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Multichurch Pastoring and the Family



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OUR READERS RESPOND...

The Babylonian temptation

The Babylonian Temptation: Making a Name for Ourselves" (April 2007), by Reinder Bruinsma, vividly describes the continual round of articles in church publications applauding whatever accomplishments a church leader wants recognized such as another evangelism plan, more short-term mission trips, various retreats, some volunteer activity, a new or remodeled church, students' or professors' achievements, an update on progress somewhere—the list is endless. Does anyone try to work unobtrusively and without praise? Or do most attempt to make a name for themselves and, of course, the church?

—Marilyn Morgan, email

Growing in Christ

The 28th fundamental belief, "Growing in Christ"—voted at the 2005 General Conference Session—was certainly a move in the right direction. However, I was disappointed by the explanation of this doctrine by Dr. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez ("Growing in Christ: Atonement and Christus Victor"—June 2007).

The stumbling block to holy living and growing up in Christ is the "law of sin" in our members (Rom. 7:21–23). In Romans 7:14–25, Paul, identifying himself with every born-again Christian (the majority of the verb tenses are in the present active tense), makes it very clear that we may hate evil, want to do good, will or choose to do the right thing, and even delight in the law of God; but when it comes to putting these things into practice we fail miserably in our own strength. He concludes that our only hope is in Christ (v. 25).

The good news of the gospel is that Christ has already set us free (aorist tense) from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). Christ was able to accomplish this by assuming the self-same human nature that is dominated by the law of sin, and, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14), conquered this law of sin, executing it on the cross (Rom. 8:3). This is what makes it possible for

us to experience His victory, as we learn to walk in the Spirit (v. 4).

According to Rodríguez, Christ "did not annihilate the evil forces, but He broke their power over the human race, making it possible for anyone to participate in His victory." Sad to say, no mention is made concerning Christ overpowering the law of sin in our members, the stumbling block to growing in Christ. Unless Christians clearly understand the objective facts of the gospel, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, what hope do we give them in their subjective experience of growing in Christ?

—Jack Sequeira, email

I thank and praise God for the article, "Growing in Christ: Atonement and Christus Victor." It was enlightening and encouraging, even for an old preacher. Christ did not annihilate the evil for us, but He broke Satan's power over the human race, making it possible for everyone to participate in His victory.

But I wonder: Why do we not today see more miracles of healing, as in the days of Christ and the apostles? Could it be that we failed to read the whole of Christ's statement in Mark 16:15–17? The gospel—the power of God for salvation, in all its beauty and glory—if preached, would bring about these signs. Let us preach Christus the Victor who has "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13, KJV). In my estimation, the whole article is a challenge for us in the Laodicean church.

—Jeremia Florea, retired minister, Spring Lake, Michigan

Change the focus, feed the people

The June 2007 editorial titled "Growth Calls for Responsibility" demonstrated courage, forthrightness, and common sense. One more "program" would only weary the saints. Besides, most programs seem to vanish from the radar screen very

quickly. When I cleaned out my church office before moving to a new church, I discovered over a dozen program manuals that had accumulated over the years—many of them still in shrink wrap.

A camp meeting speaker recently reported that her conference raised a million dollars for evangelism in one offering. I know of summer camps and schools that operate on pitifully inadequate budgets. Both of these church entities play a major role in nurturing and keeping children and youth close to the church. Unfortunately, what a retired General Conference leader called the "numbers game" has placed the greatest emphasis on public evangelism. It seems to me that an excellent way to keep people from leaving is to feed them. Feed them by teaching them how to study the Bible. Have conferences on preaching and teaching that edify and equip members to face the rigors of everyday life.

Your editorial called us to change our focus. It is time to look at church through different lenses. Thank you for your editorial.

—Larry Yeagley, email

The landscape of the church

The June 2007 article titled "The Landscape of the Church" compels me to respond. It's about time we discussed vital subjects like numbers (baptisms), small multichurch districts' viability, and changing cultural norms worldwide. Having served 15 years in the Pennsylvania and Ohio conferences, your cover story triggered the painful and divisive years during the Vietnam War.

Thanks to Donald W. Hunter, Pennsylvania Conference president, my wife, four children, and I were introduced to the infrastructure of small congregations in rural areas of the state. But when you named Henry Kenaston in your June 2007 editorial, I had to share how this indefatigable pastor in his three-church district traversed his territory some 60 miles from north to south.

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The pastor's Gethsemane

WILLIE E. HUCKS II



Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' . . . Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me' " (Matt. 26:36, 38, NIV).

The life of Jesus was consumed with ministry. The waiting throngs constantly looked to Him for help, relief, and blessings—keeping Him so busy that He had no time for Himself.

Jesus was God, but He was also a man. As such, He experienced the range of human emotions—from joyful delight as He played with little children, to intense sadness at the lack of faith exhibited by His own disciples.

Like us, Jesus had to deal constructively with these emotions. We tend to exalt Jesus as some superman who never struggled with discouragement, who could automatically arise and stand tall without the slightest hint of discouragement; Gethsemane, however, paints a picture of Jesus that shows just how human He truly was. We see Him overwhelmed with sorrow (Greek: *perilupos*—"deeply grieved"). In verse 39 He prays, " 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me' " (NIV)—indicating His humanity's desire to pull back from His lot. Here we see the Savior at the low point of His human experience.

To whom could Jesus turn during these low moments? His disciples? They abandoned Him more than once. Jesus ministered to everyone within His

reach. But how often did others minister to Jesus?

The life of the pastor

Outside the bright lights of the pulpit, faithful pastors engage in a multitude of activities: from counseling to youth ministries to administration to evangelism to church school, and more. If one could count the hours that pastors invest in ministry, one could clearly see that pastors have time for everyone except their families. Pastors have even less time for themselves and their spiritual nourishment and physical maintenance.

Add to this the reality that the life of the pastor is extremely lonely. To whom can the pastor turn? Only another pastor who has worked on a daily basis with a congregation can understand the frustrations and heartaches. But pastors are often too busy ministering to the flock to take time to minister to one another. Too often pastors feel (rightly or wrongly) that they must maintain a certain distance from their members.

So to whom does the pastor turn? Can these church members play a role in ministering to the pastor, who gives and gives—without the guarantee of getting something in return?

The answer lies in the passage cited earlier. All Jesus sought was the company of His disciples. It would have been His greatest comfort just to

know that His followers were with Him, showing their concern.

Bearing one another's burdens

Often my church members would tell me, "Pastor, I'm praying for you." And this always encouraged me, especially when I most needed prayer. Far more powerful, however, than knowing a member was praying for me was when that person called me and said, "Pastor, I don't need anything. You were just on my mind, and I wanted to call you. May I pray with you?"

When everyone rushes about their business, what a blessing for pastors to know that their members call to pray not only *for* them but *with* them. Whether church members realize it or not, pastors struggle with sin and temptation. We also carry with us the burdens of our calling. We each face our own Gethsemane—those moments of intense anguish when we wish that God would ease, or take away, the challenges.

And while our church members pray for us, what an even greater blessing it is for pastors to know that other pastors are praying for them! As collaborators in gospel ministry, who else can know the spiritual battles, the family stresses, the ministerial challenges we face?

Let us always be there for one another, as we each walk through our own Gethsemane. **M**

Tell us what you think about this editorial. Email us at MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to us at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Multichurch district life and children

Richard Daly



Richard Daly pastors three churches in the Bristol district, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Bristol, England.

I can almost guarantee that one of my three young boys (ages seven, five, and three) on Sabbath morning will ask the question, “Daddy, which church are we going to this time? Are we going to the big church or the little church?” Another will ask, “Are we going to the new church?” What usually follows is a debate among them as to which church is the best. “I like the new church. They have better potlucks,” one says. “Yeah and there’s more space in the back to run around,” says another approvingly. “But Joseph [their best friend at the bigger church] won’t be there!” says another disappointedly. And so the debate continues.

Compared to other ministerial colleagues, having three churches may seem like a luxury, since some of them have to grapple with half a dozen or more. But once the minister begins to pastor more than one church, the Sabbath worship merry-go-round begins. This impacts the whole family, especially the children who already have various issues to contend with as the children of a pastor.

For me, the development of church growth happened rather quickly. Our main central city church had reached its capacity in size; and the forward-thinking congregation felt the best way to move ahead, rather than investing in a bigger building, was to plant a church. This was done by transplanting 40 members to the northern area of the city. Within a year, the mother church had reached its capacity once again. The excitement of seeing a church borne from within and

prospering had left its mark. So the decision to do the same again was met with little resistance. This time a core group of members settled south of the city.

For evangelism, this was great. Pastorally it meant a complete change in ministerial approach. Three churches in three years seemed like fathering three children in three years!

The impact affected all areas. Each church wanted the full undivided attention of their pastor, and each had good reason for doing so—the central church, because it was the largest; the northern church, because it was in transition; and the southern church, because it was the newest. Therefore, pastoring involved rotating between the three on a weekly basis; hence the reason for the debate among my kids every Sabbath morning.

The impact that pastoring a multichurch district has on the family may not be high on the agenda in any initial church planting seminar or training event. For the ordinary pastor, it is usually a learned experience borne from the pains of seeing the family finding some form of church identity. This perceived status of pastoring several churches at one time can often become elevated at the expense of the stability of the family.

A few months ago I attended a ministers’ meeting at which various clergy from various denominations came together for a special time of prayer. The floor was open to prayer requests, to which one pastor asked for prayers for his teenage son who no longer desired to attend church. It seemed like this request struck a chord among others in attendance and paved the way for an intense time of openness and honesty of ministers to share of their struggles to keep their children engaged in spiritual activities.

It is not uncommon to read of the challenges pastors’ kids (PKs) face and the growing demands and expectations placed upon them in the home, church, and community. Stereotypes still remain. PKs are born into a world of intense demands and expectations. At an early age they begin to experience the pressures of living in a glass house where the eyes of others are always on them. To make matters worse, the congregation can often assume that if their parents are ministers, the kids are spiritual giants by default, able to quote scripture and pray with eloquent words that God hears and to which He responds quickly because they have an inside track to the throne room.

To some degree pastoring a multichurch district can add to these complications. Thinking back to what happens in my home on a Sabbath

morning and listening to my kids debate about which church they prefer, I am aware that if an effective program of church implementation is not done, in which they feel a part of a regular worship and Sabbath School experience in a familiar environment each week, the debate I hear today could very well take a different course in the future.

Some of the effects multichurch pastoring can have on children include the following:

- missing out on special days such as children's day or youth day, due to church rotation
- having to engage with different Sabbath School teachers in different churches each week
- having no real sense of ownership or commitment to one church
- being treated as a regular visitor rather than as a member
- not being able to establish firm and lasting friendships
- decreasing levels of spirituality (or discouragement) that are not detected by other spiritual leaders

A minister's family life revolves around the church programs, obligations, needs, and demands. Children of pastors quickly learn that they live a life of sacrifice. They come to understand that the needs of other people are all too often of greater importance than their own.

When ministering to PKs who have subsequently left the church, I often hear comments such as, "Every time I tried to talk to my dad, all I heard was a sermon." One of the biggest stumbling blocks for children is not so much having to listen to the same sermon in each church but having to hear one kind of preaching from their father in the pulpit but another kind living at home.

Other comments I come across in ministering to children who have left the church include this most frequent response: When asked if there was anything they wished their parents would have done differently, the answer usually is, "I wish my parents would have spent more time at home with me." Proof again that many ministers can often sacrifice their family on the altar of

ministry and that they think that if they are serving God, then He will take care of the family. Although it's true that God does care for the families of pastors in a special way, as parents we must learn to better balance our time for the sake of the family—our first ministry.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of multichurch pastoring, and its effects upon the family, is not so much what happens on the Sabbath; rather, the many ministerial tasks that impact the pastor each day.

How, therefore, does the minister balance the demands of pastoring each church and at the same time ensure that his family is not left with feelings of estrangement and disengagement? A partial answer is to be reminded as to where our priorities ought to lie in the scheme of pastoral responsibilities.

I recently listened to a retired pastor whose successful ministry was widely acclaimed. He spoke of many wonderful things he had experienced in the churches he had served. Then he added, "But I paid a high price for my

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Mike Tucker

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success—my children did not get what they should have from their father and today have turned away from the Lord and the church.”

As he wept, I thought about my children. Do I want them to become another statistic? Do I want to be remembered as a successful multichurch pastor with growing churches, having gained “success” at the expense of losing my own children? Knowing all I know in theory, am I prepared to sacrifice them on the altar of ministry?

Right then and there, God reminded me that in terms of priority, He calls me first to be a father before He calls me to be a pastor. “Great good done for others cannot cancel the debt that he [the minister] owes to God to care for his own children.”¹ My children need to know that next to their mother, they are the most important people in my life. My congregations need to know that also.

What are some possible suggestions for ensuring that children are not caught up in the merry-go-round of church rotation? One of the main adjustments we made as a family was to settle our children in one of the three churches where they could function in the week-to-week development of their worship experience.

A pastor can easily, though unintentionally, neglect the children out of a misguided notion that availability to members takes precedence over all other things, including the family.

Under the best of circumstances there will be some disruptions in a pastor’s home life. The pastor is on call 24 hours a day. If a death or other tragedy involving one of the members occurs just before a pastor heads out the door to take the children fishing, plans must necessarily change. Such demands are to be expected. But depending on their ages, all the children know is that their parent-pastor did not get to go fishing because somebody else needed and received their parent’s time and attention. When these occurrences arise, talk to the children, sympathize with them, and seek to make it up in a reasonable and intentional way. Pastors should intentionally carve out time in

their schedules for their children and guard it scrupulously.

How do such priorities work? This is where there is value in having clearly defined priorities in order to make such adjustments. All of the priorities in my life can function with appropriate importance as long as I keep them in their proper place. But when a lower priority leaps above a higher one, I am

UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES THERE WILL BE SOME DISRUPTIONS IN A PASTOR’S HOME LIFE.

setting myself up for a fall. I cannot be a faithful pastor if I neglect the higher priority of my wife and/or children. In fact, according to 1 Timothy 3:5, “(for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)” (NKJV).

I am disqualified if such neglect characterizes my life. It is spiritually disastrous to put my wife above my Lord, my children above my wife, or my pastoral ministries above any of those. It is no slight to the churches that I serve that their place in my priority comes after my devotion to Christ and family. On the contrary, the churches get more of what they need when I minister out of a conscience committed to these priorities.

By remembering the priorities of these callings in my life I am better able to establish and maintain balance in my obligations. “Nothing can excuse the minister for neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. The spiritual welfare of his family comes first.”²

No matter how much I try to juggle between the demands of my churches, it seems there will always be more to be done. Some good things that scream out for attention should be left undone so that I can do what is better and best. When I have to make those hard choices, I do so on the basis of the priority of my

calling. Then I can take heart that I have acted in faith based on claims that God has made on my life.

The benefits of such a priority-led ministry can yield great rewards in all areas concerned. It challenges churches to take the initiative to develop lay-led ministries, with the pastor providing a training and supervisory role. “The minister should not feel that it is his duty

to do all the talking and all the laboring and all the praying . . . but . . . to educate workers in every church.”³

The benefit to the pastor’s family, however, can be redemptive. One multichurch PK remarked, “I’ve had a unique perspective on the church, as I’ve seen hundreds of people touched by God, saved from their sins, and lives turned around. I’ve seen God make a difference.”

Another amusingly remarked, “I have the most well-developed hearing since I’ve had to sit through hundreds of sermons and listen to thousands of solos. I also have very discerning taste buds, given that I’ve been to hundreds of potluck dinners. I can quickly identify the best bean casseroles and even tell what foods have been frozen for hundreds of years!”

How else can we find that balance? It calls for a conscientious, committed, praying parent who is guided by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. ■

1 Ellen White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1892), 204.

2 Ibid.

3 Ellen White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Assn., 1995), 264.

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ABUSE

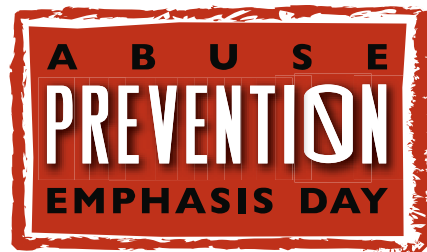
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Frantic plans and desperate measures

Bill Bossert

Men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do . . ."
(1 Chronicles 12:32, NIV).

Recently, I walked through a downtown section of a small community here in central Wisconsin. I was shocked to see that within just a few blocks of each other, five church buildings stood without their congregations. They had been transformed into law offices, an art museum, and the like. Each congregation had either folded or merged with some other struggling group. It was a very sobering walk that day.

The Wausau church, where I am pastoring, seemed to have had a similar destiny. Twenty-five years earlier, it was a thriving church family. The membership numbers, however, told the awful truth of steady year-by-year decline. We all could see that the congregation was aging. Monte Sahlin calls it the "graying of Adventism."¹ He could have been observing our church family. We were slipping each year more and more into a boomer/builder congregation. We were also discouraged, frustrated, and didn't know what to do about it. All our previous efforts had pretty much failed.

The temptation, of course, was to panic. But we had already pushed the panic button, and nothing had changed for the better. Some of us wanted to do something very quickly to fix the problem, because desperate times called for desperate measures. Others seemed resigned to

the inevitable. Who should be designated to turn out the lights for the last time?

But over the next three years, the Wausau church turned completely around. Remarkably, it actually found within itself those "men of Issachar." It found the men and women who came to understand the times, and then worked diligently to know what to do. It worked, and today the Wausau church has blossomed and grown. It turned from lots of empty pews into not knowing where everyone is going to sit. In times past, attendance lagged way behind membership. Now, attendance far exceeds membership. Today, more people under age 45 than over age 45 attend. The children's divisions are overflowing with eager, happy participants. Skeptics who wondered if anything would ever change are shocked.

Those who know the story and have witnessed the changes in Wausau often ask, "How in the world did you do that?" That's a good question. We had nothing really special to bring to the table. We are, and were, just a normal struggling church with normal people. No supertalented, supereducated leaders. We're just people from the heartland of America. But we were determined to do something, and we begged the Lord to lead us out of our impending disaster.

There were several things that helped us as we made our journey. Here is what we learned. Perhaps it will be helpful.

Who's to blame, and who's responsible?

It was a crucial first step for us to find out who was to blame and who was responsible for the serious problem we were in. In coaching other church groups, we have discovered that, like us, they tend to blame a lot of people and programs that are actually not part of the problem. Yet, they are frequently targeted as the culprits. Usually, these blamed leaders were not present, so it was a lot easier to verbalize the accusations.

You could probably add your usual suspects to the following list, but we felt that it was important to us to let these (and many others) off the blame hook. It really was a giant step forward toward addressing our issues and problems to not bring them up for blame anymore.

The last evangelist who had meetings at the church. Yes, the one who worked so hard to baptize only four or five people who didn't "stick" with it very long. The very one we had agreed wouldn't be very effective even before he started. We all agreed he was not the problem.



Bill Bossert, D.Min., at the time of this writing, was pastor of The Shepherd's House: An Adventist Community of Love, Wausau, Wisconsin, United States.

The conference/denominational leadership. We did give them half of 1 percent blame. But even at that, they really were not the problem.

The lack of spirituality among the members. We acknowledged that we all could get closer to Jesus in our personal walk. Suggesting that it's a lack of spirituality may be just a way of excusing doing nothing about the problem. The hope would be that if we all could "get more spiritual" the problem would be solved. We took this off the table believing we had plenty of spirituality to know we had to follow Jesus. We did this not in arrogance but in humble submission to Him.

The community is just too secular. We asked ourselves if we thought Jesus had written off our community. It was easy to look around and see evidences that He hadn't. We saw that He was indeed working in our community—we just weren't a part of that.

The mass Adventist media. We've handed out tracts and books, blanketed our town with TV and radio, put *Signs*

magazine news boxes at key spots—you name it. They didn't do the trick to make our church grow. We had accepted the fact that they were not the problem.

It was a bitter pill to swallow, but we had to admit we were to blame. The reason people, even our own young adults, were not walking into our church was what we were doing. That hurt. Our young adults told us that church was "boring." We later learned that really meant the church wasn't relevant to their lives. Why should they bother?

But the truth of facing who is to blame was somehow freeing. Recognizing the truth was our first step into taking responsibility for what happened or didn't happen at our church. Oh, we saw glimpses of the Lord working in our church family, but it seemed He was doing it in spite of us or outside our ministries.

What really is the problem?

It would seem this is the easiest part: defining the problem. And quickly we started saying what we thought (knew)

the problem was. Actually, we didn't really know. Congregations often think they know exactly what their problem is and how to fix it. Although they may come close at times to some of the issues, generally we all tend to miss the heart of it completely.

We determined not to do the "quick" fix but pour time and effort into seeing if we could discover what the problem really was within our church and out in our community at large. Although it wasn't rocket science, it did take some careful digging. Our research, data gathering, and study took almost four months. As we worked on it, a clearer picture of what had happened and why it happened opened before us. One of our elders exclaimed at just such a discovery work session, "Now I know why my kids don't come to church anymore. I can't believe how clueless I was. I finally get it!"

After we discovered what we thought were the issues in our growth problem, we didn't immediately jump into fixing them. Carefully, we built a process of change² that would hopefully make a

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significant difference in the life of our church and keep our congregation together. We had already learned that creating frantic plans and implementing desperate measures were ministry program killers. We knew that if we weren't careful, we could split the church and have a dogfight on our hands. We also knew that a lot of us were skeptical that anything could really change and that many were somewhat insulated to any new ideas proposed.

Our change process

1. *Don't assume you know what the problem is.* This is the most crucial place to start real change. Most of the churches want to skip the first four steps in our process. We have learned that to do so can spell for a quick failure or lead to conflict and disaster. Starting here also helps the pastor move from being the "person with the correct answer," to just another traveler taking the discovery journey with the church family. The pastor needs to be a fellow traveler, not the expert. This keeps the issues from being clouded with personal agendas. This helps so much in allowing the church family to take ownership of the process, and to not just be dragged along as participants in another of the pastor's new programs.

2. *Gather as much data as you can before drawing any conclusions.* The more details and facts we gathered, the easier it was to see the true scope of the problem we faced. We checked out everything we could find including our community demographics with the United States Census online data.³ Our church clerk gave us our church's demographics that included our membership, membership attendance at worship, and the attendance at worship of nonmembers,⁴ as well. We wanted to know if our church reflected the community demographics around us. It did not. Facts and details here can be a pastor's friend, as it relates to helping the church accept the case for change. I didn't have to convince our church we needed change. The facts did that work for me. I just had to travel along with them toward the obvious conclusion.

Voices From The Shepherd's House

The pastor and members of The Shepherd's House practice innovative forms of evangelism in their neighboring communities, and they are effectively making a difference worldwide.

According to one of their church members, Melissa Crownover, The Shepherd's House has actively engaged the Hmong population for ministry. They have also intentionally sought out individuals who have family members who are deployed overseas, to establish person-to-person contact, meeting their needs as best as they can.

Every Saturday morning, during the Sabbath School lesson study time, several members go to a nearby Barnes and Noble bookstore. There they select a religious book and conduct what is akin to a book club meeting. The target group is college-age students. On average, about 15 students attend on a weekly basis; and one was recently baptized.

She said that her dream for The Shepherd's House is being realized: a church that is open to and accepting of everyone and that serves everyone in the community.

According to Mark Krueger, the head elder of the church, there is more involvement from those members who have been on the edges of church life. "The church needs to leave the building and impact the community." In addition to the busy life that a head elder leads, by virtue of the office, Krueger also drives others' children to the church school; and that is another form of ministry that he assumes.

These are just a few of the things that The Shepherd's House is attempting with success. Perhaps some of these ideas might work for your church, or might spark other thoughts that could work for you.

3. *See who is missing.* We took the church clerk's reports and pitched the names listed there into the common generational groupings. We could easily divide our whole group into five categories (builder, boomer, buster, bridget, children).⁵ Placing the data results in a bar chart made it easy for all to see exactly where we were not being effective. Clearly, our huge hole was reaching young adults. That missing group of people affected everything in the church. It was most visible every Sabbath in our children's divisions and our youth ministries.

4. *Start reading.* Once we knew exactly who was not attending, we then went in search of current information and solid research on how to reach that group. We read books by authors such as Roger Dudley, Dan Kimball, Brian McLaren, Reggie McNeal, Loren Mead, Thom Rainer, and Mike Regele. We looked for everything we could find on how to reach the young adults who were right around us. But once we started

reading the wealth of information on the postmodern culture and its effects on young adults, we saw a much larger picture. We quickly saw that we needed help (1) to address the larger issues (the effects of postmodernism on our church) and (2) to accomplish a number of needed changes. We learned that we could change the way we did church and yet not compromise our faith. Understanding this helped relieve a lot of anxiety among us.

5. *Start making a list of areas that need to be addressed.* This is exactly where most churches want to start fixing the problem. We had to fight the urge to quickly fix it without doing our homework first. Even today, it is still a temptation as we continue to progress on our journey. But we frequently asked ourselves if we are again trying to do the "quick fix." We firmly believe real change cannot happen without carefully doing the preceding four steps first.

Once we had done our initial homework and got a good handle on the

reading, the list of what we needed to do was more reliable, easier to create, and more workable to implement. For us, we had to do something immediately about our boring (irrelevant) worship service. We clearly understood that if people couldn't encounter the Living God at our worship services, then something was desperately wrong. For other churches, it may be other things that are blocking effective growth, but the worship service frequently needs addressing.

Working together, we developed a list of about eight items to start. Since then, we have kept adding other items to that list. Our process of change continues even today. It really must. If you're doing the same thing now you were doing a year ago, you're falling behind. We understand that our society is in constant change. Therefore, we must move ahead and adapt our methods as well.

6. *Decide, as a group, what to do first.* We all recognized that we had to think

first of the needs of those born after 1964. Yet, we didn't want to alienate our stalwart group of builders. We carefully crafted an 18-month strategy to keep all our members informed and moving together. The development of information that everyone could understand was crucial. This element of change brought people together by meeting in small groups in people's homes after our worship service. We divided our church family into those small meeting groups (8–12) to share a potluck lunch and chat through the issues with a prepared discussion leader. We sought input and permission from all our generational groups to move forward. At those sessions, people were allowed to ask questions, express their concerns, be heard, and receive information.

Since we are in the process of changing all the time, it is important for us to move together. Today we still work our process, but it is much easier now when

people understand we're not going to dive off the deep end, and that what we are talking about they can have a part in making it happen. Through working the process, we have established trust and confidence in where we are and where we want to go. Of course, it's really not possible to get 100 percent on board, but we are close to it.

7. *Remember that change brings conflict.* We all knew that change would bring some conflict. By taking our time and bringing people along with us, we avoided a lot of incoming flak. Some at first grumbled about things being different than what they were used to. Some weren't sure if we were changing simply to justify abandoning our Adventist roots somewhere down the line. Some thought we were trying to be "like

the world." Some thought we were just trying to be popular. Time and process, however, helped settle those fears—to change the culture of our church. Our membership would tell you now that they believe the changes we made were Spirit-led.

8. *Keep moving forward. Don't give up.* There were times when we felt like giving up. Turning a church around is just plain hard work. When challenged in meetings about what we were trying to do, we knew we had to do a better job at providing information, a better job listening to the members' concerns, and a better job seeing if the Lord was really the careful Prompter behind the question. When we grew weary at times, we would remind ourselves of our predicament. That would push us forward again. We sought to have the longing desire for our community that is found in the heart of Christ. We knew we just couldn't give up if He was still out there working.

Here at The Shepherd's House, we believe we're at the beginning of our adventure, not at the end. There is an excitement about what may be just around the corner for us. We are being more aggressive in looking around us to find where the Lord is working right now in our community. We want to know how we can go to where He is and how we can work together with Him. We have determined that we want to actually follow Christ into our community. We know that if we keep doing the same things over and over again, we're not where He is. He is on the move. We believe we should be too. ■

For further study

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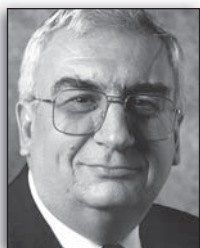
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- 2 See John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).
- 3 *U.S. Census 2000 Demographic Profiles* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Available from <http://censtats.census.gov/>
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- 5 See Gary L. McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002).

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Caring for the finances of the global church

Nikolaus Satelmajer



Nikolaus Satelmajer, editor of *Ministry*, speaks with the treasurers of the General Conference.

Editor's note: Church finances, as operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is a complex task. From the time E. S. Walker was elected as the first treasurer of the General Conference in May 1863 to the present, the church has had 24 treasurers—all of them with their associates carrying the mandate of being efficient stewards of the church's finances worldwide. In 1863 Adventists gave \$8,000 in tithe; last year, the worldwide tithe alone amounted to US\$1,602,733,957. Add to this various freewill offerings, gifts, and asset growths, and the church has an enormous responsibility to manage the finances, to care for the rapidly growing work around the globe, and to plan for the future. Currently this work is cared for by a worldwide team of treasurers. At the church headquarters, the financial leadership consists of Treasurer Robert Lemon (RL); Undertreasurer Steven Rose (SR); Associate Treasurers George Egwakhe (GE), Jose Lizardo (JL), Daisy Orion (DO), Juan Prestol (JP), and Roy Ryan (RR).¹

Because of the tremendous impact of church finances on the worldwide mission of the church, the editor of *Ministry*, Nikolaus Satelmajer (NS), recently had a conversation with the church's world treasury leadership. Excerpts:

NS: How does your work as treasurers impact your spiritual life?

RL: I'd say it's more the other way. How does my spiritual life affect my work as a treasurer? My

spiritual priorities make me look at my work from the perspective of ministry rather than simply one of financial management.

SR: To see how the Lord blesses, how He continues His work through tithes and offerings given by faithful members of the church, is faith affirming. It's just been wonderful for me to see this for so many years. God always makes the resources available.

JL: Seeing over the years how God has enabled the church worldwide to overcome many financial challenges has impacted my spiritual life. Nothing is impossible for God.

RR: Often I have seen that the Lord works with human beings even in their weakest moments. This is particularly so when the core spiritual relationship with the Lord remains true and unwavering. That relationship helps us to discern not only the difference between right and wrong, but also to act in such a way that even in difficult and challenging moments, one maintains one's basic spiritual relationship with God, and others. Such a spiritual stance, based on a redemptive relationship, has impacted my work as a treasurer.

NS: The General Conference treasury team consists of a treasurer, one undertreasurer, five associate treasurers, and other staff members. As treasurers, what are your primary areas of responsibility? Bob Lemon, you're the treasurer. Is it fair to say that the overall responsibility for the financial operation rests with you?

RL: Yes, but it is a team work. I have certain areas that I work with more closely, such as Loma Linda and other boards.

GE: I take care of the General Conference capital budget, insurance, training of treasurers, and I am manager of General Conference sessions.

JL: My main responsibility is to take care of the missionaries around the world, known more recently as interdivision employees.

NS: And that's quite a few individuals, isn't it?

JL: We have more than eight hundred paid interdivision workers.

DO: I'm in charge of corporate matters. I am the secretary of the corporation—the legal entity

that holds properties and takes care of legal matters on behalf of the General Conference.²

RR: I care for the investments of the church. I also deal with property development and provide consultation wherever needed.

SR: The traditional role of the under-treasurer is budgeting, and as such I care for the world budget, the in-house budget, and various cost centers at the church headquarters. I also serve on the Andrews University board and the Review and Herald Publishing Association board.

JP: My responsibilities are mostly in the North American Division. I also take care of a few cost centers at the General Conference.

NS: What percentage of the tithe received from around the world is used for the actual operation of the General Conference world headquarters here at Silver Spring, Maryland, United States?

SR: Two percent. That's our cap. We've always been under that. Last year, our actual operation was one-point-ninety-four percent of the world tithe.

RL: If you include tithe and all offerings, it is less than one and a half percent.

NS: Has that been a fairly constant percentage, or has it been up and down?

RL: Before 1992 the percentage was higher. In 1992, there was a limit put on the operating expense for the General Conference, which at that time was four-point-twenty-five percent of what we received from North America, and one percent from the overseas divisions. Even that amounted to more than the two percent. Then in the year 2000 we moved to the two percent cap.

NS: Do you give guidance to the conferences, unions, and divisions about keeping a healthy balance between office operations and field operations?

RL: As part of our work, each of us is assigned liaison responsibility to one or two of the divisions, and we work closely with the treasurers of those divisions.

NS: Roy Ryan, since you deal with investments, what principles govern the way church funds are invested? What measures are employed to safeguard church funds?

RR: We're interested in safeguarding the

funds that come to the General Conference. The funds come for different kinds of activities and it is those objectives that govern the length of the investment time. So we use a diversification of managements and styles, diversification in terms of the number and type of companies to guide our investment. We are also careful to ensure that the values of the companies in whose stocks we invest are not at odds with the values of the church. For example, we cannot invest in companies that are involved in pornography, gambling, tobacco, alcohol, meat, caffeinated beverages, etc.

NS: A specific question to Steve Rose and Juan Prestol. Historically, the church in North America has been a major contributor for the operation of the worldwide church. How significant is that contribution? To what extent are the other parts of the world becoming self-sufficient?

JP: The church in North America has been and continues to be a strong supporter of the mission of the world church. North America may be contributing around seventy-five to eighty percent of the world budget of the General Conference.

SR: Close to eighty percent.

JP: And this, in spite of the fact that the church membership percentage in North America is becoming smaller and smaller. Right now, North America has about seven percent of the world membership, but supports eighty percent of the world budget. That's quite a strong support.

SR: Strong indeed. But tithe from other parts of the world is increasing. There are some divisions that have been very intentional about self-support. I'm sure some parts of the world will always be dependent on other sources, but the change in the tithe sharing that took place in the last quinquennium (2000–2005) has caused the world divisions to send more of their tithe to the world budget. North America's percentage of tithe contribution is steadily

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Bob Lemon

reduced so that there is more sharing from outside of North America for the world budget. The divisions are carefully working with their fields to try to move toward self-support, but for some it will be a long process.

RL: Three or four years ago divisions other than North America surpassed North America on the mission offerings. And the percentage of tithe worldwide—not what comes to the General Conference because we get eight percent from North America and two percent from the others—the percentage of total tithe from the world has also shown an increase. Juan, what's your tithe from North America?

JP: About eight hundred and sixty million dollars.

RL: Eight hundred and sixty million, and the total for the world field is one-point-sixty-six billion. So the tithe from divisions other than the North American Division is approaching that of North America and it will soon pass that, simply because of the membership growth.

NS: If a church member is interested in knowing about the finances of the church, what information is available to the member? Are budgets and statements available?

SR: If someone wants a financial statement, we'll be happy to send one. Our Web site does not carry such information.³

RL: We often send out copies of the financial statement. We can share a copy of the budget if an individual asks for it. For security reasons, we do not put these statements on the Web.

RR: On occasion we have provided a list of the investments, not the amounts, but a listing of the companies at that point in time. But the list is not permanent, as changes in investments occur continually.

NS: I want to focus on auditing, which has certainly been a topic of discussion, particularly in the U.S. corporate world. Can you inform our readers about the process of auditing in the church? How

would you compare this to what is done in the business world in general? Are we using similar standards or is this just an in-house auditing, as some people seem to think?

RL: The General Conference is not audited by the General Conference auditors, but by an external auditing firm. Thus our audit

is an independent audit. We have set up an audit committee that is made up of lay people as well as denominational employees. No one on the General Conference Audit Committee is an employee of the General Conference. In addition, the General Conference



George Egwakhe

JP: Our process for disclosing financial information is mandated by the by-laws. The by-laws instruct treasury to disclose the statements through the audit review committee and the executive committee. We are also required to provide such statements to the constituencies, and this we do at the level of the constituency whenever we have a constituency session. At the General Conference Session there is a full disclosure. In other words, the by-laws dictate how we should disclose the information.

NS: At the Annual Council and Spring Council,⁴ which are open to the public, individuals may attend and receive financial reports.

Auditing Service, which does a majority of the audits around the world, is probably more independent than most independent auditing firms, and



Steven Rose and Daisy Orion

certainly has high quality of service and follows GAAS⁵ in their audits, which are the accepted standards.

JL: According to a professional, who is not an employee of the church, our system ranks very high among not-for-profit organizations.

RL: Just a comment from the chair of the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) board who is a layperson, a professor of accounting at a non-Adventist university and who has worked on government commissions in the area of accountability and auditing. He stated at a farewell function for Eric Korff, who retired earlier this year as the director of the General Conference Auditing Service, that GCAS meets the gold standard of ethics when it comes to auditing.

NS: All of you have worked in different parts of the world—three to five countries, I understand. Except for one, six of you were born outside the United States: Bolivia, Congo, Dominican Republic (two), Nigeria, and the Philippines. That brings in quite an international flavor and expertise to the treasury team.

JL: Even the one who was born in the United States has overseas mission experience. It's a plus, all around.

RR: I spent most of my working career outside the U.S. Twenty-three years in all.

NS: As you look at the financial picture of the church, what are some of the encouraging trends worldwide?

SR: We like the new trend in mission offering. It's positive and upbeat. The office of Adventist Mission—their reports, DVDs, and continued promotion—has helped bring about this change. We're getting the story out better.

RR: Another positive trend I have noticed is the willingness of church administration, and more significantly



Juan Prestol (foreground) and Roy Ryan

Photo: Heerly Mayr

the lay members, to take a look at the land the church owns as an asset to be managed. Increasingly the question is faced: Can we do whatever's being done at a given site in another location, because the present site, purchased years ago, has become an extremely valuable piece of land which if sold can generate large amounts of money that can be ploughed into the new facility and other mission-oriented projects of the church. This is something we've not addressed in the past. Now we see more conversations and an openness to take into consideration how to turn our fixed assets into avenues of fulfillment of the larger mission of the church.

RL: What this means is re-investing in property and buildings wisely and more productively. For example, we may have a church or facility in one place. Those who used those facilities have moved away and may be commuting to it or may have transferred to another church. The property, however, has great value but is being underused. It can be sold and a better facility built in a more appropriate place, and we may still have

money to do other projects.

NS: Are there some trends that cause you to pray, "Lord, I'm a little concerned"?

DO: While slow membership growth in some parts of the world may be a cause for concern, we need to be thankful for the opening of the work in many areas of the Ten/Forty Window.⁶

GE: Another cause for concern is that rapid growth in membership does not see a corresponding growth in stewardship.

NS: So there needs to be an emphasis on the total package. Will we ever have enough funds?

RR: The church has grown and become what it has because of the faith with which our leaders and members have stepped out and affirmed that God will complete His work. We are not entirely clear where the funds will come from, but we are confident that the Lord is leading this work and that He will provide. If we ever come to a place where there are more than enough funds, then there's something wrong with the focus of how we view mission.

NS: Thus our goal is not to accumulate funds but rather to complete the mission, and that's not going to be done until the Lord comes.

RR: The Lord blesses us with resources with the full intention that they be used, not that they be hoarded. But the challenge of the vast mission yet to be accomplished must keep us on our knees and look up to see the Lord open the way. Faith builds as well as hopes.

JP: We always have more plans than what we have money for, and I believe that until the end, our plans will exceed the assets that we have.

NS: That's been the case from the very beginning of the church, hasn't it?

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SR: Yes, that's what forces us to prioritize, to work diligently, and to pray for greater things.

NS: What I gather from our conversation thus far is that you consider your work in church finances as really a spiritual ministry. It's not just the management of money for the sake of managing, but rather being stewards of God's resources.

RR: If our work is just managing money, there are jobs outside that we could do and get paid a lot more. We are here to participate in the mission and growth of the church, and as the Lord leads this church, to be involved in church finance is pretty much a spiritual experience.

JL: This is not a job, this is a calling.

NS: So, when you succeed in your work, you don't get rewarded with bonuses. What's your reward?

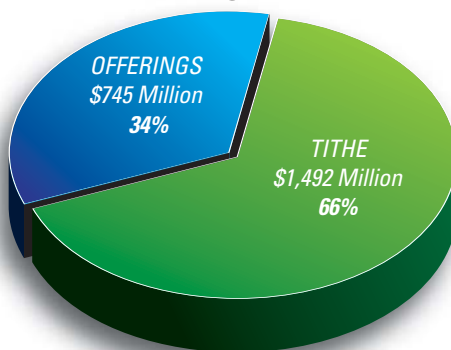
RR: Satisfaction.

RL: Quite often, people have asked me, "As treasurer of the church, what causes you not to sleep at night?" My response has been, I don't have problems sleeping at night, because if I thought I was in charge of it, I wouldn't sleep at all, but the Lord's in charge. The cattle on a thousand hills are His, everything is His, and the only thing we miss when we don't return our tithes and offerings is the blessings He has promised us.

NS: Well, I have one last question. Our readers are ministers in various roles—ministers who pastor ten, fifteen or twenty churches; pastors of small congregations, large congregations; and ministerial teachers and conference administrators. *Ministry* literally goes around the world. If you could say something to that group of readers, what would you say?

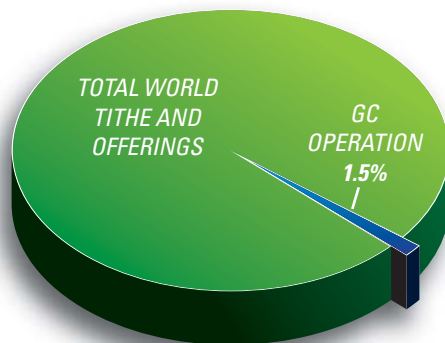
JP: They should become more familiar with how the church functions around the world, how it makes enormous efforts to maintain integrity, to preserve

Worldwide Tithe & Offerings 2005



General Conference Headquarters' Operating

Compared to Total World Tithe and Offerings



assets, and to accomplish the mission in a responsible fashion. Their faith in the church will lead them to encourage members to be faithful as good stewards.

RR: Pastors are absolutely essential to the success of the church. Without them, it would be difficult to provide all of the services that a pastor provides to a local congregation. Without pastors and the leadership skills they bring, the spiritual life they bring into a congregation, the example they set, there simply wouldn't be any resources for us to manage. Yes, the Lord will finish the work; the lay members have a central role in the life of the church; but the pastors do carry a vital responsibility in nurturing the church and leading her to fulfill its given mission.

RL: The ministry to our members is what it's all about, but at the same time, there are areas that we have to enter in the world where we don't have work and we don't have local pastors. In churches that have a vision of a finished work in the whole world, we don't have trouble with local resources and we don't have trouble with resources that are shared. None of us is going home until all of us go home. Although, we all must do what we can locally, I have never found a church to be weak if it also sees a clear vision of the finished work.

RR: It was outward focus that brought us to where we are. When that focus is limited to within, we see a church that stagnates and doesn't grow. As my concern is expressed for others beyond my own group, we find a church that is healthy and vibrant. The pastor has an essential role to keep the focus on the worldwide mission of the church. ❑

- 1 Since this interview, Steve Rose has taken the position of vice president for finance at Walla Walla College, and Juan Prestol has become the General Conference undertreasurer.
- 2 Similar corporations exist at various levels of the church organization, each responsible for legal and property matters within the local organizational jurisdictions.
- 3 If you wish to obtain a financial statement, please contact the controller of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- 4 Both of these are meetings of the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Annual Council brings together all the members (about 300) and the Spring Council brings together about 100.
- 5 GAAS stands for Generally Accepted Auditing Standards, which are drawn up by the AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants).
- 6 The imaginary rectangle called the 10/40 Window is located between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north of the equator, and stretches from West Africa through the Middle East and into Asia. Two-thirds of the world's population live here and they are the world's poorest people—the vast majority of whom have never even heard the name of Jesus.

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Finding Bethany

Brant Berglin



Brant Berglin pastors the Second Mile and Eagle River Valley Adventist Churches, Anchorage, Alaska, United States.

I write this from the solace of Bethany, my personal “Bethany,” that is.

Our pastoral district is more than a six-hour drive away from here, and I’m truly resting for the first time in weeks. My wife, children, and I have taken a short vacation over a long weekend and are staying in the home of a Christian family—long-time friends. They have opened their home to us, annually, for several years as a pastoral retreat. Because he is an elder in his church and she is a pastor’s daughter, they understand well our needs.

During Jesus’ ministry across the Judean countryside, He found lodging in the town of Bethany with Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus.¹ There was a special connection between them. When Lazarus was sick, the message came to Jesus from Bethany reporting, “Lord, the one You love is sick.” The closeness of this relationship is evidenced further by His raising Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus depended on the willing hospitality of His followers as He traveled, and in Bethany Jesus found open hearts and a warm hearth. Here, Jesus could escape the clamoring multitudes, the constant testing of His enemies, even the worldly ambitions of His followers who wished to crown Him as their earthly King.²

If Jesus needed time away, then so must those who have taken Jesus’ yoke upon themselves. Ministers today must follow the path of the Master, even when it leads to breaks in the action, to moments of peace in the storm, to resting instead of running.

Tangible benefits

In over ten years of pastoral ministry, I’ve rarely found any times to be really convenient for vacations. But not taking vacation has been detrimental to my family, to me, and to my ministry. Being here in “Bethany,” however, has uncovered the most wonderful gold mine of benefits. Here are a just a few:

Because our host-home is a considerable distance away in the best of Alaskan driving weather, my family has time to connect during the road trip. There are moose, caribou, and eagles to watch for, songs to sing together, worships to enjoy, and stories to tell the kids. We share with each other in much-needed ways, while creating some wonderful memories.

Putting space (350 miles, in this case) between me and my home city gives me a larger vision for the challenges awaiting my return. Some challenges, which seemed unanswerable while immersed in them, now appear clearer as I step outside them for a few days.

At home, the telephone is a tool for connecting with people, yet the ring often signals more demands on a pastor’s time. But here, with our friends, the telephone ceases to dictate my days. Few people in my district know where I am; only the elders and conference secretary have the phone number (for emergencies only!). Several days without a phone call do wonders for this pastor’s sanity and the willingness to receive them when I return home.

I find physical rest and health here as well. The agenda for each day consists of whatever we choose. Nothing else. Though we spend time enjoying the outdoors with our hosts—cross-country skiing in winter; or canoeing, hiking, and biking in summer—the energy expenditure isn’t draining. Rather, with so few expectations, the adventures refresh and rejuvenate us. In addition, the meals are healthy, mouthwatering, and plentiful. We arrive home healthier and more rested than when we left.

Finally, I find that, in ministering to us, our host family receives a blessing. They feel that caring for us helps spread the gospel more effectively in areas they cannot go themselves. Our time together always seems to enrich both of our families as we share our trials and faith and encourage each other. What a model of the body of Christ in action this family has been to us!

No doubt, you could add more, but these are real gifts of healing to me, mentally, spiritually, and physically.

continued on bottom of page 21

Moses and the wilderness district: six guidelines of district pastoring as seen in the Exodus

Felix Vecchiarelli IV



Felix Vecchiarelli IV is pastor of the Kinlichee and Window Rock Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Arizona, United States.

As a district pastor, you think you have it hard? Compared to Moses, the first district pastor, your job may not be all that difficult.

Moses wasn't just to get the children of Israel out of Egypt; he had to get "Egypt" out of Israel. Now, it's true that your job is basically the same. The only problem, however, was that Israel was not a few hundred tithe-paying, Sabbath-keeping, Jesus-centered parishioners. Moses was to lead hundreds of thousands of mostly unconverted men, women, children out of four hundred years of paganism and bondage!

Let us not forget how the story ends, either. Headaches and all, Israel crossed the Jordan, conquered Canaan, and lived in the Promised Land. Though Moses had to wait for his entrance into the true Promised Land, his task was complete. The people whom he led—his sheep—were safe and sound at home.

How did he do it? What can today's district pastor learn from the wilderness wanderings? The following are six guidelines of district pastoring that we learn from his incredible journey.

Never forget you represent God

In Exodus 3, notice how many times God says "I." God was going to work for His people. He was personally involved. His power and love would bring salvation. At the same time there is one crucial "you" in all this. In Exodus 3:12 God tells Moses, "When you have brought the people out of Egypt . . ." (NKJV, emphasis supplied).

God would accomplish His work through Moses. Most Israelites would never see or speak with God. They would, however, speak with and see Moses. The people of Israel learned about the character of God from Moses; thus, their understanding of God largely depended upon the actions and words of Moses.

Whether you are standing at the pulpit, shopping, driving, or sitting in the comfort of your own home—you represent God. Your actions and words represent God to all who come in contact with you—from church members to members of the community. You and I represent a God who is holy; therefore, God's holiness should be our characteristic as well.

It is all the more important for a district pastor. You have two or more congregations and two or more communities, which means your influence is felt in many places.

Remember the family

Leviticus 10 tells the story of Nadab and Abihu. God has very specific words for those who serve Him in the sanctuary. " 'By those who come near Me / I must be regarded as holy; / And before all the people / I must be glorified' " (Leviticus 10:3, NKJV).

We could discuss several reasons why this is important. But let us just focus on one major issue: pastors' children, and that applies to many pastors. The fact that God had to remind Aaron of these essential steps immediately after his sons were destroyed tells us that Aaron was at least partially responsible for his children's doom. A district pastor may face this issue even more than other pastors. The children of district pastors have more strikes against them because in most cases one parent is gone more hours than other pastors are. Even worse, the children are in different churches every Sabbath. Thus, regarding God as holy and glorifying God at all times is a must for the district pastor because of the lasting impression it will leave on the children.

Speak for God, not for yourself

Too many times a district pastor puts too little attention on the sermon due to the time spent attending to the churches. In order to make up time, pastors have come up with many different ways to write their sermons. There are Web sites and books from which to get sermons; or, pastors will use the same sermon over and over; or, pastors will rely too much on stories and testimonies. Though these have their places, from the life of Moses we can see that there is at least one better way to handle the sermon.

As we said, Israel's understanding of God, to a certain degree, depended upon the actions and words of Moses, especially when Moses would begin a sermon by a "Thus says the Lord." Moses focused regularly on the word of God, even when it didn't make sense. Moses was told to part a sea, to strike a rock for water, to place manna in the ark, to call out plagues, etc. Moses listened to God's word, and it always worked.

There was one time, though, when Moses did not obey God's word. God told Moses to command the rock to spew water for the people of Israel. Moses struck the rock, instead of commanding it, as told—and as a result of his disobedience he was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land. When a pastor turns from the Word of God, the consequences can be devastating. Sermons must be Bible-centered, and the pastor must spend time in the Word in order to get the sermons the congregation needs to hear.

Turn your congregation's eyes upon Jesus

When Israel was hungry, manna (living bread) fell from heaven. When Israel was thirsty, they were led to the rock. When Israel was bitten by snakes, they turned their eyes upon the bronze serpent. When Israel was in trouble, they turned to God.

Since time at a given church is limited, in-home visits and in-office visits are so much more important.

Finding Bethany continued from page 19

Finding your Bethany

Was I simply fortunate to find such caring friends and a place of retreat? After all, not every minister has such options. That's true, but with a few minutes of time and research, you can probably discover your own personal Bethany.

First, try to locate a place to which you can get away—a place that is a substantial distance from your district and where your family can stay for several nights. Some may give clergy discounts, and perhaps you'll find a

Turn each member's eyes toward Jesus. Preach about any biblical issue you want: lifestyle, prophecy, or history. But always tie every thought to Christ. Appeals are vital. Ask your congregation to stand for Christ. Remind your church members that when they walk out the door of the sanctuary, they must live for Christ. Make Christ the foundation of your ministry.

Establish leadership to direct in your absence

Moses didn't take the container of manna into the sanctuary. Moses didn't spy on the Promised Land. Moses never killed a lamb during the Day of Atonement service. Moses did not build the sanctuary. At the same time, Moses did not shape and mold a golden calf. Moses also never led the people to revolt. The church is the body; you can't be the hand, neck, back, ribs, and feet all by yourself.

Get your members active. Get the churches involved in their communities. Let them do the work, even if you must watch it closely. Don't run every ministry; rather, guide every ministry, be involved, give advice, but let the church members do the work. Pastors should not be concerned or feel anxious with members running ministries, as long as they have chosen Christ-centered men and women. The church must learn to rely upon Jesus, not upon you or me. A healthy body has every part working for good.

Christian proprietor who can be sensitive to your needs.

Another option would be to call the pastor of another district, perhaps outside your conference. Explain what you're looking for, and ask what possibilities he suggests. It may open up an opportunity for each of you to minister to other's families in turn!

If a neighboring conference has a year-round staffed camp, perhaps it could serve as your personal Bethany. The key here is to find a place that is comfortable and far enough away to feel at rest.

Look to the reward

Hebrews 11 tells the story of how faith led the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Old Testament. Listed among them is Moses. We are told that Moses chose to suffer for Christ rather than enjoy the rewards of this world. Verse 26 says that Moses looked to the reward. Through the wilderness wandering, he faced a lot of trials and headaches. Outsiders, Israelites, and even family members persecuted and rebelled against Moses, yet he kept his eyes on the prize and kept the people moving toward the Promised Land.

A district pastor will most likely face a lot of pressure, a lot of work, and plenty of headaches. But keep your eyes on the reward. Choose to suffer affliction in the name of Christ—knowing that every day we work for Jesus, the Promised Land gets a little closer. Our job is a special one. We tend to God's church even if they are two or more small congregations. Our eyes and the eyes of the church must be kept on preparation for heaven.

Conclusion

Sure, being a district pastor is hard. Just ask Moses. But just as Moses, despite setbacks, succeeded, we too can succeed. Moses had some hard lessons to learn. No doubt we will also. Let's study his life, his trials, and from them learn to better lead our sheep through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. **M**

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However you do it, if Jesus needed His own Bethany, be sure that you do, too. **M**

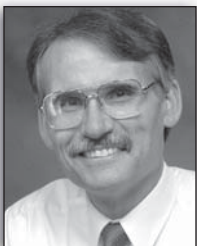
- 1 See Luke 10:38–42 and John 11. Jesus possibly lodged in their home on other occasions, such as Matthew 21:17. It was also in Bethany that Mary anointed the feet of Jesus in the home of Simon the leper (cf. Matthew 26:6–13 and Mark 14:3).
- 2 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), 524.

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Plagiarism: a historical and cultural survey

(Part one of a three-part series on
the accusation that Ellen G. White
plagiarized)

Research by
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In a court of law, a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. In the court of public opinion, a person accused of a crime is often presumed guilty without a careful review of the facts.

In 1980 Ellen White joined the “Who’s Who” of high-profile authors accused (but rarely convicted) of plagiarism.¹ This list includes Rudyard Kipling, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Richard Henry Dana,² Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Russell Lowell, Jack London, Martin Luther King Jr., and even William Shakespeare.³ Just because a writer includes similar words or even exact phrases from other writers in their composition does not mean that they are literary thieves. In this first of three articles, we will see how this can be.

Developing a sense of intellectual property rights

Concern about intellectual property rights is of fairly recent origin. During the Middle Ages, the use of the words of others was not only common, it was expected. George Kennedy, in *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, writes, “Classical writing and oratory were . . . to a considerable extent a pastiche, or piecing together of commonplaces, long or short. . . . The student memorized passages as he would letters and made up a speech out of these elements as he would words out of letters. . . . In the Middle Ages handbooks of letter-writing often contained formulae, such as openings and

closes, that the student could insert into a letter, and a whole series of formulary rhetorics existed in the Renaissance.”⁴

By the 1700s, concern about plagiarism had changed little. According to Albert C. Outler, John Wesley’s publication of an abridgement of another’s work was seen by Wesley and his eighteenth century colleagues as a form of endorsement, not plagiarism.⁵ William Charvat describes the 1840s as an era of “wholesale scissoring.”⁶ “The American weeklies stole from both the French and the English. The English, in their turn, stole from the French and the Americans.”⁷

Changes in public expectations

By the mid 1800s, things began to change. “The more readers and writers revered ‘originality’ as an absolute artistic virtue, the more the spectre of guilt floated over the ‘influenced’ writer’s horizon.”⁸ “One can detect a proliferating concern with plagiarism in the mid-nineteenth century. . . . American writers of the antebellum period were attempting to work out the limitations and the possibilities of proprietary authorship.”⁹

Once public sentiment had changed, the pendulum swung too far, hindering the writing of talented writers. “Tennyson was appalled by the ‘prosaic set growing up among us—editors of booklets, bookworms, index-hunters, or men of great memories . . . [that] will not allow one to say, “Ring the bell” without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sidney, or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean “roars” without finding the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it.’ This ‘prosaic set’ that Tennyson, Pope, and others railed against was the new breed of scholar—the ‘pendants without insight, intellectuals without love’—who trivialized literature, distorted aesthetics, and sought prestige and honor not through originality but by impugning the originality of writers of proven talent.”¹⁰

“Dullards, whose dearth of originality is only excelled by their consuming mania to be thought literary, become omnivorous readers and self-called critics. To advertise their own names they accuse such writers as Caine, Kipling and even Shakespeare of plagiarism.

“. . . Myths, plots, traditions are open to us all, but to adapt them, to dramatize them,—‘aye! there’s the rub.’

“In the daily affairs of life there is such a thing as the much scouted ‘unconscious similarity.’ . . . In mechanics, &c., the Patent Office could furnish innumerable proofs not merely of similarity of design, but of simultaneous identical invention by

two or more originators in various parts of the world. . . .

"Who that writes for publication can recollect all that he has read?

". . . Writers of established fame are impervious to the shots of these picayunish quotation mark hunters; but this rash, careless arresting of suspected thieves who, however innocent, may not be able to prove it, is working infinite harm. . . . A good thing were better repeated than never heard at all. And 'next to the originator of a good sentence is the first quoter of it.'"11

"The first detailed discussions and definitions of plagiarism issue from this period and from the likes of Johnson, Pope, Goldsmith, and De Quincey."¹² The legal concepts of "proprietary author" and "literary work" took time to develop.¹³

By the beginning of the 1900s, accusations of plagiarism were rampant. Mary Moss elaborates: "The points in which real plagiarism consists—treatment, atmosphere, character, observation—the points which make each man's work his own, are as fantastically different in 'Modeste Mignon' and 'Venus' as an act of Offenbach from a string quartet in the third period of Beethoven. It is perfectly easy to tally certain likenesses; impossible, without quoting whole chapters, to illustrate the complete difference."

Quoting Anatole France, Moss continues: "It is great luck, nowadays, if a celebrated writer be not treated, at least once a year, as a thief of ideas. . . . The truth is that situations belong to all the world. . . . A plagiarist is the man who pillages without taste or discernment. . . . But as to the writer who only takes what is suitable and profitable for him, and who knows how to choose, he is an honest man."

"Let us also add that it is a question of measure. . . . La Mothe Le Vayer . . . said: 'You may steal in the manner of bees, without wronging any one, but the theft of ants, who carry off a whole grain, should never be imitated.'

"But as for stealing the bare bones of a plot or situation, a thing almost impossible to avoid, who would not rather be pilloried with all the illustrious thieves who have consciously or unconsciously

appropriated and embellished any idea which came their way, then rest undisturbed with the critical punsters (it is the same mental habit) who excel in ferreting out unimportant likenesses!"¹⁴

"Ideas are not property so they cannot be stolen," Deena Weinstein remonstrates.¹⁵ Holly Newman agrees. "The fact is, concepts and ideas are freely available for everybody to use and develop however they desire. The U.S. Supreme Court, in what is called the 'Feist case,' has said that ideas are freely available but that the expression of the idea can be protected."¹⁶

Keith St. Onge rejoins: "The obvious response is our obligation to protect our original scholarship from the envious siphoning of lesser scribes. However vital that protection is deemed, neither the academy nor the law has managed to establish a syntactical minimum offense. A classic instance on the record is that of an otherwise sane professor of criminology who publicly claimed his surprising gift for identifying *one word plagiarism!*"¹⁷

So how many words does it take to be certain of plagiarism? After running a number of experiments testing students' abilities to write about well-known subjects without recalling material that was given in notes, McIver and Carroll concluded, "Any sequence of exactly the same 16 or more words that is not an aphorism, poetry, or words to a song is almost certain to have been copied from a written document."¹⁸

Concern over how many of another person's words one uses seems almost artificial. Of Martin Luther King Jr., it is said, "The black pulpit supplied King 'with the rhetorical assumption that language is common treasure—not private property.'"¹⁹ According to one article, in the student papers of King there are six examples of plagiarism.²⁰ The same source states that in one of these papers, "only 14 of 38 paragraphs are free of verbatim plagiarisms." In another, "Only three of the remaining 22 paragraphs in the essay are not replete with verbatim plagiarisms, often of entire paragraphs."²¹ In King's dissertation, there are nine examples of plagiarism;²² in his speeches, there are five.²³ Because of his great

influence, the discovery of King's plagiarism hasn't seemed to tarnish his influence as a speaker and leader very much.

Similarity not always plagiarism

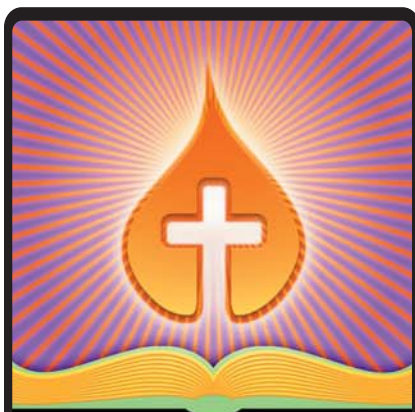
John Talman admitted, "I am not rashly shouting 'plagiarism!' for that charge has proved groundless in as many cases as it has been justified."²⁴ When does similarity not equal plagiarism?

When the borrower of language encourages readers to read his sources. The description of alleged plagiarism, reported from the *New Orleans Creole*, states that Rev. Dr. Scott "transferred to his own pages entire sentences of description, explanation, illustration, argument and appeal." However, Dr. Scott was defended on the basis that he acknowledged his sources in the preface of his work and that he advised his listeners in his lectures to "procure and read" specific works.²⁵

When the borrower writes from within the pool of his own genre. Dameron notes that a number of scholars have examined "Poe's role as an author and journalist within the *context of the culture* and mass market of his day."²⁶

An anonymous *New York Times* article refers to the charge that novelist Katharine C. Thurston "derived the idea" for her novel from a work published 17 years earlier. Noting that there was "nothing particularly original" in her work, the article goes on to say that "its plot and its very situations have long been parts of the stock in trade" of the writers of the romance genre. "Charges of plagiarism are easy to make," intones the article. "Every newspaper receives many communications embodying such charges from irate, well-meaning persons who cannot be made to understand why the Editor does not immediately lend all his resources to their cause. Frequently men and women of the highest literary standing are thus ruthlessly assailed."²⁷

When the borrower of language shows independence of thought. J. O. H. Cosgrove, editor of *Everybody* magazine, "didn't think that [Jack] London had resorted to plagiarism. He had ideas enough of his own. In treating similar themes resemblances would occur." The



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2. The Holy Spirit helps you see Jesus. The Spirit inspired the Bible writers to paint the true portrait of God in Jesus. Do not let your intellectual prejudices or emotional experiences trick you into rejecting or changing that portrait.

3. When you speak with God, listen to what He tells you. The Holy Spirit illuminates your mind to see Jesus when you read the Word of God with an open and willing attitude.

4. Converse with God. Prayer is part of speaking to Him as to a friend. It is not meaningless babbling or shouting.

5. Focus on Him, not on your own emotions. The goal of prayer is not to get an emotional "high." Human emotions vary, depending upon circumstances. Speak with God in order to get to know Him and to enjoy His fellowship.

6. Pray for others. God is their God, too! When praying, acknowledge God as the Creator who owns everything and everyone. Seek the best for His creation as you pray for others.

7. Cry for His kingdom to come. God's kingdom of grace is here in Jesus. His eternal kingdom of glory is yet to come. Pray for others to experience His grace and to join His kingdom. Pray for Jesus to return soon and the suffering of the world to end. Let your prayers influence the way you live.

—Paul Petersen, South Pacific Division associate coordinator for prayer ministries.

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publisher of the book, Doubleday, Page & Co., from which London is alleged to have plagiarized, declined to prosecute.²⁸

Edward Fitzgerald noted, "My canon is that there is no plagiarism when he who adopts has proved that he could originate what he adopts, and a great deal more."²⁹

When the borrower "says it better." "In every branch of knowledge writers and thinkers more or less appropriate the ideas of their predecessors and endeavor, as far as lies in their power, to improve upon them; and how many, I wonder, acknowledge the source of their information?"³⁰ As James Russell Lowell once put it: "A thing always becomes his at last who says it best, and thus makes it his own."

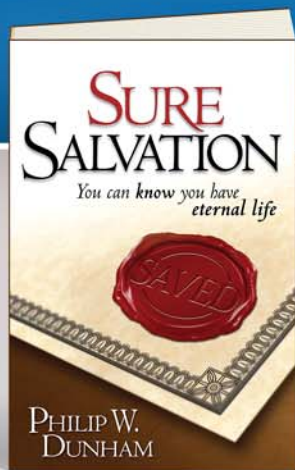
Are these not applicable to Ellen White's writings? In the next two articles, we will see how insights about composition cast her "plagiarized" writings in a totally different light. ■

(Part two will appear in the October 2007 issue)

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- 25 "Alleged Plagiarisms of Rev. Dr. Scott." *New York Daily Times* (1851–1857); August 23, 1854, 2. Ellen White likewise recommended the very books from which she drew selected material in writing her books and testimonies.—D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation* (RH 12-26-82), from which she quoted in *The Great Controversy*; Daniel Wise's *The Young Lady's Counselor*, from which she quoted in the *Health Reformer* (HR 07-01-73); Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (RH 11-07-1882 and ST 02-22-1883), from which she took 12.23 percent of *Sketches From the Life of Paul*. (By a stricter standard, David J. Conklin finds only 1.6 percent.)
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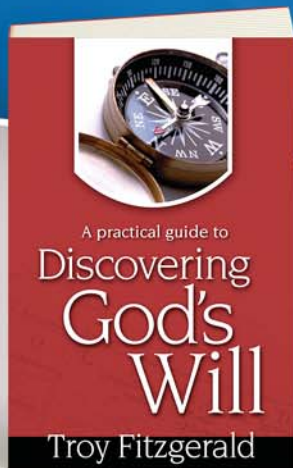
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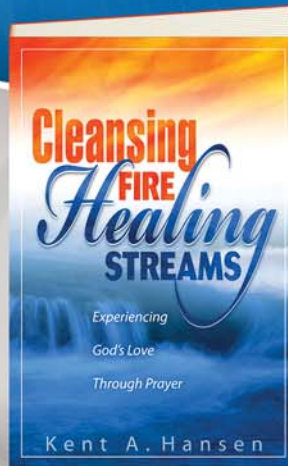
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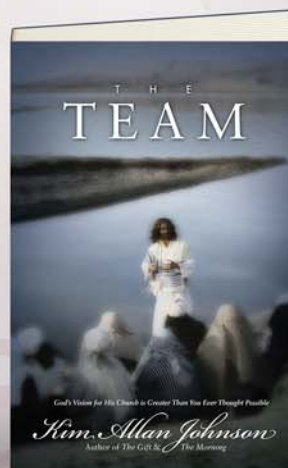
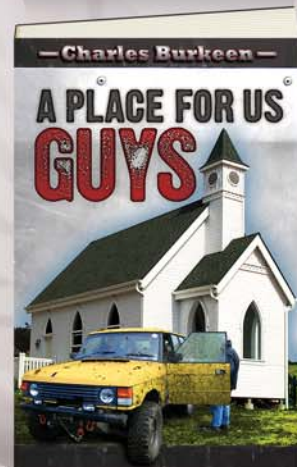
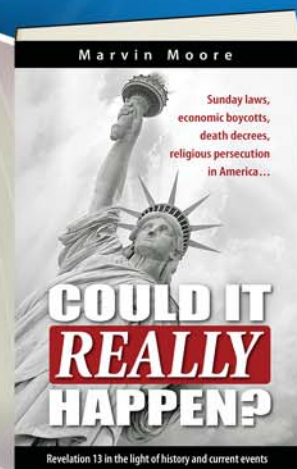


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Teaching preaching

James Wibberding



James Wibberding,
M.Div., pastors
the Seventh-day
Adventist churches
in Lansdale
and Souderton,
Pennsylvania,
United States.

Teach me to preach," one of my new elders requested. A smile came across my face because his request tugged at my own love for preaching. To give him the joy I live each week would be incredible.

But the smile disappeared when I started to plan. How do you teach preaching?

I thought of my own excellent preaching teachers. Derek Morris used Haddon Robinson's classic, *Biblical Preaching*. Jud Lake taught from Galli and Larson's *Preaching that Connects*. But *Biblical Preaching* seemed too daunting for a lay preacher, and *Preaching that Connects* covered advanced skills better than basics.

I went to the shelf to pull out other preaching books I'd read but hit the same walls. Then it struck me. My sermon writing process is simple. If I could excuse myself from rehearsing all I had learned, I might have something to teach beginners. So, I began to condense preaching to its basic elements.

What to teach

What is preaching? Preaching is applying God's Word to the lives of people. Learning to preach is like building a house—you need structure before details. The foundation and framework make the finished work possible. The student needs structure before they know where to put the details. So, what does that foundation look like? What does it take to apply God's Word to people's lives?

Most good sermons start with (1) a relevant life question, proceed to (2) a biblical answer, and end with (3) life application. The *question* is the reason to listen, the *answer* is the wisdom of God, and the *application* is the life change.

On these stones, I built a preaching class in my district. Twenty people showed up or asked for materials. That's 10 percent of active membership. People wanted to learn. Could I teach them? Yes I could—by God's grace.

How to teach

I found *what* to teach but lacked *how* to teach. This came through trial and error. Along the way, I found some shut doors and some keys to unlock them. I share with you three of these shut doors here, along with their keys, in the hope that you will become a better teacher of preachers.

Door #1—complexity and simplicity. The first shut door is the complexity of preaching. There is so much a preacher must do to master preaching. To get past this door, homiletics professors resort to a step-by-step "how to" approach that avoids theory. This is a grave mistake because it risks putting a ceiling on the preacher's skills.

The key to unlocking this door of complexity is laying a simple foundation. With a good foundation, lay preachers can start changing lives long before they master the art. A solid foundation is also a base to build on as they expand their skills. You may wish to dig down to the foundation stones of your own preaching theory or use the stones I list above. Whatever you do, give your students enough theory to preach compelling, biblical sermons and enough room to grow in their own skin.

Door #2—schedule and flexibility. The second shut door is the student's schedule. Capable people are busy people. A night class that meets ten times may exclude your best students. I held my first preaching class on a Sunday afternoon, and half my students were still unable to come. That was just the first session. If you held formal classes for several weeks, almost no one could make every class.

Instead, the key to unlocking this door is flexibility. A one-session class followed by one-on-one time with each student works well. The session should introduce the foundation stones and build camaraderie among the students. One effective way to illustrate the foundation stones is by choosing a text and walking the class through the whole process of sermon building. This can be done in one hour if you prepare well. As you later work with each student, give assignments that take them through the sermon-building

process (the same process you use each week). Then, meet occasionally to check progress. Guide them to grow on their own schedule.

Door #3—jitters and trust. The third shut door is student jitters. Most people have done little more on stage than a prayer or Scripture reading.

The key to unlocking this door is instilling trust in God. My own experience has taught me that knowing I have a message from God emboldens me. God's Word and God's Spirit are the assurance of success. Talk up the power of God's Word to stand on its own and share stories of times when God's Spirit spoke through you in surprising ways. Help students see that success rests with God, not with them.


Fostering development

Besides the foundation and these keys, I have learned two principles that guide my mentoring of lay preachers. First, affirm more than you critique. After each sermon, suggest one area to improve and affirm four things done well. Second, encourage them to listen

to other preachers regularly with an ear for learning new skills.

A teaching plan

In summary, as you prepare to teach budding preachers, six tasks lie before you. First, sift through your own preaching ministry to uncover the foundation stones of your sermon process. Second, conduct an introductory session during which you share and illustrate these foundation stones. Third, give and assess assignments for each phase of the sermon process (studying the text, outlining the message, writing an introduction, finding illustrations, making applications). Fourth, give constructive feedback after each student's sermon. Fifth, share resources for continued growth. Sixth, continuously point them to God for strength and guidance.

Finally, remember that God has called you to equip others for ministry. He will bless your efforts. 

Tell us what you think about this article. Email us at MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to us at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

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He prayed, studied, and counseled his flock, covering about 500 miles a week when he later transferred to Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. I followed him but could not keep pace!

In my first district (Bradford, Eldred, and Mt. Jewett) I was mentored by Charles Stone, Norm Childs, and Leonard Gustafson—all head elders. These folk came from Scottish, Irish, Swedish, German, and Italian stock—hardworking, sociable, and faith-enhancing leaders. It was a struggle for a Burmese immigrant of Armenian-German blood to blend with these beautiful faith-building European pioneers.

—Keith R. Mundt, email

Unbaptized children and the Lord's Supper

I appreciate the open dialogue and presentations of both sides of the discussion ("Children and Communion," June 2007). I must admit that my theological reflections have followed along the lines

of Dr. Jankiewicz for some time, but I try to avoid arguing the issue. Unfortunately, as Dr. Johnston would put it, I have taken open Communion to a level too far in his estimation.

"Open" with the exceptions Dr. Johnston makes doesn't seem open to me at all. I guess I would like to ask Dr. Johnston to respond to a statement he made in his article that our open Communion position implies some form of baptism from another denomination in order to participate. I re-read the chapter on the Lord's Supper again in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* and I could find no allusion or implication of that fact. The statement says: "The communion service, therefore, is for believing Christians." In fact, I have never heard an Adventist pastor mention the baptismal clause in a Communion service before. Can you be a believing Christian and not be baptized? This is the argument Dr. Jankeiwicz makes in the first article dealing with the thief on the cross.

Resources

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Also, if baptism is implied in our statement of beliefs, then would infant baptism be accepted from the high church group or just adult immersion baptism? Am I then, as an officiating minister, expected to interview those who partake of Communion to find out if they are eligible for our "open" Communion? This reminds me of my Lutheran roots from childhood. When a person wanted to take Communion they had to notify the clergy in advance so he could validate their eligibility. I watched growing up as the pastor passed by people who came to the kneeling rail wanting Communion—but he wasn't sure they were "right with God," and he continued past without so much as an acknowledgment of them.

One other problematic line of argument that Johnston takes is the line of reasoning from Christian tradition. I guess I'm not a very well informed Adventist because I thought that human

continued on page 29



Dateline

TV documentary to feature ADRA Sweden's project

Stockholm, Sweden—For a number of years **Adventist Development and Relief Agency** (ADRA) Sweden has worked with ADRA Kenya against female genital mutilation in western Kenya. The project has been financed by **Lakarmissionen**, a Swedish non-governmental organization. In 1997, 12 Swedish charities began a joint venture with Swedish national radio and television called **Varldens Barn** (Children of the World).

At the beginning of 2007, Lakarmissionen submitted ADRA Sweden's and ADRA Kenya's joint project to Varldens Barn. Following the project being chosen to be showcased, the Swedish national radio and television sent a film crew to Kenya in May 2007. Their product will be screened at a gala later this year.

The ADRA project supports girls through the rites of passage which are important steps to becoming a woman. The rituals (of which female genital mutilation is one) have many different components: The girls learn the facts of life, how to take care of children, and what is expected of a woman in the community. **Dr. Robert Nyambaso**, who is involved with the project says, "Female genital mutilation is a terrible abuse of young girls who may die of blood loss during the circumcision, risk getting infected with AIDS and other diseases, later may suffer from infections and trauma during birth, and during their adult and child rearing years suffer prolapses." Sweden's ADRA director, **Siri Bjerkan-Karlsson**, says, "Circumcision of the girl child must be fought against in every country where it is practiced. Many believe that it is a religious practice, but there is no support for it in the Koran or the Bible. I am proud to be connected with this project. Last year 900 girls in western Kenya were saved from [circumcision]."

The Women's Ministries Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church helps in this project—educating them and helping them decide against circumcision. Bjerkan-Karlsson comments, "They already have this right under Kenyan law, but fighting a practice that is so ingrained in their tradition takes time. By exposing this project on national television we hope that we will help many young women live a more normal and less painful life."

—[ADRA Sweden/Audrey Anderson/TED News]

SEEDS 2007: maximum impact for the harvest

Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States—"Why did you come to SEEDS 2007?" we questioned the participants of this church planting conference—held June 5–9, 2007, on the campus of Andrews University—that included topics for church renewal and personal ministries.

"I want to learn how to talk to people about spiritual matters," said one young lady. Another shared, "We've been trying to plant a cell church, and we wanted to figure out how to grow." Yet another said, "I wondered if there could be anything at SEEDS for a hundred-year-old church? . . . I found a lot!"

"Yes! I got it!" exclaimed one when asked if he had received what he came to find. "We learned by experience the very things we had been trying to learn from theory!"

What did they experience? The five major components at SEEDS 2007:

- the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- discipleship groups . . . growing
- effective leadership
- members, equipped and in ministry
- God-centered coaching

The objective of SEEDS 2007 was to show through vision, clear principles, testimonies, and especially through

practical, hands-on experience how the five elements support one another and how to put them to work in the local church for maximum impact for the harvest.

Tim exclaimed, "Worship was fabulous. Now I have the engine [the Holy Spirit] to go with the chassis. It was both practical and spiritual in one event! I found the presence of Jesus . . . and the toolkit. It has changed my life!"

During coaching, Mindy, a 20-year-old, heard herself offering a vision for her ministry. "I see an *adult* vacation Bible school in which young adults



Raewyn Harkins joined other seminary students experiencing Discipleship Groups at SEEDS 2007.

will travel together across the United States, functioning as a discipleship group, stopping to draw into ministry churches that need help reaching their community." Soon she was putting her vision on paper, finding a supportive network among SEEDS participants, and making plans to launch her cross-country road trip ministry next year at SEEDS 2008—June 9–14, 2008, at Andrews University.

Information about SEEDS 2008 can be found at <http://www.nadei.org>, "SEEDS 2007," "view report" at the bottom of the article.

—Marti Schneider ■



BOOK REVIEW



The Faithful Preacher by
Thabiti M. Anyabwile, Wheaton,
IL: Crossway Books, 2007

The Faithful Preacher is a fitting title to this partly historical, partly biographical insight into the lives of three unusual African-American pastors. It starts slowly but picks up the pace midway through the book. A literary sound bite is all you get from each brief depiction of these three extraordinary men. But this small glimpse speaks volumes about their character, courage, and commitment to the work of the gospel ministry. As you read the selected sermons of each preacher you will be enlightened, inspired, and humbled by the passion and lofty standards with which they have unyieldingly declared for preachers committed to the sacred work of the pulpit and gospel ministry.

Author Thabiti M. Anyabwile captures the essence of what these men must have endured as African-Americans during this period in America's stained history of antebellum attitudes and Jim Crowism

culture. The first pioneer, Lemuel Haynes, had to be the first African-American pastor to preside over an all white congregation for 30 years, from 1788 until 1818. He was eventually voted out because of discipline issues he wanted to enforce. Haynes faithfully stood in the gap as a watchman on the wall of Zion—setting a record for this kind of cross-cultural leadership in America.

The second trailblazer, Bishop Daniel A. Payne, first president of Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio, was ahead of his time when he said, "Perhaps there is no greater power in a given community than that of educated women." His passion for an educated African-American clergy was a visionary and a scholar who blended character and cogent reasoning as minimum qualifications of ministers who ascend to the pulpit. I had to reexamine my own sermon preparation, spiritually and academically, as I read the powerful exposition of "The Divinely Approved Workman." To be challenged to the very depth of one's ministerial soul and to be uplifted and encouraged at the same time is a gift that few preachers possess as did Bishop Daniel A. Payne.

The last prophetic vanguard intrigued me the most. Francis Grimke is a

preacher whose shoulders Martin Luther King Jr., Cornel West, and the like could certainly have used as platforms of moral courage and conviction in the face of brutal aggression. Grimke's challenge on race prejudice to Christianity in America during his time was unambiguously trenchant. His message could still find a hearing in the postmodern, multi-cultural, Christian churches of America today. I dare you to read this portion of the book and come away untouched by his burden for true Christian unity among the races. His prescription for the remedy to this ongoing problem is practical and Christocentric.

This book is a must-read for all pastors, especially African-American pastors. It will demythologize many stereotypes with which black preachers have been saddled in the past, and it will give all preachers a reminder of the level of excellence God intends for His chosen vessels to pursue as lifelong learners who dispense eternal verities to a dying world.

—Reviewed by Roscoe J. Howard III, associate secretary for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and secretary of the North American Division, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. ❏

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tradition wasn't a solid platform for the basis of our theology. I was under the impression that we were in the line of the Reformers who said *Sola Scriptura*.

I practice open Communion, and when I offer this to the congregation I tell them that "open" means anyone who loves Jesus with all their heart is welcome. In light of Jesus' example maybe even that is too much of a qualification. I also tell parents that they are responsible to teach their children, and the parents make the decision regarding eligibility. But I will not withhold the emblems. Salvation is offered to all, and the emblems of the Lord's Supper are to point to the

One who provides that salvation. If I'm in error, I wish to err on the side of mercy. I think that is a biblical principle.

—Kevin Kuehmichel, pastor, Cleveland, Ohio, United States

Thank you for the articles by Darius Jankiewicz and Robert Johnston. The Lord's Supper superseded the Passover where all the family members were involved. After baptism the Communion service is a memorial of the baptism and is often called a "mini baptism." For children to participate should be anticipatory of their baptism. Children and young people have a relationship with

Jesus that should be encouraged at every opportunity.

I think Jesus' concept of "worthy" and "unworthy," as far as children are concerned, is answered in His invitation to them to "come" when the disciples thought them unworthy. —Ray W. Eaton, North New South Wales Conference, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia ❏

Editor's Note—For additional information on this topic, please see the D.Min. dissertation written by Seizou Wagatsuma, "Development of a Biblical Paradigm for Ministry to Unbaptized Seventh-day Adventist Children," chap. 7, pp. 233–251 (Andrews University, 1987).

Doing church like a pub

JAMES A. CRESS



Should you try making your church more like a tavern? Bruce Larson describes how the neighborhood bar becomes the substitute for the church in meeting the needs of unchurched individuals who are longing for friends: "It's an imitation, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality, but it is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes, not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers."¹

If this need for friendship is essential in getting decisions, it is equally vital in keeping new converts attached to the body, both in emotional as well as physical proximity.

Jerry Cook says there are three guarantees from the church that people must have before they will risk becoming open enough to receive the healing that brings spiritual maturity and wholeness. First, the guarantee that they will *always* be loved—under every circumstance—with no exception. Second, that they will be totally accepted, without reservation. Third, that no matter how miserably they fail or how blatantly they sin, unreserved forgiveness is theirs for the asking.²

The first and second of these guarantees are crucial in the impact of friendship for new members. A friend will love a friend and accept that person for who they are—warts and all! A friend will seldom do this for a stranger. Strangers will find little acceptance, little love, and virtually no forgiveness from a group of people who do not know them.

Furthermore, no matter how theologically persuaded new members are

of the doctrinal positions of their new church, without friendship it is nearly impossible to remain in fellowship. When new members are recruited on the basis of doctrine alone, without fellowship as a strong and accompanying reality, we set both ourselves and the new members up for failure.

Rather than assuring that new believers either already have friends or gain new friends within the congregation, members often adopt a "holier than thou" attitude that excludes people at the very moment they most need inclusion. As Christians we are rightfully concerned for our unsaved loved ones. Perhaps we should show equal concern for our unloved saved ones.³

Applying Cook's first step to this issue of "having friends within the church," notice what he says: "Love means accepting people the way they are for Jesus' sake. Jesus hung around with sinners and if we're too holy to allow people to blow smoke in our faces, then we're holier than Jesus was. He didn't isolate Himself in the synagogue. In fact, He mixed with sinners so much that the self-righteous got upset about it. 'He's friendly with some very questionable people,' they said. And Jesus replied, 'Yes, because I didn't come to minister to you religious leaders. I came to call sinners to repentance.' Isn't that fantastic? Jesus spent His time with dirty, filthy, stinking sinners. And when those kind of people find someone who will love and accept them, you won't be able to keep them away!"⁴

This is the very essence of discipling! This is the very process of nurturing new members to the point of fruit-bearing maturity, and the best "first fruit" they can bear will be extending love, acceptance, forgiveness, and friendship with another new believer. "Pastors are not obligated to get people to heaven. That's the work of Jesus. A pastor's obligation to people is first to love and accept and forgive them, and second, to bring them to ministry readiness by teaching them to do the same."⁵

And even this emphasis on extending forgiveness and acceptance relates directly back to articulating the doctrines—the most essential one being salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. The Adventist Church needs continually to relearn that Jesus accepts us—although our lives have much that offends His holiness. Righteousness by faith in His merits says that His acceptance of us does not imply approval of our misbehavior, but rather it shows love that will transcend our shortcomings and transform our behavior into His likeness if we will only allow sufficient time to interact with Him as "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24, NIV)! If we, then, are acceptable to Jesus despite our lack, how could we dare reject others? ■

1 Harvie M. Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 29, 30.

2 Jerry Cook and Stanley C. Baldwin, *Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 11.

3 Conn, 29.

4 Robert Tuttle Jr., *Someone Out There Needs Me* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 103.

5 Cook and Baldwin, 15.

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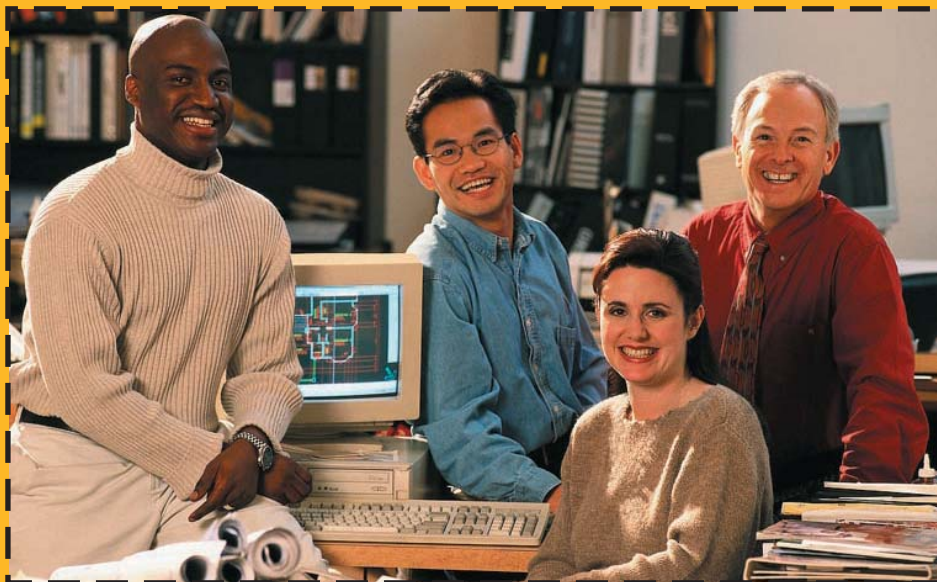
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