the theological principles of contextualization. But they applied the apostle Paul's principles of becoming all things to all people.

"The apostle [Paul] varied his manner of labor, shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed," writes Ellen White. She adds, "The laborer for God is to study carefully the best methods . . ." Workers are "not to be one-idea men, stereotyped in their manner

of working, unable to see and sense that their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people among whom they work and the circumstances they have to meet." (*Gospel Workers*, 118, 119).

Global Mission pioneers are lay people who, on a small living stipend, establish new groups of believers among their own people and cultures. Budiman Soreng, one young pioneer, could only stare as people walked around town with the decapitated heads of their enemies dangling from their hands. Budiman was working in the Bengkayang area of Kalimantan, the Indonesian side of the island of Borneo, where there had been fierce tribal warfare—complete with beheadings and cannibalism. Budiman established three groups of believers, and today he's a district pastor supervising a team of Global Mission pioneers in the same region.

Pioneering for the gospel was in Budiman's blood (his father, too, was a Global Mission pioneer). He says his first task when he arrived was to "study the situation"—the place and the people.

Next he started to make friends with animists, Muslims, and Chinese Buddhists, as well as other Christians. "I played football with the people, went jogging in the mornings, and worked with them in the rice fields," he says. "At midnight I prayed, 'Lord, first work in my heart. Then I can work with the people. Let me say what Jesus would say.'"

Budiman soon began visiting in homes, sharing from the Bible. He communicates with the people in their local dialect and has composed spiritual songs in their language. More than two hundred people have been baptized, and, with the help of four other pioneers, five new areas have been opened to Adventist work.

The first key for successful outreach, says Budiman, is to be humble. "We have an expression here—'we tread the ground.' That means 'we come here, we are like the people here.'"

These pioneers model the apostle Paul and Jesus Himself, who adapted His ministry to reach various people. In His teaching He translated the good news into stories that people from all walks of life could understand and appreciate.

Christian education: its role in the gospel commission

Mark L. Blue



Mark L. Blue, Ed.D., formerly associate superintendent of education, now executive secretary for the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Pleasant Hill, California, United States.

“**A**nd this gospel of the kingdom will be preached . . .” (Matt. 24:14). Do Christian educational institutions share in this commission? Do they in fact fulfill a role in carrying the gospel to children and their families through the teaching ministry?

Do parents of students served at Christian educational institutions appreciate the religious experiences their children have at school? How important are the religious, academic, and cultural experiences the school provides? Do the parents without the same religious affiliation as their school of choice want religion to be part of their children’s educational experience?

Background

In an investigation as to why parents choose to send their children to a private Christian school,¹ the parents interviewed were more than likely motivated by their interest in having their children in an environment where they would daily have religious influences in the learning experience. All the parents interviewed were anxious to be supportive of the Christian educational experience their children were having, and most expressed the desire to harmonize the home experience with the Christian school experience.

There was a strong sense of teamwork from parents toward the Christian school of choice, whether or not the school was affiliated with their own denomination. With most of the parents interviewed, in instances where the parents’

religious affiliation was different from that of their school of choice, parents made significant efforts to affirm with their child the religious experience provided by the school.

One of the parents expressed a willingness to pay more tuition because of her satisfaction with what she was getting from the school she had chosen. This particular parent implied that she was getting more than her money’s worth. She was not a church member of the denomination affiliated with her school of choice.

How parents view Christian education

All the parents interviewed expressed their belief that their children were growing spiritually, academically, and socially. The greatest expression of satisfaction from parents centered on the instruction their children were getting about God, the treatment of others, respect for authority, cooperation with peers, how to be supportive of Christian morals and life principles, and family values. Christian education seemed to have had a positive impact on both the children and their parents.

One parent, however, made it clear that the reason for her choice of the Christian school was not the religious experience her child was having. She seemed to be more interested in what the private Christian school could do for her child to prepare him for later academic success. This parent’s perception of the school’s academic standards motivated her to want private Christian education for her child. This parent was willing to tolerate the Christian learning environment in her school of choice to give her child the best chance for academic success. In her case, the academic program was everything that the parent had expected and anticipated it would be.

All students have outside influences brought to bear upon them. They have to decide at some point how they will respond to those influences.

Christian school teachers work and pray for the religious influence of the school environment and their dedicated effort and the work of the Holy Spirit to impact the student for eternity. These school teachers do their part to plant seeds of biblical principles that will be nurtured throughout the students’ lives.

In the mind of the parent who had no interest in the religious experience of the Christian school chosen, the school was “generic” enough not to interfere in the child’s life or in the life of the parent. The parent was not interested in the school’s religious experience impacting her

child; the child was there only to absorb the scholastic and academic challenge provided.

The parent did not choose to enroll her child in a Christian school by accident. It was a conscious choice, motivated by her perception of the excellent academic preparation her school of choice provided.

Christians realize that God's providence is not always necessarily understood immediately. Only time and the working of the Holy Spirit will determine the final result of a parent's private Christian school choice.

Juxtaposed with the previous parent's position is the attitude of a parent who felt that the Bible instructional program in her Christian school of choice was not as sectarian as it should have

been. She expressed a desire to have the Bible instructional program reflect more of an influence from the sponsoring church. For this parent, including the denominational uniqueness of the church in the Bible instructional program of the school was preferable to general Bible instruction. Thus schools that accept students from more than one denomination or without any religious affiliation need to decide whether they are going to provide religious instruction that emphasizes their uniqueness or whether their religious instruction will avoid or downplay what makes the school's religious experience unique.

More than one of the parents interviewed mentioned their interest in providing an ethnically diverse experience for their children, because this is the "real

Ten ways church schools can support their pastor

Adapted from a list developed by Gary Brown, principal, Columbia Adventist Academy, Battle Ground, Washington, United States.

1. *Be visible at church.* What are your talents? Use them in the church, even if you cannot be there every week. Become involved in the church—you need the church and the church needs you. Attend various church programs.

2. *Focus on dedication and prayer.* Invite your pastor to your school's dedication ceremonies. Have students meet with the pastor and pray on school grounds.

3. *Tell others.* Tell others about the good things that are happening at your church. Let them know you appreciate the support of your pastor.

4. *Talk with your pastor.* Find out your pastor's vision for your school. After all, the church is a major supporter of the school.

5. *Communicate.* Be prompt in sending information for the church bulletin. Keep the church informed.

6. *Deal with conflict.* Read Matthew 18 and follow the principles outlined therein when disagreements with your pastor occur.


7. *Include your pastor.* Invite your pastor to participate in school outings.

8. *Recognize your school is a "church" school.* Your school exists because of support from the "church." If you have a school newsletter, encourage your readers to support the church. On the school board, express appreciation to the church and the pastor.

9. *Have baptismal classes.* Organize with the pastor baptismal classes in your school, and be in the church when baptisms take place.

10. *Evangelize.* The next time the church has an evangelistic series, find ways of participating. Support the series by music, attendance, or other means. Reach out to youth attending the school but not the church.

Editor's note to educational superintendents: We encourage you to provide this list to your school personnel.



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Aspects of Prayer

Prayer is personal. Whether one prays in the seclusion of the “desert” or amid the hustle of the “marketplace,” prayer is a personal communication relationship between the individual and God. It is available at all times, in all circumstances.

Prayer needs authenticity. Use primary language which is an authentic reflection of the thought processes and experiences of the individual heart, not tired clichés or formulas.

Prayer is life-driven. Do not feel that you have to soft-pedal with God. He knows our strengths and weaknesses and knows that we may not always understand the world around us. It is appropriate to express our frustrations and sorrows to Him.

Prayer is awesome. God is our Friend, but He is also our Creator, King of kings and Lord of lords. Yet, He is always interested in us as if there were no others.

Prayer is revealing. Prayer reveals God and makes Him available to us. But it also reveals something about us and makes us available to Him. Prayer creates the prerequisite for hearing Him speak to us. Prayer reveals more about us and does more to us than it does to God.

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world.” These parents desire that their children have exposure to other children that were ethnically different but shared a common belief system, morality, spirituality, and religious fervor in their families.

Since the Christian school was seen as a safe place for families, parents were willing to accept whatever their perceived risks were to introduce their children to an ethnically diverse Christian educational environment. One parent was particularly pleased about the cultural diversity of her school of choice when discussing with her children that the love of God extends to all families.

The gospel at work

Is the Christian teaching ministry in private Christian schools helping the church fulfill the task of taking the gospel to the world? Yes, it is!

Parents who send their children to a Christian school continue to enthusiastically support the education ministry of Christian schools and teachers. For many, private Christian schools have played an important role in expressing the gospel in terms that children and their families could understand. Today the gospel is being presented to families in Christian schools through the efforts of their teachers.

The families interviewed continued to express their support for the spiritual impact Christian teachers and the Christian learning environment have in their lives, in their children’s lives, and in their homes. Judging by our interviews, churches with Christian schools should continue serving families who are not church members.

The future of Christian education

A major study reported “that since the mid-1980s, enrollment in private elementary and secondary schools has fluctuated between 5.2 million and 6.0 million” with the expectation that enrollments will “remain around that level between 2000 and 2011” in the United States.² According to the above information, private Christian school enrollment will continue to fluctuate, and over the next decade the number of students served will remain virtually unchanged.

Every non-Christian or nonchurch-member family enrolled in a Christian school should be viewed as an important prospect for the expanding ministry of the school *and* the sponsoring church or churches. Potentially, the school could become the first point of contact with families needing and wanting Christian education for their children and perhaps a church home. A good idea for both the school administration and the supporting church leadership would include the development of a marketing strategy designed to discover whether or not these families have an interest in developing further a relationship with the church supporting the school.

Summary

The child influenced for Jesus while attending a K–12 school will become an adult and have a chance to make the all-important decision about faith in God and His Son. Isn’t this what Christian education is all about?

Sometimes the child decides for Christ while still in school. Sometimes the decision may be delayed until adulthood, but the Bible instruction and religious experiences received during childhood and youth under the nurturing instruction of a Christian teacher add to the foundation Christian parents and churches have laid for future decisions about God and church.

Many parents choose Christian education for their children. Some parents are interested only in the perceived academic advantage a private Christian school can provide. Christian schools and churches, anxious to provide religious and academic excellence to the parents who seek it for their children, realize this as a win-win arrangement for Christian school parents, educators, and affiliated churches. Parents, teachers, and affiliated churches are privileged to be able to partner in the Christian school’s ministry. ■

1 Mark L. Blue, “Why Parents Choose Private Christian Schools” (Riverside: La Sierra University, 2004).

2 D. E. Gerald and W. J. Hussar, *Projections of Educational Statistics to 2011* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Council of Educational Statistics, 2001).

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Dateline

Norway unified evangelism

Royse, Norway—In January 2006 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway launched an evangelistic initiative based on the book of Daniel. The series, a 30-minute television presentation called *Babylonkoden* or *The Babylon Code*, features a chapter from Daniel followed by a group discussion.

“In this effort we are able to combine TV with small-group ministry in a very effective way,” says **Tor Tjeransen**, church president in Norway. “We are very grateful for the way this series has been received by both church members and the public.”

For Gunnar Jorgensen, church communication director, one of the important features is the cooperative effort that makes the program possible. He writes, “This is the first time we have been able to initiate a public effort with such an effect nationwide.” This approach allows even the smallest churches to participate in this evangelistic series. Rolv Kleiven, a retired physiotherapist, and his wife gather 7 to 8 nonmembers in their home every Tuesday



The program is taped in front of a live audience in the Stavanger Seventh-day Adventist Church.

evening to watch the DVD and discuss the materials. “Those who come are very enthusiastic,” reports Kleiven. Some of those who participate have asked, “Why hasn’t anything like this been offered previously?” Kleiven reports that churches of other denominations are expressing an interest in using the program.

Tjeransen points out that “A group of 50 volunteers in the Stavanger church puts together the TV programs with the presentations by pastor **Reidar Kvinge**. Responsible for filming these programs,

the Stavanger church also tapes a 30-minute group discussion for members of the public who cannot attend a small group. These people work with study materials supplied by the Norwegian Voice of Prophecy school and submit their answers to the correspondence school. About 130 people follow the series in this way.”

“It is great fun being part of this ministry,” says Stein Terje Jakobsen, production manager at the Stavanger church.

Pathway of Hope TV

New York, New York, United States—The production phrase: “Lights, camera, action,” has taken hold of a group of pastors from the Greater New York Conference and the Northeastern Conference. Pastors **Rohann Wellington, Abraham J. Jules, G. Earl Knight, Steve D. Cassimy, and A. J. Smith** have joined hands to create a new, highly mission-driven ministry.

Pathway of Hope will be a half-hour evangelistic/pastoral preaching broadcast similar, though not identical in style, to existing broadcasts such as *Breath of Life* and *It Is Written*.

The concept was developed by Rohann Wellington and Abraham Jules. Dr. Jules, pastor of the Mount Vernon Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Northeastern Conference, has been



Dr. Abraham J. Jules

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selected as the speaker. G. Earl Knight, executive secretary of the Greater New York conference will serve as the associate speaker.

The plan is to broadcast the program over various existing broadcast systems. Those interested in the program may visit <www.pathwayofhopeny.org>.

Christianity in Africa seminar

Ashton, Maryland, United States—**C. E. Bradford**, well-known Seventh-day Adventist retired church leader, preacher, and writer, was the featured panel member of a seminar on Christianity in Africa. Six others participated in the seminar held at the Emmanuel-Brinklow Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Harold L. Lee, president of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, introduced the panel and the topic. One of the panel members, **Joan A. Francis**, professor of history at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, United States, shared new material on the topic that she has developed for children.

The importance of the Sabbath on the African continent was one of the topics of discussion. Recently Bradford authored *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection*, which points out that the Sabbath has been kept on the African continent for a much longer period than scholars have realized.



C. E. Bradford, author of *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection*, was featured at the seminar held at the Emmanuel-Brinklow Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ashton, Maryland, United States.

The book is available at <www.ministerialassociation.com>. Bradford's book breaks new ground, demonstrating the need for additional study on this topic.

National Congress on Preaching

Grapevine, Texas, United States—The National Congress on Preaching will be held just outside of Dallas, Texas, April 24–26, 2006. More than twenty well-known preachers will give presentations or hold workshops at this event. This yearly event, started in 1989, draws ministers because of the quality of preaching and instruction. Those interested in attending should contact the congress sponsor, *Preaching* magazine, at <www.preaching.com/ncp> or call +1 615-599-8985. ❏

Letters continued

We have had the joy of seeing people struggling with tobacco win the victory through Jesus. What a loss if they had been treated badly!

In our present culture I believe we are faced with the challenge of baptizing and nurturing former sex offenders, drug abusers, and homosexuals. We are called to be supportive to the wounded, friends of the critical, and in general exhibit authentic humility and grace to those around us.

The issue of sexual offense is indeed serious, but I believe the emphasis should be on educating parents and members rather than focusing on punitive measures for the offender.

—Pastor Ron Dorchuck, Butte district, Montana, United States

Postmodernism: mighty act of God?

In *Ministry* (February 2006), Dr. Jon Paulien writes: I have found eight reasons to believe that postmodernism is an act of God in the positive sense.

Does this mean that it is God's act to make people believe that there is no absolute truth? If postmodernism is an act of God does that indicate that modernism also was an act of God, which gave us

Ministry Magazine plans to publish an issue this summer on life in a multi-church district. Among the subjects to be addressed, as they relate to multi-church districts, are

- administration
- spousal and child(ren) stress (it would be particularly helpful for such topics to be addressed by spouses and/or children who can relate to these stresses)
- preaching and the preaching calendar
- the challenges to personal spiritual formation
- the challenges of continuing education
- the satisfactions and challenges of working in a multichurch district

If you are interested in writing on any of these topics, submit your article(s) to hucksw@gc.adventist.org by May 15.

atheistic evolutionism and everything else resulting from it?

Both modernism and postmodernism is not taking people closer to God but taking the world further downhill. Is God acting in that trend? Is God acting against Himself?

Would Dr. Paulien be so kind to explain himself a bit clearer than the eight points he is discussing which are, in my opinion, more symptoms of postmodernism, than signs of an act of God.

Thank you.

—Pastor Jan T. Knopper, New South Wales, Australia

Dr. Paulien responds: My remarks are based on the biblical conviction that no matter how depraved a given culture may be "God never leaves Himself without witness" (see Acts 14:17). From the standpoint of any age, the age that follows is usually perceived as an unmitigated disaster. But in my mind we have a choice. We can bemoan everything that is going wrong and take up a hostile position toward those who believe that way, or we can look for the indications of God's "witness" and seek His point of contact with those who have grown up in that new culture. In my experience, the latter approach is more fruitful in building up the church. ❏




RESOURCES

Adventist Mission video resources

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—Adventist Mission has announced plans to introduce a new video resource to churches, beginning with the second quarter in 2006. This free resource will be sent automatically to churches in North America, and a complimentary master will be sent to each world division for duplication or adaptation as they choose.

Intended to communicate specific messages to Seventh-day Adventist church members from the world church headquarters, the video segments on each DVD will come in primarily three lengths.

- 10 minutes—ideal for showing in Sabbath School, church, vespers, or prayer meeting
- 5 minutes—for programs where there is less time available
- 1–2 minutes—ideal for announcement time between Sabbath School



and worship, or at the beginning of the worship service.

The stories are up-to-date accounts of real Adventists doing their best to “Tell the World” about Jesus. Church members will see and hear about little-known people and places from around the world, how seeds of hope are planted, and how miracles spring from simple faith.

The DVD will include some video stories from the division receiving a portion of the 13th Sabbath offering. Several of the videos will feature general mission stories from other world fields and will promote the weekly mission offerings. Some stories will show how the mission offering has specifically blessed real people and made a difference in their lives.

Although the first DVD was recorded in English, Adventist Mission is also working on translations with a new Adventist Mission DVD to be released quarterly. A short video clip can be viewed online at <www.AdventistMission.org>.


The office of Adventist Mission was established when the Office of Mission Awareness and Global Mission merged in 2005.

Asian-Pacific Institute of Lay Ministry

Students who register for the Lay Training Seminar in Sacramento, California, United States, will attend ten lectures over the course of a year. A pilot project of the Asian/Pacific Ministries of the Northern California Conference and the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, local elders and laypersons who graduate will receive certification to qualify as lay Bible workers.

Courses of study will include Principles of Church Leadership, Spiritual Gifts, Principles of Witnessing and Church Growth, Personal and Public Evangelism, Gospel of Health, the Gift of Prophecy, Preaching and Worship, Pastoral Care and Visitation, Bible Doctrines, and Dynamics of Small Group Ministries. Although the registrants will not be charged any tuition or class materials fees, travel expenses, lodging, and food will be the responsibility of the student or church.

For more information:

Dr. Viclouis Arreola III, Director, Asian-Pacific Institute of Lay Ministry, 916-682-9469, varreola@ncc.adventist.org 



BOOK REVIEW

It Takes a Church by Gary L. Hopkins and Joyce W. Hopp, Mountain View, Calif., Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2002.

Childrearing should be a shared responsibility between the home and the church. True, parents have the major share of this responsibility by providing a home atmosphere filled with love, care, and prayer. But the church as an extended spiritual family cannot shirk its responsibility. Where the church and the home work together in a ministry of love, care, and nurture, our children are bound to be saved and safe.

That, in summary, is the theme of this excellent guide to childrearing—indeed every member’s guide. In *It Takes a Church*, authors Gary L. Hopkins and Joyce W. Hopp portray the different temptations that our kids face on an everyday basis, especially as teenagers, and how they respond to these temptations based on the interaction with the adults that have a direct influence in their lives.

Giving statistical support to their research, Hopkins and Hopp report on the differences between children whose interaction with adults is frequent and those who do not have a parent, teacher, or church member taking an interest in them. The findings show that children with little adult interaction, especially those entering the adolescent years, are more likely to experiment with drug use,

alcohol, premarital sex, and pornography—as opposed to those whose parents and other significant adults are heavily involved in their lives.

The authors present a case study of a teenage boy and his family. The boy is a normal kid, grows up in a single parent home, and struggles with the same temptations that his peers face. The boy is fortunate that his mother and young sister are excellent communicators and together they have a close and intimate sharing atmosphere. They have time for each other. In addition, other family members and adult friends take interest in their lives. This adult interaction does not guarantee that teenagers will not face challenges and temptations or keep them from experimenting with the forbidden. In fact, there are areas in which this par-



ticular teenager dares to experiment, but the fact his mother chose to deal with the situations in a loving manner has made the difference in his making the right choices.

The book suggests that love is the answer to changing the path that our children travel, and it starts with building a close relationship with them. Getting to know the youth in our community and in our church, and making it a point to play an active role in their lives, makes all the difference. We need to *show* them love and not just teach it.

I highly recommend this book to all adults and adolescents. It will be a good guide for parents, pastors, youth leaders, Sabbath School teachers, and other adults who are interested in saving children.

—Reviewed by Larie Gray, administrative assistant, Adventist Review

The Peacemaking Remnant: Essays and Historical Document, edited by Douglas Morgan. Silver Spring, Md., USA: Adventist Peace Fellowship, 128 pages, \$10.

John the revelator, in Revelation 12:17, succinctly identifies the last-day remnant as keeping the commandments of God and holding to the testimony of Jesus. Many Seventh-day Adventists have taken this text and associated it with Seventh-day Adventism.

But what does it mean to keep God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus? Douglas Morgan has assembled a number of prominent Adventist thinkers to plumb the practical depths of Revelation 12:17. The results are potentially upsetting for some.

Charles Scriven, in the opening chapter from which the title of the book is derived, equates the spirituality for which all must strive as one of "engagement and stewardship" (p. 12). He states that "Christian peacemaking is the unswerving effort to overcome evil with good" (p. 20).

Zdravko Plantak argues for a ministry in the vein of the Old Testament prophets,

stating that Adventists "ought to be among the first to condemn it [violation of the love principle] and to seek ways to eliminate injustice, inequality, bad relationships, and violation of human rights" (p. 28).

After Charles E. Bradford and Ryan Bell discuss theology and civil disobedience, respectively, Keith Burton calls for, among other things, "all Christians to free themselves from the noose of nationalism, and connect with God's global community" (p. 62). New Testament scholar Kendra Haloviak argues that one's hope for the future determines how the present should be lived: seeking justice, peace, working to end hunger, comforting and healing, and fighting disease.

Ronald Osborn gives an excellent overview of Adventism's response to wars fought over time: ranging from outspoken criticism of the Spanish-American War (1898–1899) to its silence regarding Vietnam (1960s). Douglas Morgan concludes the reflections in his chapter

by equating peacemaking—the role of the remnant—with "nurturing *shalom*—restoring health and wholeness in human communities at every level" (p. 88).

Within the appendices are excerpts from the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, of actions voted during its Spring Meeting in April, 2002. The Adventist Church reiterated its stance concerning the mission of the remnant by saying that "Churches should not only be known for spiritual contributions—though these are foundational—but also for their support of quality of life, and in this connection peacemaking is essential" (p. 113).

The Peacemaking Remnant is a revolutionary work in that it broadens the concept of remnant, taking its readers beyond focusing on the *characteristics* of the remnant, and stressing the *behavior* of the remnant. ■

—Reviewed by Willie Hucks, assistant editor, Ministry Magazine



Women's Resource Center Seeks New Director

La Sierra University seeks qualified candidates to fill the position of Director of the Women's Resource Center (WRC).

Responsibilities: establishes priorities; oversees all operations of the WRC, including programming, project and personnel management, financial oversight, and communication with various publics; helps to identify and develop sources of funding; creates and oversees activities and resources which empower women and/or which move the Seventh-day Adventist Church toward greater acceptance of women in leadership roles.

Skills: effective communication skills in writing, public speaking, and one-on-one interactions; strategic planning; fundraising and resource development; financial and office management.

Education: master's degree or equivalent in area related to the position.

Experience: involvement in work empowering women or changing negative perceptions about women; experience in a leadership position (such as social worker, pastor, chaplain, or teacher) that shows appreciation for the needs of Seventh-day Adventist lay and professional women; experience as a college or university teacher preferred. Part-time commitment considered.

Please submit resumes to: Dell Jean Van Fossen, Director, Human Resources, La Sierra University, 4500 Riverwalk Parkway, Riverside, CA 92515

Keeping the Commandments

We applaud the renewed interest in God's commandments as evidenced by the upcoming, first-ever Ten Commandments Day. We also commend its sponsors' interest in godly living, spiritual renewal, and the challenge of turning hearts and minds toward our eternal God and His unchanging law. As longtime advocates of a grace-motivated observance of the entire Decalogue by born-again Christians, Adventists can and should enthusiastically affirm those who are now standing up for God's law in the midst of a world that appears to ignore it.

This renewed emphasis on the moral law of God stands in welcome contrast to the messages all too frequently heard in some pulpits, messages that give distinct impressions that Christians can safely ignore the Ten Commandments because they have all been "nailed to the cross" and are no longer of importance to the followers of Jesus. At the same time, those of us who have labored in this field for some time can and should humbly offer a few crucial observations to this growing movement of sincere believers who share our deep concern for the role of faith and Christian influence in culture. What would Jesus do? is still the most helpful guideline as we communicate to our secular society the clear mandates of God's eternal law. All other observations grow out of this conviction.

Emulate rather than legislate. Jesus didn't lobby the Roman Senate for legislation requiring observance of the commandments by citizen and subject alike. And not because He believed the world wasn't truly decadent and in need of the moral law. Jesus did, however, frequently invite people everywhere to follow Him, to emulate His perfect observance of the commandments through a life of abiding trust in His heavenly Father.

Repose rather than impose. No one held the law of God in higher esteem

JAMES A. CRESS



than did Jesus. He consistently kept the law and taught others to do the same. To those who sought to nullify the Ten Commandments, our Lord underscored their unchanging nature. For those who mistakenly believed that law-keeping was a means of salvation, He described His Messianic mission as laying down His life for the sins of the whole world, including scrupulous law keepers.

To those who had turned the law into a tiresome list of "dos" and "don'ts," Christ said in clear, liberating tones, "Come unto Me and you will find rest for your souls." He taught that the Sabbath of the Decalogue was for celebrating God's salvation, not earning it. His spiritual rest was about reposing by faith in God's grace through His appointed, perfect, paschal Lamb. Never once did Christ dismiss or diminish the law and not once did He seek to impose it on others. His kingdom, He proclaimed, was one of grace, truth, and the awesome freedom to choose.

Show rather than tell. Jesus didn't print up bumper stickers so His disciples could "share their faith." He wasn't bashful about the law, it's just that the Creator knew best how to win back His wayward creatures. The integrity of His faithful life of obedience to His Father's will made ordinary people want to follow Him. Not a petition drive, not a lapel pin, not a two-ton monument in a public building, and not a national holiday. Jesus "walked

the walk!" And His relatively few words on this subject had power and authority precisely because they were consistent with His example. When He encouraged others to thoughtfully observe God's law, He had already shown them how by the way He lived His life.

Shine rather than whine. Our Savior didn't moralistically whine about the moral decline of the world around Him or the evils of a secular government. He didn't join the picket lines, He didn't form a political action committee, and He didn't rally the troops to decry the decay of culture. In fact, He directed His most severe critiques of culture at the ones who should have been most positively influencing culture but who, in attitude and action, appeared to have conformed to the spirit of this world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Influence is a matter of shining more than whining.

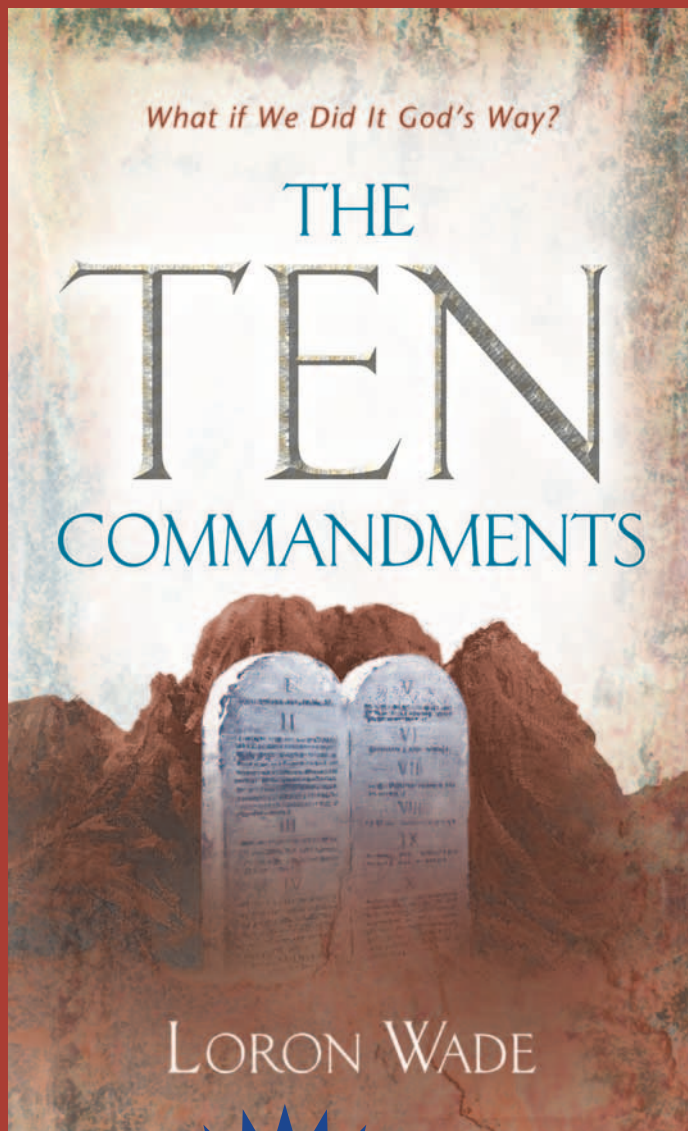
Motivate with love rather than law. Better than any of us, Jesus understood that law is a terrible motivator. "If you love me," Jesus said, you will want to keep My commandments (John 14:15). Love is the great motivator in our lives and the great transformer of culture. Not law. Not guilt. Not shame. Not rhetoric. Not slogans. Just love!

It is ironic that the zeal of our advocacy for something inherently holy and just and good (Romans 7:12) could easily turn into just another form of legalism and defeat the very purpose for which we strive unless we look to Jesus' example and act as wisely as serpents and as harmlessly as doves. If we insist that people who claim no connection with Christ must nevertheless observe the Ten Commandments, we end up advocating legalism, a form of godliness without the power of a living relationship with God, wrought by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. ■

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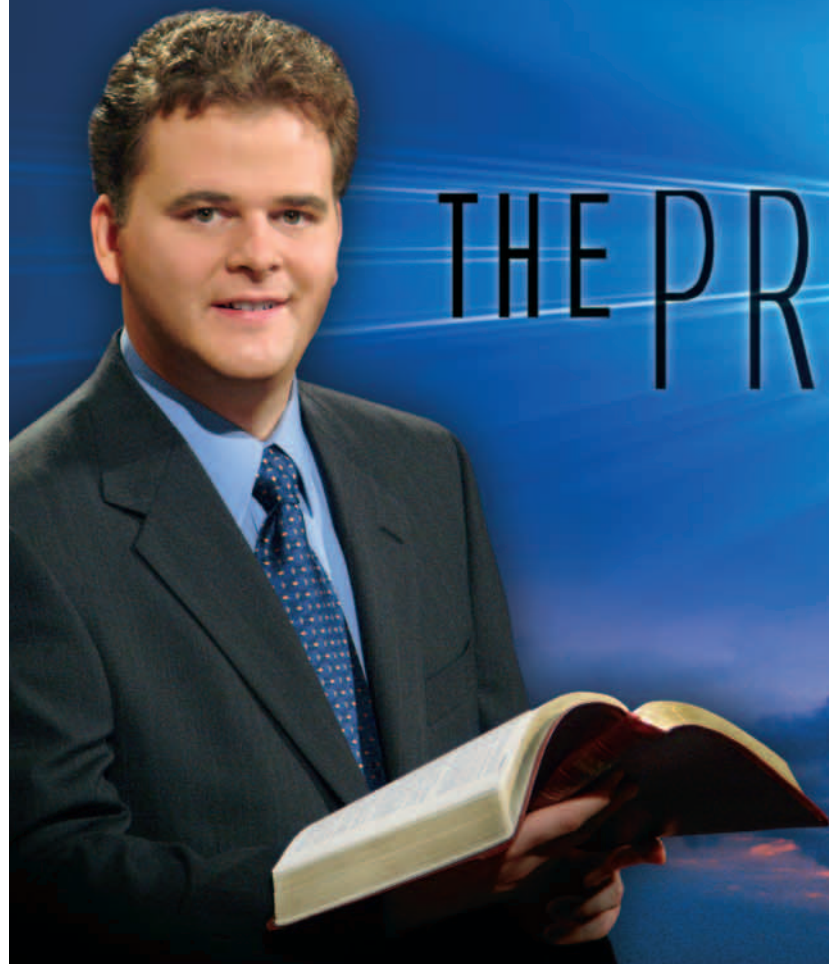
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