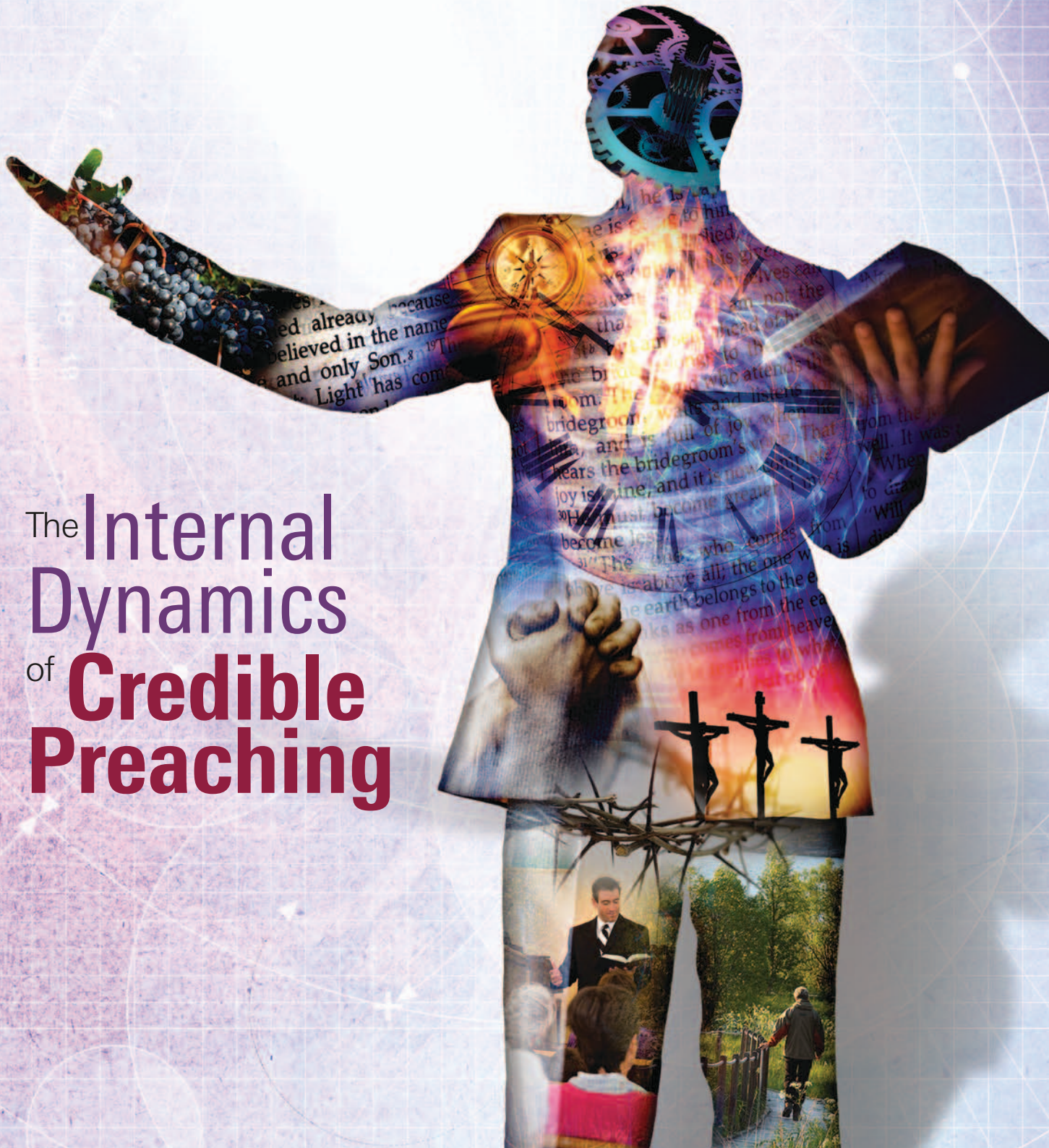


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The Internal Dynamics of Credible Preaching

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12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.
www.ministrymagazine.org
ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org

EDITOR

Nikolaus Satelmajer

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Willie E. Hucks II

CONSULTANTS TO EDITOR

John Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Myrna Tetz

EDITORIAL SPECIALIST

Sheryl Beck

OPERATIONAL SPECIALIST

John Feezer IV

ADVERTISING

Cheri Gatton
advertising@ministrymagazine.org
+1 208-965-0157

SUBSCRIPTIONS/RENEWALS/ ADDRESS CHANGES

ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org
+1 301-680-6508
+1 301-680-6502 (fax)

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Chinese-Robert Wong
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Director Anthony Kent | kenta@gc.adventist.org | +1 301-680-6516

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ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES
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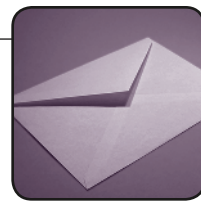
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“HERE IS WHERE MANY PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS FAIL EQUALLY, SUBSTITUTING CHURCH TRADITIONS FOR THE STANDARD OF GOD’S WORD (INCLUDING THE DECALOGUE).”

Remembering James A. Cress

I would like to add my voice to the accolades and appreciation being expressed in behalf of Jim Cress (“Tribute to James A. Cress”—March 2010). He and Sharon have had a major influence on the clergy and their families in many parts of the world for many years.

Jim appeared several times at our WestPoint of Evangelism, held annually in recent years in Simi Valley, California, United States. His leadership skills were legendary, and his talents for communication made his ministry a blessing whenever he taught a class.

Our prayers continue to be with Sharon.

—C. Lloyd Wyman, Westlake Village, California, United States

Justification by faith

Regarding justification, I would suggest that Seventh-day Adventists have a little more in common with the Roman Church than Dr. Gulley portrays in his article (“The Impact of Justification by Faith to the Current Protestant and Catholic Relationship”—January 2010). We occupy a sort of middle ground between typical Catholic and Protestant soteriology. While the former may make too much of works, the latter makes too little of them.

Our tenet: “It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained” (*Selected*

Messages, bk. 1, 397). This theme is repeated throughout Scripture. Hebrews 10:14 is a prime example, especially in translations that honor the linear Greek verb, as rendered “being sanctified.”

While we do not “‘increase the grace of justification’ ” (for nothing can add to Christ’s cross), we certainly amplify its impact in this world and the next by submitting to sanctification. The question then is, *What comprises true sanctification?* Here is where many Protestants and Catholics fail equally, substituting church traditions for the standard of God’s Word (including the Decalogue).

Christians are fully justified from the first moment they believe, on the basis of Christ’s works and none of their own. Yet this free gift may be lost if we fail to appropriate the other blessings that come with it: conviction of God’s will and the power to carry it out.

—A. M. Hendron, Strathmore, Alberta, Canada

I was saddened to read Norman Gulley’s article on justification and Protestant-Catholic relationships. Catholic-Protestant union—true union—is far closer than Gulley’s analysis or sentiments allow. Has he read the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church? It details a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ Jesus. True, Christian unity still has a long way to go; but these great efforts are not “mere papering

over of differences”; rather, a setting aside of suspicions and working and praying together so that we finally obey our Lord’s command that we be one as He and the Father are One.

—Charles Waddell, STL, PhD, parish priest, St.

Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Claremont, Western Australia, Australia

Dr. Gulley rightly tells us what justification is and is not. Here the article was good and helpful. What I found not helpful was the comparison with the Council of Trent—and only Trent. It was as if the author was unaware of dialogue that has happened over the last 40 years, especially between Rome and the Lutheran World Federation. The 40 years of dialogue, culminating in the signing of the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” on October 31, 1999, was a surprising gift of the Spirit; one the article failed to even mention.

Roman Catholics and Lutherans now agree on the essence of justification by grace through faith. Yet it is Rome who rightly states that true unity can only be achieved, not by human sentiments or desires, but only on the hard truths revealed by the Holy Spirit.

It might have been helpful if the author had commented on Benedict’s wonderful paper on justification which he gave last year, during the year of Paul. It sounded every bit like the voices of Paul, Augustine, and Luther. As it was,

Continued on page 27 ▶



Authority through credibility

Authority and the clergy—this has not always been a good combination; but can the clergy function without authority?

History has too many examples of abuses of authority by the clergy. At times, the clergy have used even secular authorities to enforce their views. Some have claimed they did it for the salvation of the people. Perhaps the goal was good, but often the outcome was violence and, not too infrequently, death. Whatever the motive, these outcomes cannot be justified.

At other times, the clergy have used their perceived authority and standing in the community for evil purposes. Throughout the world, we are bombarded with reports of sexual abuse by the clergy—often committed upon children. It pains me to read and hear the reports, giving details of clergy sexual abuse. Often nothing was done about these evil acts. If you think that in your denomination such things have not happened, think again.

Recently, I saw a cartoon¹ in a newspaper that told me what many think of the clergy. In the cartoon was a picture of Jesus and on the bottom of it were the words, “ ‘Let the little children come to me’ (Matt. 19:14, NIV).” In front of that picture, a clergyperson holds a snare. Next to that clergyperson is another one who says, “What a great recruitment poster!” The tragedy is that some of the clergy have behaved just this way—using their spiritual authority for evil purposes. The days when clergy members were trusted individuals across the board are gone. Or perhaps, those days never existed.

What now?

The examples of abuses of authority could be multiplied; but

does that mean that clergy members have no authority? If they do, what kind of authority is it, and how is it perceived and exercised? Matthew tells us that Jesus “taught as one who had authority” (Matt. 7:29, NIV). Luke tells us that the people in Capernaum were “amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority” (Luke 4:32, NIV). In his final charge to the disciples, as recorded by Matthew, Jesus said to the disciples, “ ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been give to me.’ ” What follows is not “go and be authoritative,” but rather “ ‘go and make disciples of all nations . . .’ ” (Matt. 28:18, 19). It seems that the authority referred to by Jesus is not really authority *over* people, but authority recognized because of the teachings and outcomes. Ministers of the gospel are not military generals. They are witnesses to transformation, inviting others to experience the same transformation.

Authority and the spiritual life


Secular authority is often tied to power—power over career, position, income, property, and even life. Clergy authority is tied to our spiritual life and recognition by people that we are faithful to our spiritual principles. Secular authority may be tied to a legal document giving a person certain authority. Spiritual authority is tied to the Word of God. Whenever spiritual leaders attempt to exercise authority that does not belong to them or is inappropriate, they fail God’s people and their spiritual lives have been damaged or even destroyed.

What are some ways that the clergy can develop a healthy, spiritual authority? Always keep

in mind that spiritual authority is based in a Person. The Scriptures present God as that Person and not as an impersonal force or mechanism. Our authority comes from faithfulness to God and His Word; and it resides in us not as a right, but as a gift. Spiritual authority must be nourished or it will become oppressive and harmful both to others and us. I have worked with a number of outstanding individuals who have been my supervisors. I looked to them as authority figures, not so much because they had important titles, but because of the kind of persons they were. A title may describe what a person *does*, but it does not provide spiritual authority for the individual. The individuals I have in mind had my respect—and I accepted them as authority figures—no matter what title they had.

Spiritual authority has to do with the credibility of the person.² Can the person be trusted? Is this person someone who lives what he or she teaches? Or does he or she use authority for personal gain and even harm to others? Does the person have authority because of a title or because those around him or her accept his or her authority because of his or her faithfulness to God and the spiritual life God wants him or her to live? We cannot borrow spiritual authority—it is a part of our character.

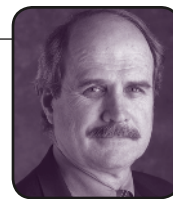
Is spiritual authority elusive so that only a few can find it? Not really. We just have to look for it in the right places—God and His Word lived out in our lives.

Faithfulness to God—in public and private—gives spiritual authority. 

¹ *Washington Post*, March 29, 2010, A18.

² See the lead article in this issue by David Thomas on preaching and credibility.

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The internal dynamic of credible preaching

Preaching can be considered an audacious thing for humans to do—daring to stand in the pulpit to speak for God because God is not there in person to speak for Himself.¹ Nevertheless, preachers are driven by the belief that preaching is a divinely mandated mechanism by which they can affect lives. As did the apostle Paul, preachers live under the urgency of the words: “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Romans 10:14, NIV).

In order for preaching to be effective, it has to have credibility. Credibility is a bit difficult to define as it has an element of intangibility: credibility is something that makes preaching interesting, urgent, and effective; its absence, in contrast, makes preaching dull and ineffective. Credibility is commonly understood to be the ability a person has to elicit belief in others. The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, for example, defines credibility as “the quality or power of inspiring belief.”² A sermon with credibility, then, would be one that has enough authenticity to give it bite in the minds of the listeners, enough to move them to action and change.

To create credibility

Credibility is produced by a number of things. First, the content of the message: the ideas, concepts,

arguments, and illustrations. These elements must be perceived as true, or credibility can be quickly lost. I recall preaching a sermon that was well-put together but had a story that the congregation felt was far-fetched. Thus, the whole sermon lost its credibility and, therefore, its effect. Another sermon I preached deemed to have great credibility primarily because, in the presence of some health professionals, I happened to correctly describe the mechanisms by which leprosy works.

A second element in establishing credibility is speaking technique and ability—skills that may be learned, borrowed wholesale, copied, even mimicked. But we must be careful: technique may be borrowed, faked, or, even worse, disconnected from the “heart” of the speaker. Any technique borrowed and unrefined to fit a person’s nature and personality, easily ends up appearing fake, comical, and not credible.

Many view technique as the primary ingredient in credibility. This idea is reflected in our great fascination with flamboyant public speakers. Also, so many preachers and their teachers turn immediately toward improving technique when faced with ineffectiveness in their preaching.

The internal dynamic

Though content and technique both play a substantial role in establishing credibility, a third (and by far the most important) element

must be considered: the internal dynamic between the preacher and the message they deliver. When it comes to preaching with credibility, this dynamic³ becomes particularly important but is seldom talked about.

In preaching, more than in other forms of speech, credibility originates not just in the content of the message, not just in the way in which the message is delivered, but also from something sensed as coming from within the preacher themselves. As a living process, preaching and its effectiveness cannot be divorced from the speaker. The process, product, and person are inherently interwoven and interdependent. Often when we think about the lives to be touched by preaching, we think of the congregation; seldom do we consider that another person exists who must be affected by the sermon—the preacher themselves.

Fred Craddock exposes the foundation for the internal dynamic upon which credibility is built when he observes that the nature of a minister’s work “makes the separation of character from performance impossible.”⁴ Craddock says that, “in preaching one says more than what is said, or less.”⁵ Preaching, indeed, ministry as a whole, wraps the person and the task together. The latter cannot be credible without the former being genuine.

The homiletical engine

One of the best ways to understand how credibility gets built up in

the preacher and the sermon would be to spend some time reviewing how sermons are produced. The process of birthing and tending a sermon from origin to delivery is known among preachers. Good preaching is not the result of accident but the product of a disciplined process established as a central feature of a preacher's life. For want of a better term, I call this process and discipline a "homiletical engine." I would list among its operating

basis for reading, meditation, as well as for writing (and re-writing) sermons.

Essentially, the homiletical engine includes the process that begins with the birth of an idea, then moves through the preservation of the idea, to the incubation, to its distillation, then writing and refinement to the point where it actually gets practiced and then preached. This process may vary to some degree from this description, and may be formal or

Incubation and distillation

As the homiletical engine becomes central, almost automatically the contemplation of the things of God are placed at the center of life; a situation that privileges the preacher to be dealing with the things of God on an almost mandated basis (and paid for it too!). By virtue of the need to preach, a preacher has to spend time with the things of God. This necessity



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parts the maintenance of at least a minimal devotional life, reading over a wide range of subjects, and developing a homiletical bias that causes a preacher to see all things with the eye of one who has to preach. This includes a process of preserving ideas that might become sermons. This homiletical engine could include the development of an illustration file, personal contact with the members of the congregation, and interaction with the local community. Included also must be the discipline of carving out a significant number of hours on a weekly

informal, but its makeup and function are understood by all preachers.

Good preachers discipline themselves to develop this engine and install it, front and center, in their lives. This engine is never off. And if the engine is well-built and in good operating condition, the number of ideas and sermons produced is endless, the quality high. Those who preach regularly well know how much this process affects life, and that by this all-encompassing discipline and process, preachers deliver something worth listening to week by week.

alone has the potential of affecting a preacher's life significantly because the Word, by its very nature, has power to change and bless.

Particularly crucial to the creation of credibility are the particular steps in the homiletical process that involves meditation. Incubation and distillation would rank at the top of these steps. Incubation time defined is that time when, and by means of which, a preacher takes a hold of an idea, thinks about it, mulls it over and over, looking at it one way, then another, often unstructured, even incidental. Incubation can occur

at any time—while the preacher is driving, playing, eating, or even in the shower. I have never read anyone who describes incubation time better than David Hansen: “For an hour I want to be alone with the text. I read it over, stop and stare at it.”⁶ Again, “I put the text on the computer screen. I fiddle with it. With a computer, experimenting with the paragraph breaks is easy. . . . The only rule . . . is ‘Do not rush.’”⁷ A little later, he continues, “I leave my desk and take a walk. I let the text as I can see it—divided into paragraphs, filled with pictures—settle into my mind. I let the text sit in my skull right behind my eyes. I want the text in my subconscious. It takes time to get it there. Walk and pray and leave it alone.”⁸ Still, “I stare at the text more. The word *stare* is a Latin word related to the Latin word for ‘strenuous.’ Staring at the text is strenuous meditation. This strenuous meditation is done inside us.”⁹

John Killinger, a teacher of preachers, says, “Ideas as they first occur to the preacher may not be in their final, most preachable form. They need to season—to ripen—before being used.”¹⁰

Distillation is the opposite of incubation—the process whereby a preacher distills from the meditations the message to be preached. One particularly difficult part of distillation is the creation of a theme sentence that succinctly tells the purpose of the sermon, a process aptly described by John Henry Jowett: “No sermon is ready for preaching, nor ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence clear as a crystal.” Then he adds, “I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study.”¹¹

What is the point here? If a sermon idea grows into something credible, it has to be processed, absorbed, incubated, and then

distilled. *Is it substantial enough to become a sermon? What is the essential idea? What ideas are cousin to it? Are there any events in the church or community to which this idea might properly speak? What applications might be made from it?*¹²

The effects of this process are expansive. The preacher not only has something to say, but with a lot more than can be used in any single sermon. Finally, it has to be trimmed down to the message that the preacher actually preaches.

“Trembling anxiety”

All this reflection and deliberation does not just clarify and expand an idea but has an enormous capacity to affect the preacher. As they work through the homiletical process, aside from organizing the idea, several things happen. First, a development of a sense of ownership and urgency is created—a crucial component of credible preaching. This prevents a preacher



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from showing up and preaching as if nothing were at stake. To quote Craddock again, "To preach as though nothing were at stake is an immense contradiction."¹³

This sense of ownership and urgency shows up as tension, almost a fear, that William Barclay once called "a trembling anxiety!" This fear, says Barclay, is best understood as "the trembling anxiety to perform a duty."¹⁴ He continues: "It is not the man who approaches a great task without a tremor who does it really well. The really great actor is he who is wrought up before the performance; the really effective preacher is he whose heart beats faster while he waits to speak. The man who has no nervousness, no tension, in any task, may give an efficient performance; but it is the man who has this trembling anxiety who can produce an effect which artistry alone can never achieve."¹⁵

"Trembling anxiety" is produced during incubation and preparation. And when people hear a speaker infused with trembling anxiety, they take note: the preacher signals that what is about to be said should be considered important enough to make a difference. If this anxiety is missing, the sermon sounds hollow and unconvincing. From this dynamic, credibility emerges.

A possible side-effect of the homiletical process exists that is both obvious and fascinating: the devotional effect on the preacher. To preachers, the devotional value of sermon preparation may develop into something of a volatile subject. If you ask, *Does sermon preparation time count as devotional time for preachers?* many would answer with a resounding, *No!* It would be more correct to answer with a resounding, *Yes!* It seems incredible to suggest that, as a preacher invests in the homiletical process, incubating an idea, then distilling it into a sermon, writing it and re-writing it, that the preparation time

would have no devotional effect on their life.

Precisely from this intersection between a preacher's heart and message, credibility emerges. That credibility occurs only when the message touches the preacher's own life. When a preacher finds that they are touched by their own message, even a poorly constructed and delivered sermon may have considerable effectiveness, more so than another sermon that has only technical grandeur.

John Killinger has a marvelous exposition of the effect of the internal dynamic between preacher and message: "Wait silently over the page when you have read it. Close your eyes and let the images cross your mind in vivid retrospect. Let yourself tremble before the presence of the Word in the words. Then, armed with all your commentary background and dictionary knowledge, you will go off to the pulpit with something extra—with the conviction that you yourself have heard the distant echoes of a 'Thus saith the Lord.'"¹⁶ You will go into the pulpit feeling what P. T. Forsyth often said, "I do not believe in verbal inspiration. I am with the critics, in principle. But the true minister ought to find the words and phrases of the Bible so full of spiritual food and felicity that he has some difficulty in not believing in verbal inspiration."¹⁷

Conclusion

What happens inside the preacher during sermon preparation plays a huge part in the establishment of credible preaching. The difference this makes for those listening is very significant. "On the hearer's side the difference is between hearing a sermon and hearing the Word of God; between seeing the forked lightning on a film, and being exposed to the whip and terror of the thing itself; between reading an article about life

in the army and being handed your call-up papers; between discussing a dogma and meeting the living God."¹⁸

Preachers must be careful to tend to the internal dynamic that fuels preaching. They must constantly tune up and revamp their homiletical engines. There are so many things that can incapacitate it. Borrowing whole sermons from others damages it; insincerity damages it; failure to meditate and reflect, unbelief, and busyness can be deadly. Whatever the cost, preaching is too valuable a thing to be toyed with. Those who tend to the inner dynamic of preaching are worth listening to, even if their abilities are marginal. Those who allow themselves to be expedient with it become as "sounding brass and clanging cymbal." They are unworthy of the pulpit and ought to leave the preaching to others. ❏

1 This comment about speaking for God because he is not present to speak for Himself was first told to me by a friend who attributed it to the outspoken Dr. Ian Paisley whom he once heard use it at the start of a sermon many years ago.

2 Merriam-Webster Online, s.v. "credibility," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/credibility>.

3 Phillips Brooks, in his book titled *Lectures on Preaching*, described this division using the terms *message* and *messenger*. Phillips Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1907).

4 Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 23.

5 Ibid.

6 David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 94.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 95.

9 Ibid.

10 John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 2d. ed., (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 51.

11 John Henry Jowett, *The Preacher, His Life and Work* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1912), 133.

12 I have many times been asked how much time I spend on the preparation of a given sermon. That has never been an easy question for me to answer largely because it is very difficult to calculate incubation time. How does one count it, for it comes sometimes in large blocks, but many times as a few moments here and there. Though hard to count, it is vital to the end product.

13 Craddock, 25.

14 William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, The Daily Study Bible Series, rev. ed. (Nashville: Westminster Press, 1975), 24.

15 Ibid.

16 Killinger, 26.

17 P. T. Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Graham, 1907), 38.

18 Thomas Keir, *The Word in Worship*, quoted in Killinger, 26.

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The Emergent theology: Voices of confusion (Part 2 of 2)

The Emergent theology

As indicated in Part 1 of this series (March 2010), many Christians assume the Emergent church is about new forms of worship, and pay little attention to Emergent theology. The reality, however, is different. The Emergents *are* about changing Christian theology. Brad Cecil argued in 1997 that the Emergent church was not about the generational gap and a new style of worship, but “It’s about theology.”¹ Richard Rohr, the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation, moves a step further: in order to understand the big questions and concepts like love, forgiveness, suffering, death, and grace, Christians need new “software,” that is, a new way of thinking.²

The Emergent conversation provides a forum to challenge certain doctrines that do not necessarily withstand biblical scrutiny. For example, I, like the Emergents, also question the doctrine of the eternal suffering in the fires of hell. Yet, I find the Emergent theology disturbing for several reasons. For one, the Emergent theology is becoming less Christ-centered and more Spirit-centered.³ Second, Emergent theology is shaped and formulated more by personal and cultural experience, and less by the revealed Word of God. The gospel is being adapted to cultural context and downplayed into a mere *good news of God’s inexhaustible love*. Next, the Emergent theology increasingly—as

it continues to *emerge*—incorporates Eastern notions of reality and spirituality.

Emergents who have emerged ahead far more than others, Brian McLaren and Richard Rohr for example, insist on the “both/and” paradigm of thinking that is supposed to teach people to stop being divisive, critical, and judgmental. Rohr does not apologize about telling Christians they need to learn to think contemplatively. He promotes an Eastern monistic mind-set.⁴ On the contrary, I find Christianity to be a rational approach to life and spiritual issues. God invites people to come before Him and reason together with Him (see Isa. 1:18). Paul advises young Timothy to correctly handle the word of truth (see 2 Tim. 2:15). John instructs his readers to test the spirits in order to find out whether the spirit(s) in question is from God or not (see 1 John 4:1).

The Emergent spirituality

Innovations in the Emergent worshiplike spiritual exercises are introduced to induce spirituality. “Spiritual” or “spirituality” is probably the most favorite concept among the Emergents, directly contrasted to “religious” or “religiosity.” Common sense expects religiosity and spirituality to go hand in hand. So, why do Emergents contrast the two? Spirituality, rather than religiosity, I surmise, means to attract newcomers, estrange the same from the mother base, and

then convert them into the new Emergent Christianity.

What characterizes the Emergent theology is its emphasis on catholicity, orthodoxy, and “embodied theology.” The last point is important. The “embodied theology” says that the Spirit present in the Emergent community shapes and formulates Christian theology. To be spiritual means to have a spiritual experience. If community members would have such experiences, that would indeed indicate the presence of the Spirit in the community. In other words, what manifests in the lives of the community members *is* the work of the Spirit. Hence, an Emergent would feel free to write, “God speaks to us out of our own culture and the stuff of our own lives, no less so than God speaks to us in the canon of Holy Scripture.”⁵ Hence, Bruce Sanguin, an author and minister, says that when he presides “at the wedding of a gay or lesbian couple,” he can “experience it as the ‘new thing’ God is doing in our day and age.”⁶

The “embodied theology” emerges when each member brings to the meeting their own story, their own theological understanding of a biblical text. Out of these individual insights, the “big story” of God emerges. Therefore, the work of the Spirit, embodied in the community, equals, or in some cases, supersedes the written Word of God.⁷

The Emergents claim that the Bible alone does not provide a sufficient guide for contemporary

living, and that there is more to divine authority than what the Bible alone offers.⁸ It is not uncommon to read, “*Sola scriptura* also tends to downplay the role of God’s Spirit in shaping the direction of the church.”⁹ This shift of the repository of spiritual authority from the biblical text to the Spirit becomes problematic. It encourages the masses to rely on subjective experience rather than on the objective and reliable Written Word.

In the physical absence of Jesus Christ, the Bible remains the most reliable spiritual guide. According to Jesus (John 14), the task of the Holy Spirit is to lead people into a deeper understanding of the Truth, that is, the work of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Written Word of God. The Holy Spirit speaks for and testifies about Jesus Christ, the incarnate Creator God. The intention of the Holy Spirit is not to draw sinners to self but to lead them to Jesus Christ. “Test the spirits to see whether they are from God,” says the apostle John, “because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1, NIV). The Emergents forget one simple but essential point of the gospel and biblical Christianity—it really *is* all about Jesus Christ, not about us.

The concept of emerging and the kingdom of God

The often-used metaphor about the Emergent church is the budding growth on a forest floor. According to Jones, the movement emerged in the 1990s, spontaneously, so to speak. “A new church is emerging from the compost of Christendom.”¹⁰ The public also came to believe that this “emerging” started in the 1990s. I have, however, come across works that called for and disseminated the idea of a new emerging church as far back as the 1970s.¹¹ In fact, as early as the 1960s, some Christian leaders recognized that Christianity at all levels, in academia, ecclesia, and the public, was undergoing fundamental changes and new approaches were necessary to recapture the attention of the masses.¹²

The idea of Christianity “emerging” through time is directly linked with their understanding of what the kingdom of God is and when it will be fully realized. The theme of the kingdom of God, as central to the Emerging church, places much emphasis on joining God’s “community,” here and now.¹³ A lot of emphasis is also placed on channeling church and personal resources to the making of the kingdom of God here and now—a good and well-intended idea that sounds Christian. Moreover, the making of the kingdom of God is primarily the work of Jesus Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit leads people back to Jesus Christ, the Savior of humanity and King of kings. Second, the final realization of God’s kingdom necessitates, first of all, the actual and final destruction of evil and sin from the universe—an event that has yet to take place. A final destruction of evil and sin, that is, of Satan, his demons, and unrepentant sinners, to take place soon is not a pleasant theme for the Emergents.

To find a discussion of the need to abandon sin and a sinful lifestyle in order to enter into the kingdom of God is rare. For the Emergents, the kingdom of God is in the process of spiritual re-formation (notice the hyphenation), a spiritual evolution, here and now, as we speak. Accordingly, this spiritual re-formation—that is, this spiritual “emerging,” or “spiritual formation”—is the work of the Spirit, and a process that has been transpiring for

centuries, and will continue on for centuries to come. McLaren states that humanity, as a whole, is spiritually re-forming toward the day when all humanity will finally become the kingdom of God, the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of the Lord.¹⁴ This teaching becomes troublesome on several levels: it misinforms about the true nature of the kingdom of God. It fails to warn of the importance of seeking repentance and Jesus’ grace, *today*. It lulls people into a false

THIS SHIFT OF THE REPOSITORY OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY FROM THE BIBLICAL TEXT TO THE SPIRIT BECOMES PROBLEMATIC. IT ENCOURAGES THE MASSES TO RELY ON SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN ON THE OBJECTIVE AND RELIABLE WRITTEN WORD.

sense of security and hope that God, an “inexhaustible” love, will never carry out divine justice. It teaches that both sin and death are part of one and the same ongoing redemptive process. This emergent attitude toward human predicament resonates with New Ageism, the Baha’i teachings, Eastern monistic notions, and so forth. It is utopian and not biblical.

The Emergent attitude toward history

The Emergents are fond of going back to “ancient” or “vintage” Christianity. The “ancient-vintage” refers to the writings of the church fathers, not to the writings of the apostles and biblical prophets, as some may assume. The Patristic teachings and monastic way of life are being served as a new model of spirituality. This adulation of Patristic theology and insistence that God’s community has lived in the so-called Age of the Spirit for the last 2,000 years, necessitates an argument that the origins of the church are to be found in the first-century church of Antioch rather than the first-century church of Jerusalem.¹⁵ This may appear as a new revelation to some; however, this does not come as a new truth but a new repackaging of an old supersession doctrine arguing for a radical discontinuity between Judaism and Christianity. I find this development to be disheartening. The old Patristic argument that the church replaced the synagogue was the major component of a two millennia-long ecclesiastical hatred and contempt of Jews and Judaism, a direct precursor to modern anti-Semitism.¹⁶ Contrary to their insistence on tolerance and elimination of all forms of prejudice and bigotry, the Emergents may find themselves on the same path.

Though I find the work of Phyllis Tickle and Diana Butler Bass quite informative, their histories are highly skewed toward proving the “emergence” of Christianity during the last 2,000 years.¹⁷ Their work borders on revisionism of church history. In fact, church history was both progressive and contained false teachings and apostasy, corruption, and abuse of ecclesiastical powers. The pogroms and inquisitions were hallmarks of the church that opposed a search for truth. Also, for the Emergents to bash Protestantism for religious warfare, colonialism, and other

evils of modernity of the last 500 years, is not uncommon. On the contrary, the Protestants stood up to the inquisitorial and oppressive medieval church. The Protestants played a major role in the overthrow of ecclesiastical and monarchical absolutism, and they contributed to the development of a constitutional model of governance that influenced England, the American colonists, and other parts of the world.

Another example of misinterpretation of history includes their insistence that changes brought about by the cultural shift from modernity to postmodernity demand that everything must change in Christian worship and Christian theology.¹⁸ Much indeed has changed in the last century or so, but those changes are related to modernization. Nothing, however, has changed when it comes to human nature and the human predicament. What changed is how we handle our affairs, not how we handle our sinful nature.

Humans have for centuries tried to resolve the puzzle of human predicament, and all human approaches—be they monistic, monastic, pantheistic, gnostic, deistic, Catholic,¹⁹ Protestant, or Emergent, all have failed or are failing. The only reliable way out is the blueprint Jesus Christ left behind. The truth about Jesus’ grace and the moral standard of the kingdom of God has been revealed to us through the revelation of Yahweh and Jesus Christ, and recorded in the Bible. It remains constant and certain. ❏

- 1 Tony Jones, *The New Christians: Dispatches From the Emergent Frontier* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 47. Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 33.
- 2 Richard Rohr, *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 2009), 12.
- 3 Throughout this essay the word *Spirit* does not necessarily refer to the Holy Spirit Jesus spoke of in John 14.
- 4 To learn more about the monistic mind-set, start with James W. Sire, “Journey to the East: Eastern Pantheistic Monism,” in *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 5th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press,

2009). Note: previous editions would do fine.

- 5 See Karen Ward, “The Emerging Church and Communal Theology,” in *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives*, Robert Webber, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 162.
- 6 Bruce Sanguin, *The Emerging Church: A Model for Change and a Map for Renewal* (Kelowna, BC, Canada: CopperHouse, 2008), 138.
- 7 Ray S. Anderson, “It’s About the Spirit, Not Just Spirituality,” and “It’s About the Community of the Spirit, Not Just the Gifts of the Spirit,” in *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006); Sanguin, *The Emerging Church*. This theme, that the Bible alone does not suffice as a spiritual guide and a criteria, weaves throughout many other works published by the Emergents and non-Emergents as well.
- 8 See Brian D. McLaren, “Why I Am Biblical,” in *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004); Doug Pagitt, “The Emerging Church and Embodied Theology,” in *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*, 119–143.
- 9 Will Samson, “The End of Reinvention. Mission Beyond Market Adoption Cycles,” in *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope*, Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 156.
- 10 Jones, *The New Christians*, 7.
- 11 See Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, *The Emerging Church* (Waco, TX: Word, Inc., 1970); Ronald J. Wilkins, *The Emerging Church* (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co. Publ., 1975).
- 12 The history and origins of the idea of “the emerging church” requires far more space than allowed here, but the reader should be aware of the issue.
- 13 See McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2006); Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003); Anderson, “It’s About Kingdom Living, Not Kingdom Building,” in *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*.
- 14 McLaren, “Seeing the Kingdom,” in *The Secret Message of Jesus*.
- 15 Anderson argues there is no historical continuity between the first-century church in Jerusalem (Peter, James, and other “traditionalists”) and the first-century church in Antioch (Paul). Christianity, according to him, started in Antioch, not Jerusalem; with a new revelation through the Spirit to Paul, and not with Peter, James, John, and the other original apostles.
- 16 Scholarship on the history of hatred and contempt of Jews and Judaism, that is, the history of anti-Semitism, clearly shows that a “straight line” can be drawn between the ecclesiastical contempt and hatred of Jews and Judaism and the Holocaust. Those who truly aim to educate young generations that anti-Semitism and racism in all its forms is not biblical, is evil and destructive, ought to shun any theology which resonates the replacement theory. A substantive scholarship exists in support of this link between ecclesiastical contempt for Judaism and Jews and anti-Semitism. For more on the history of the contempt of Jews and Judaism see my “The Ecclesiastical Roots of the Holocaust: From the *Adversus Judaeos* Tradition to the Holocaust,” in *Thinking in the Shadow of Hell: The Impact of the Holocaust on Theology and Jewish-Christian Relations*, Jacques B. Doukhan, ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 3–27.
- 17 See Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008); Diana Butler Bass, *A People’s History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story* (New York: HarperCollins Publ., 2009).
- 18 See Leonard Sweet, *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999); McLaren, *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crisis, and a Revolution of Hope* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007).
- 19 Here I refer to the teachings of the medieval church that salvation comes only through the sacraments, dispensed by the church.

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

Myrna Tetz, BA, is a writer and editor in West Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.



Coronary Health Improvement Project

Editor's note: Congregations often present programs to benefit their members and the community. CHIP is one such program that congregations may want to consider offering.

Suppose your physician said that you have less than a year to live, you need to be put on ten medications, an oxygen tank, and a sleep machine. Even worse, you were so exhausted you often returned to bed after your morning shower.

One woman's testimony *does* equal that recital of health hazards. And undoubtedly, in this world of horrendous individual health problems, her nearness to death's door could be replicated again and again.

Verna Van Nuland from Wisconsin, United States, was in this situation and told to go see Kay Theyerl, MD. "I cancelled the appointment several times." But she did, finally, see Dr. Theyerl.

After Dr. Theyerl analyzed Verna's medical history, she described the Coronary Health Improvement Project (CHIP) and urged her patient to register for the classes that were already into the fourth night of a six-week program at her hospital.

By the end of the CHIP program, Van Nuland had lost 24 pounds, started an exercise program geared to her condition, and, as a result, her energy began to return. When Dr. Hans Diehl, DrHSC, MPH, the founder and presenter of the CHIP program, came to speak to the alumni, he drew a name for someone to attend the next class, free.

"That name was mine," says Van Nuland, "so I went back for the fall class."

Following the second program, she does not take any medications, has lost 85 pounds, does not use the oxygen tank or sleep machine, and her energy has returned even more. She will be 70 years of age in May and helps facilitate the CHIP program in her area.

The results of Verna, having followed the CHIP program, have been duplicated by many others.

What the CHIP program offers

As an educationally intensive intervention program, the CHIP seminars focus on reducing coronary risk factor levels through the adoption of better health habits and appropriate lifestyle changes. The CHIP program is designed to substantially lower high levels of blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, provide relief for heartburn and angina, reduce excess weight, and lessen depression.

Dr. Diehl is the speaker in these video lecture series. He is the director of the Lifestyle Medicine Institute and a clinical professor of preventative medicine at Loma Linda University.

The results of the HeartScreen coronary risk assessment are provided to each participant early in the program, and participants are encouraged to share their results and work closely with their personal physician regarding their need for medication as they modify their lifestyle. Immediately following

the program, the heart screen is conducted again, and a detailed report is prepared for each participant that compares their risk factor levels before and after going through the program. Also included in the CHIP sessions are personalized counseling, food demonstrations and samples, and, following the program, regular alumni support meetings.

Harold Burden became a full-time volunteer right after he retired ten years ago. He says that "CHIP is about making choices and making friends. Making choices suggests freedom of action without coercion, manipulation, or judgmentalism. It allows people to press at their own pace, on their own schedule. Making friends suggests both the duty and privilege of sharing the good news with others and inviting them to join us in our 'journey toward optimal health.' "

The beginning of CHIP

The first CHIP program was conducted in Creston, British Columbia, in the late 1980s. Dr. Sid Kettner, a physician who practices in the town of Creston with about 5,000 residents, was asked to pilot this community-based health promotion program.

Because Dr. Diehl had heard that Dr. Kettner was interested in health promotion, not mere disease treatment, plans were set in place—Dr. Diehl would do the lectures and Dr. Kettner would answer the medical questions. About 450 people responded to that first program.

Dr. Kettner described what happened: “The town changed in character. Walking shoes were ordered in by the hundreds, bananas by the ton, bakeries and coffee shops tried to outdo each other in offering healthy sandwiches with the most number of grains in their breads. Monthly alumni programs

System and with the encouragement of Roger Greenlaw, MD, a gastroenterologist and clinical professor at the University of Illinois, College of Medicine at Rockford. The program grew rapidly under his leadership. Since then the CHIP program has been operated and managed by the CHIP Alumni Association of Rock-

“If your church closed its doors tomorrow in your own town, would anyone notice?” asked Roy Terretta, CHIP director in Durham, North Carolina. As a result of Terretta and his wife’s, Zeleny’s, leadership, the Five Oaks Seventh-day Adventist Church sponsored its first CHIP program last year with 13 people

AS AN EDUCATIONALLY INTENSIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAM, THE CHIP SEMINARS FOCUS ON REDUCING CORONARY RISK FACTOR LEVELS THROUGH THE ADOPTION OF BETTER HEALTH HABITS AND APPROPRIATE LIFESTYLE CHANGES.

still attract more than thirty graduates who gather to enjoy nutritious food, music, inspiration and humorous readings, and an education/motivational PowerPoint presentation. They have seen their angina disappear, their blood sugars, blood lipids and blood pressures drop, their osteoarthritis lose its painful grip on their bodies.”

“Of course,” Dr. Kettner says, “the star of that first program, Bob Anderson, who couldn’t walk to the mailbox at the end of his driveway due to severe angina, later cycled over three thousand kilometers from Creston to Ottawa, Ontario, in just sixty days at the age of sixty-seven. Impressive! No wonder that the apathy has passed and medical personnel throughout the worldwide community now see the value of CHIP.” Anderson died last year. His widow testified that “Bob was so grateful for the extra twenty years with eighteen of them very good years . . . after CHIP!”

In 1999, the program came to Rockford, Illinois, at the invitation of the SwedishAmerican Health

ford. Here, more than 5,000 have graduated from the CHIP program and more than 20 restaurants offer CHIP-approved menus.

Pastoral involvement

Why would a congregation sponsor a CHIP program? This program was not conceived as benefiting *only* church attendees, but to be shared with the community by selected members of a congregation. “Those who lead would know,” says Diehl, “that a health message shared should not be considered a duty, but a gift.”

Dan Matthews, former executive producer and host of *Lifestyle Magazine*, believes that “every church should make the establishment of a CHIP Chapter a priority for their community. We should conduct this type of program,” says Matthews, “because we care about people and are committed to making friends for God.” Matthews, retired, continues as a lifestyle media consultant and is helping Diehl with the marketing of the CHIP program. He believes that CHIP has become the best program available to teach people how to live.

attending. The second CHIP program is currently in progress.

Wayne Dysinger, MD, MPH, chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine at Loma Linda University, has a dream: “to have every church as a healthy lifestyle support group.” CHIP is documented to be the best community-based, intensive, therapeutic lifestyle change program in the world,” he says. “There are seventeen published scientific papers on the CHIP program. In addition, medical students at Loma Linda University get credit if they take the CHIP elective.”

Dr. Larry Shipowick, a retired dentist and the director of the CHIP program in Kelowna, British Columbia, suggests that church administration centers require each pastor to attend one entire session. Currently, Shipowick and his wife, Vicki, are conducting a program in the Kelowna area.

Research affirms CHIP

John Kelly, MD, MPH, executive director of the Rocky Mount Lifestyle Center, says that “a study

using CHIP to treat diabetic patients showed a twenty-six percent decrease in fasting blood sugar in weeks—a remarkable improvement by any standard. These patients were already receiving medical care.” Dr. Kelly has documented evidence in one case, “of reversal of ischemic heart disease from before and after stress echo evaluations by cardiologists.”

“If implemented on a national scale,” reports Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr., MD, a preventative medicine consultant at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, “the CHIP program could improve the health status of America more than all the efforts of modern technological medicine combined.”

The late British physician, Denis Burkitt, explained that, “The concept that Western diseases are lifestyle related, and therefore potentially preventable and reversible, is the

most important medical discovery of the twentieth century.”

The 2010 Olympics torch runner

Albert Baldeo, a retired United Church pastor, told how he became dizzy and almost fell into an open grave as he was finishing a grave-side ceremony. As a result of this near catastrophe, he followed his friend’s suggestion and registered for the CHIP program. His initial tests revealed that he had high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and was overweight.

That was 20 years ago. As a result of participating in the program, he lost his extra weight and lowered his blood pressure and cholesterol. “The program brought me hope,” Baldeo said.

Recently Pastor Baldeo, in spite of his Parkinson’s disease, carried

the 2010 Olympic torch in Kelowna, British Columbia, for a short distance.

CHIP changes lives

To date, more than 50,000 people have participated in these programs worldwide.

Results have been published in numerous scientific articles in peer-reviewed medical journals, including the *American Journal of Cardiology*, the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, and *Preventive Medicine*. As local church groups continue to sponsor CHIP programs, church and community people will notice changes in their health as well as in their outlook on life.

If you would like to participate or sponsor a program please visit www.CHIPhealth.com or www.CHIPhealth.org.

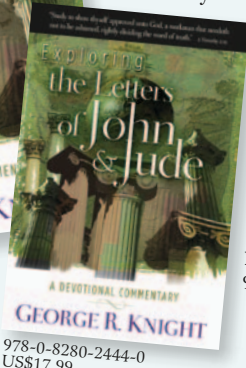
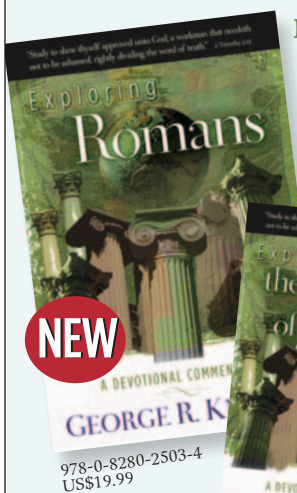
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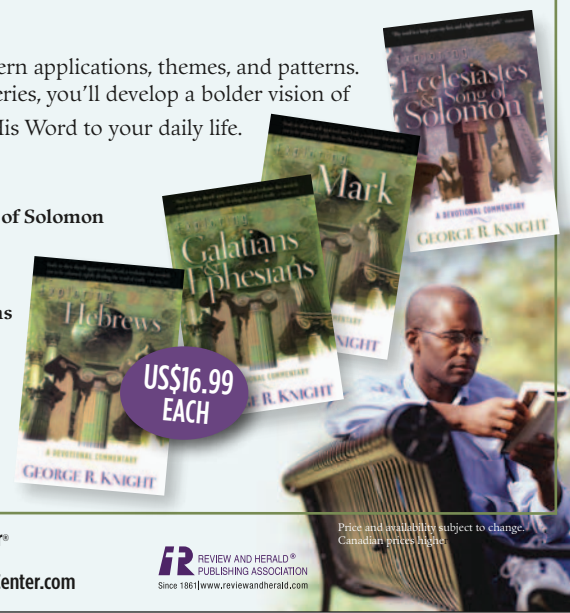
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Gerald A. Klingbeil, DLitt, is an associate editor of the *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines. He is also research professor of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



The Gehazi syndrome: Suffering familiarity with the Holy

Rudolf Otto, professor of systematic theology in different German universities at the beginning of the twentieth century, published a landmark volume discussing the basic notion of the Holy in all religions.¹ While I do not agree with many of the ideas of Otto's volume, the notion of the Holy as a unique category of religion is important. God-talk is talking about the Holy, because God is the truly "Other" that cannot be compared to anything on this planet (Isa. 46:5). He is beyond our constructs and ideas and bigger than our biggest thought.

In this article, I will look at a biblical account of someone who, by all accounts, was in close contact with the Holy and lived day-by-day in the presence of a divinely appointed messenger. Unfortunately, the story that we will look at does not contain all the lessons that can be learned by busy pastors, church administrators, Bible teachers, and theology professors. This story is, after all, just a story that describes real life. Nonetheless, it leaves us with a question that speaks directly to the heart of the issue and challenges those of us who spend most of our time in the presence of the Holy and may be in danger of "suffering" familiarity with the Holy.

Front-seat ministry

I imagine that Gehazi could not believe his eyes when he saw a confirmed dead person walk among the living or participated in miraculously feeding hundreds of people, but he had a front seat, observing from

close quarters the ministry of one of the most amazing prophets of Israel. Yes, Elisha had received a double portion of God's Spirit (2 Kings 2:9), and the rabbis were quick to point out that Elisha performed twice the number of miracles of his predecessor Elijah.² Clearly, by requesting a double portion of Elijah's spirit, Elisha invoked Deuteronomy 21:17, which details that the firstborn son would inherit the double portion of the other sons' inheritance. We recognize this request as another quick glimpse into the character of Elisha, the servant of Elijah.³ Humble and, I imagine, somewhat overwhelmed by the task ahead, Elisha realized that a double portion of the Elijah-spirit was needed to face the challenge.

Gehazi's relationship to Elisha was similar to the previous relationship Elisha had with his master Elijah. He was a wandering apprentice. He was there when Elisha visibly demonstrated that the God of Israel was the completely *Other* and not to be compared to Baal, Moloch, or Asherah. Actually, Gehazi suggested to Elisha that one of the greatest needs of the Shunamite woman was a child as she was barren (2 Kings 4:14), and it was also Gehazi who later ran ahead of Elisha to lay his master's staff on the face of the dead boy. Gehazi was close to the action, showed initiative, had been trained by one of the best, and was seemingly ready to move forward.

Naaman's story

A young Israelite girl, nameless as she remains, pointed the powerful

Aramean courtier—facing not only a medical emergency but even more so, social isolation and oblivion—to the prophet in Israel. Gehazi must have also been present when the Aramean general, Naaman, knocked on Elisha's door, even though the biblical text does not mention him by name until we reach the sad anticlimax of the narrative in 2 Kings 5:20. Perhaps he was the messenger Elisha sent out with the simple order for Naaman to go to the Jordan and wash in it seven times (2 Kings 5:10). He must have been impressed by the fact that Elisha's ministry was about to move to a higher level. More visibility and prime time action appeared to lie just ahead. The knock on Elisha's door that day meant that Elisha was not just another local player anymore but had moved on to become an international celebrity.

Naaman's initial reaction to Elisha's messenger was not favorable. He was upset—and rightly so. Here came, as it were, the national security advisor of the powerful Syrian king, and he was shown no special courtesies. He did not even get a face-to-face conversation with the miracle healer. A simple one-sentence message was all he got.

Naaman did not like the looks of the muddy Jordan (which, outside the rainy season, is not a very impressive river) and was ready to return home, angry, upset, and frustrated. Fortunately, he had a loyal crew of staff members who encouraged him to try—and try he did. Seven times he plunged himself under the water. Six times, as he looked at his hands



HOPE *Shining* THROUGH

Hope for Humanity works with Haitian Christians to address psychological trauma and recovery in Haiti.

The earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 did more than destroy buildings and roads. It left in its wake emotional scars and psychological trauma that is only now beginning to be truly understood. The greatest impact is on children and young people who have witnessed the destruction of homes and communities and experienced the loss of family members and loved ones—but the aftermath of the earthquake includes emotional distress that can be seen throughout the entire population.

Working with pastors, Christians, and churches, Hope for Humanity is reaching out to address these difficult issues. Your help is needed as Christians in Haiti and in North America work together to bring hope and emotional health back to the communities destroyed by the disaster. Programs for children, young people, and adults are now underway.

The Spark of Hope

A Resilient People Look to Rebuild their Shattered Communities

The people of Haiti are resourceful and resilient, but the sheer magnitude of the catastrophe they are facing together is unprecedented. Surrounded

by death and destruction, it is so easy for their hearts to be flooded with fear, anger, disillusionment, hopelessness, and despair.

There are hundreds of churches throughout Haiti whose members are also coping with the results of the disaster, but who seek to be the means through which God brings healing to their communities. While they must deal with their own losses, they are also reaching out to serve their communities, providing physical, emotional, and spiritual support in an environment of unprecedented need. Many churches have already opened their doors and their hearts to their members and to the broader community. The Hope for Human-

ity project provides the resources for them to further serve their community (including their own members) by providing psychological first aid and intentionally designed therapeutic activities for children and adolescents.

If they are going to be able to cope with the difficulties of life during this initial emergency relief phase, and especially if they are going to be able to begin to move forward into a more developmental phase where they can begin rebuilding their lives, they will need help in processing their emotions and building hopefulness.



Meeting the psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of members and the community surrounding churches in Haiti.

Empowering One Another

Peer-to-Peer Therapeutic Counseling (Psychological First Aid)

The Peer-to-Peer Therapeutic Counseling Program will provide psychological first aid to the local community and to church members. In the initial project, an average of five laypersons from each of the selected church congregations will be trained in crisis counseling. Following their training they will be mentored and supervised by a small group of professional crisis counselors.

Their primary task will be to seek out those in their community who most need their help and engage them in seminar-like discussions held in local churches. They will be trained to recognize those who may need professional help, and a system for referrals will endeavor to get people the psychological help that they need. The lay counselors will work six hours a day, five days a week, and will receive a \$5 per day stipend.

The project provides help for those most vulnerable in the community, particularly children. Through training and supervised experience, it will build a lasting capacity for service and ministry. It utilizes the existing infrastructure of the local church for the aid of the community.

And it provides an appropriate opportunity for church congregations and members in North America to work as partners with our brothers and sisters in Haiti by supporting their efforts.

The project provides help for those most vulnerable in the community, particularly children.



Help and Hope *for the* Smallest Victims

Therapeutic Play Program for Toddlers and Children

The Therapeutic Play Program is for children aged 5 to 10. The purpose of the program is to provide children a safe environment to process their thoughts and emotions about the earthquake, and to build positive attitudes about the future.

The program will include an appropriate balance between play and learning. Program leaders will also be taught how to recognize children with special needs and how to get them additional help as needed.

Part of the daily program will include a hot lunch for the children and program staff.

Those leading out in the program will receive a stipend of \$5 to \$10 per six-hour day, depending on responsibility and experience.

The program will be conducted three days during the week for three hours each day, with a special program on weekends. Curriculum and program materials will be developed by Behavioral Medicine physicians and experts from Loma Linda University and Adventist HealthCare, in collaboration with the Haitian people.

The purpose of the program is to provide children a safe environment to process their thoughts and emotions.



Hands *and* Hearts Together

Adolescent Therapeutic Activities Engage Adolescents

The Adolescent Therapeutic Program will engage adolescents and young teens aged 11 to 15 in service, learning, and play activities that channel their energies to bring about a positive impact on the community. Service and play activities will include such activities as community and church clean up, assisting with therapeutic play groups for younger children, helping to cook meals, learning activities, and play outlets such as soccer tournaments.

Experts in Adolescent Behavioral Health will work with local Haitian leaders to develop the program activities. Local project leaders will work with the participating churches to help strengthen their existing organizations and expand them to more fully serve the entire community.

Each congregation will determine the number of days per week and duration of each daily program, based on their local setting and needs. Those involved in the program as leaders will receive \$5 to \$10 per six-hour day, depending on their responsibilities and level of expertise. The project budget will provide service equipment (such as wheelbarrows, shovels, etc.), play equipment (such as soccer balls), and all training and supervisory costs.

The program will engage adolescents and young teens in activities that channel their energies to bring about a positive impact.



PERSISTENT *in* LOVE

"I am among you as one who serves."

— Luke 22:27

We are the Christ who serves when we are personally engaged with our communities. We are the Christ who serves when we pull together to combat a crisis. We are the Christ who serves when we reach across cultural lines and help one another.

We are the Christ who serves when we listen to those in crisis, and seek to find understanding within the situations we face. We are the Christ who serves when we stand up for those who are defenseless, for those who are in crisis, and for those who need healing.

We are the Christ who serves when we extend our understanding of His grace to the world through blessing and affirmation—and through sharing the gifts God has given to us with those in need. We are the Christ who serves when we seek God's strength in prayer, when we hold before God those who are suffering, and when we pray together as a visible symbol of our standing before God.

And we are the Christ who serves when we persist—when we don't give up, when we keep our eyes fixed on the future, and when we bring hope to the communities in which we live, the communities that are closest to us, and those that are far away.

As a pastor, you know the power of engaging your church in reaching out with the compassion of Jesus Christ; you know the impact that it can have on those you seek to help as well as on those who are able to help.

It is our privilege to work alongside the Haitian people. Beginning with Pentecost, the church has always pulled together, combining resources to go from strength to strength—as a witness to the power of God's love, and as the means by which divine healing may be expressed in a community.

Your help is needed. Every gift will make a difference in Haiti, where so much has been destroyed, so many are suffering, and so many challenges are being met by God's people. 100% of every donation will be used to support these innovative and life-changing projects.

Help us as we seek to help the churches of Haiti. Prayerfully bring this matter before your church, and ask them to join in being the Christ who serves in Haiti.

If you would like to explore a more specific response, or a special project tailored just for your church—call us. We stand ready to partner with you in a ministry of hope and compassion. If you would like information to share with your congregation, visit our website (hope4.com/haiti). You'll find downloadable resources for your use and the benefit of your congregation.

Pray for the people of Haiti. Pray for the children, the young people, and those whose recovery is uncertain. Pray for the churches. Thank you for your support of the work of Hope for Humanity with Haitian churches.



As a pastor, you know the power of engaging your church in reaching out with compassion.



HOPE for HUMANITY

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and arms, his hopes were dashed. But the seventh time was different. He was healed—wonderfully made whole again. Immediately he set out to pay tribute (and some hard-earned riches) to Elisha and confess his newfound faith. This time, he finally met the prophet personally and Elisha guided him gently and patiently into further truth. No, he did not want (or need) any of Naaman's wealth. He was content to see God's initial plan for Israel working: being a light to the nations that would attract so much interest and cause individuals and people to come in order to find out about this God who resided in Zion.

Gehazi's story

Gehazi, however, was not content. Secretly he followed Naaman, running to catch up with the thankful Aramean. A story was quickly fabricated and—to his delight—he received two talents (roughly 150 pounds, or 68 kg) of silver and two sets of clothing. Life was good. He would never, ever again have

to worry about food for tomorrow. Returning to Elisha's home, Gehazi sought to cover his tracks. I imagine he went into the house whistling and looking particularly innocent as he reported back for duty.

Elisha asked only one pointed question: " 'Where have you been, Gehazi?' " (2 Kings 5:25, NIV), and as Gehazi continued to spin his distorted view of reality (we may also safely call this a lie), Elisha confronted him with reality. How could he have hoped that his master would not be aware of this—a master who had intimate communion with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, raised the dead, fed the hungry and poor, and knew what a gentile king whispered in his bedroom suite (2 Kings 6:12)? Even if he had thought that he could trick Elisha, how could he have hoped to sidestep the Lord, the One in whose name Elisha performed all these miraculous acts?

Elisha asked Gehazi a pointed question that has been asked many times over the centuries: " 'Is this the time to take money, or to accept

clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants?' " (2 Kings 5:26, NIV). It was not, and the divine judgment upon Gehazi was immediate and far-reaching. His greed attracted Naaman's leprosy and cost him his privileged front-row seat in God's wonderful demonstration of signs and wonders.

Our story

I am an ordained minister, have been a professor of Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern studies, and now work as an editor of a religious magazine. Over the last decades I have, at times, noticed that familiarity with the Holy can lead to Gehazilike attitudes (and sometimes actions). I confess, I have never witnessed a response as immediate as that of 2 Kings 5 but would argue that this misguided familiarity with God's holiness often leads us away from the focus of our ministry.

We pray all the time, publicly and privately, and it may be that prayer has lost its mystery.

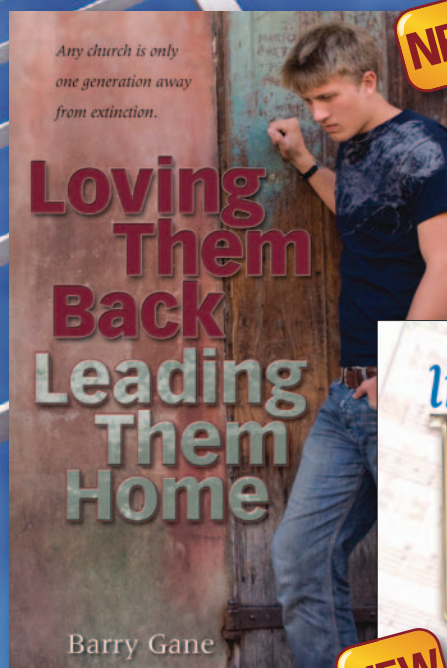


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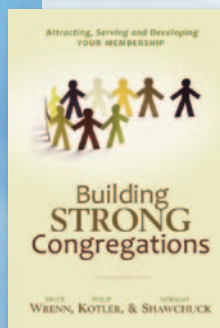
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We open Scripture (in order to preach or teach) all the time, publicly and privately, and it may be that God's Word has lost its wonder and power.

We witness (or hear about) God's transforming power all the time, and it may be that we have become sarcastic or even cynical.

Have you noticed the Gehazi syndrome in your ministry lately? Have you felt that God, the Holy God of Scripture who worked in the life of

to the Creator of the universe and our personal Savior, our mouths must drop open in awe and wonder. He truly cares—even about wayward, tired servants who may have momentarily lost their way. Writing our prayer journeys helps us remember our utter dependence upon this Holy God. Was Gehazi so busy, looking at the stock market and watching the economic indicators or the vital statistics of Elisha's ministry,

planning and plotting. Judging from Gehazi's careful action after returning with the gold and clothing, he must have been quite a gifted planner and plotter—perhaps too much so.

Wrapping it up

I am grateful Scripture is full of imperfect people that often mirror me quite well. I am also grateful Jesus, Himself, took the time to refocus during His busy ministry years and told

HAVE YOU NOTICED THE GEHAZI SYNDROME IN YOUR MINISTRY LATELY? HAVE YOU FELT THAT GOD, THE HOLY GOD OF SCRIPTURE WHO WORKED IN THE LIFE OF HIS PEOPLE AND SACRIFICED HIMSELF IN JESUS, HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT STALE AND PERHAPS EVEN BORING?

His people and sacrificed Himself in Jesus, has become somewhat stale and perhaps even boring?

I sure have, at times, felt this way and would like to share four elements that helped me re-discover the wonder, power, and majesty of this Holy God who has called me into His service. Perhaps some may be helpful to you as well.

1. *Remember your first love for Jesus.* Recall (and recount) how He called you into His ministry. No, this would not be to raise your profile or show your congregation that you are better than they are but rather a reminder of where you have come from and that your ministry is nothing outside of God's call. I wonder if Gehazi ever stopped to remember the time when Elisha invited him to serve the God of Israel. He surely must have been awed then.

2. *Block out time for personal prayer.* Keep a prayer journal and keep writing in and reading it. I found this one of the key elements needed for avoiding the Gehazi syndrome. When we talk and listen

that there just was not sufficient time for personal prayer—and silence before God?

3. *Find a prayer partner to whom you will be accountable.* This should be a person you trust and who loves the Lord. Be open about your struggles. At this moment, you can let down your guards—and feel safe about doing it. Unfortunately, our sense of position and hierarchy keeps us, sometimes, from finding a ministerial colleague who could serve as a prayer partner. Can I really pray about everything that worries me with my pastor colleague from across town or in the office next door? I wonder if Gehazi felt a bit like that—especially with the schools of the prophets around.

4. *Stop periodically thinking about your ministry and plotting new ways to advance the kingdom.* This is not your kingdom, but the Master's. While He wants us to be creative and mission-driven, He wants even more for us to spend quality time with Him. Step back for a moment of reflection, and let God do the

His disciples to “ ‘come . . . and . . . rest’ ” (Mark 6:31, NIV). Besides the physical rest, it seems they needed to “process” and recalibrate.

My mobile phone has a built-in program that looks and acts like a compass. Sometimes, when I try to find a general direction, it tells me to shake it around in the shape of an *eight* lying on its side. People must be mystified when they see me doing this, but this is the only way to get a calibrated direction. As I am trying to avoid the Gehazi syndrome of becoming (overly) familiar with the Holy, I recognize that I may need a similar complete stop and turn around in my own life. What about you? ❏

- 1 The volume was originally published in 1917 in German. For the English translation see, Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. J. W. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959).
- 2 See R. D. Petterson, “1 and 2 Kings,” in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelinein, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 4:177, 178; cf. also Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI.: Brazos Press, 2006), 175.
- 3 Note that the Hebrew term describing the quality of the “servanthood” of Elisha (1 Kings 19:21) is the same that describes the relationship between Moses and Joshua (Josh. 1:1) and is *not* the typical word used to describe regular servants.

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



An empowering model for church organization

Do you remember the call from God that resulted in years of study for the ministry? Do you remember the thrill of ordination? Vowing to be as strong as Peter, as forceful as Paul, as loving as John, and as faithful as Daniel?

Yet, what happened? That early ideal vision of the ministry somehow dissipated in the face of the daily challenges of life. Add to all that, financial struggles, the seemingly endless juggling of time for family, sermon preparation, and ministry in general, and it is no wonder our ideals are often shattered and so many ministers burn out.

When beginning my first pastorate, I tried independently to solve all problems brought to my desk. It was exhausting and frustrating. Through my desperate prayers, the Lord led me to the Moses' model as outlined in Exodus 18:13–24.

Moses, also, was overwhelmed with work when his father-in-law, Jethro, confronted him and, in effect, asked, “Why are you working yourself to death?” Jethro then suggested Moses select godly leaders and empower them. Moses successfully followed Jethro's advice.

Inspired by the idea of dividing labor among church leaders in order to lighten my ministerial load, I began to experiment with leadership models. Through trial and error, I have devised one that works for me. While I recognize that the model will continue to evolve, its value is worth sharing.

This leadership model will work for any size or multiple congregations. Four defining elements must, though, be implemented: (1) a pastoral staff/administrative team; (2) elders' oversight team; (3) central, visual, yearly school/churchwide calendar; and (4) visual ministry flow chart outlining the church's organization.

Developing a pastoral staff/administrative team

In our model, the pastoral staff/administrative team meets weekly and includes the pastor(s), church secretary, head elder and assistant head elder, church school board chair and principal, facilities/maintenance person, and, if you have one, minister of music. (I realize that not every church has someone in each of these positions.)

In developing a pastoral staff/administrative team, the key word is *team*. Regardless of the size and mission of the congregation, no pastor can effectively organize and administrate a church alone. Jesus, our Example, appointed 12 disciples to share the burden of His ministry. Following Jesus' method, I've found that a team approach to church administration works best. In fact, the majority of necessary administrative details required to successfully operate the church are handled by the weekly pastoral staff/administrative team. Situations and problems that, alone, might take many hours to solve, are often quickly resolved by the team's ideas, suggestions, advice, and action.

During the weekly pastoral staff/administrative meetings, the team prays together, plans weekly and special worship programs, strategizes for evangelism, and problem solves church-related issues. For example, maintenance problems, members' concerns, and use of building requests are handled in the weekly staff meetings.

Church schools can create challenges in pastoral ministry, especially when communication between pastor, principal, and school board chairman breaks down. By having the school board chair and principal on the pastoral staff/administrative team, we are able to more effectively work together to coordinate calendars, discuss and resolve challenges of students, parents, and facility use.

An elder's oversight team

A feature of this model includes the expanded role of church elders. They perform their regular elder duties, plus oversee two church ministries. Church ministries are defined as “programs that target groups with a specific intent and goals.” Examples include Sabbath School ministries, children's ministries, the church school, women's ministries, men's ministries, community services, Pathfinder ministries, and so forth. The nominating committee appoints the ministry directors, and then one elder is appointed to oversee two ministries. The number of appointed elders is determined by the number of church ministries.

I used the one elder/two church ministries ratio in both multichurch districts as well as in a small congregation. Even in my first district with 40 members, where the active ministries consisted of Sabbath School, community services, deacons, and deaconesses, we had three elders. The elders and I were the pastoral staff/administrative team. The first elder served as overseer of the other two elders; the second elder served as overseer of the Sabbath School and community services; the third elder was overseer for the deacon and deaconess ministries as well as church operations and maintenance. Regardless of the size of the church, when elders are empowered with the responsibility to oversee church ministries, they recruit, “talk up,” and praise their ministry directors and the ministry, and enthusiasm causes the church to prosper and grow. There is a temptation to lead a small church informally with very little planning, without a “fixed” yearly calendar, and with the pastor as “boss!”

In this model, each ministry director reports directly to the elder assigned as overseer. Each elder is empowered to problem-solve and handle the issues pertinent or specific to their ministries. If they are unable to handle a problem, or if a problem involves multiple ministries, they first contact the head elder and try to find a solution. If the overseeing elder and head elder cannot solve the problem, the head elder then brings it to the leadership team for discussion and solution (though, admittedly, this strategy works better in a large church environment than in a small one). This frees the pastor from constantly dealing with the many problems that arise in multiple church ministries and places responsibility for leadership on members selected by the nominating committee. By equipping and empowering the elders, the church has a greater opportunity to flourish spiritually and grow numerically.

Because elders play such a crucial role in the success of this model, I have encouraged the church to use

three steps in the elder selection process.

1. Consider each candidate’s spiritual gifts and personal characteristics and then match them to potential ministries.
2. Prayerfully submit the candidate to God.
3. Present the candidate’s name to the appropriate committees.

I visit the elders and spouses to review the ministries that the elder will coordinate. I never try to persuade a candidate to accept the role. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. The candidate may have questions, which I answer at this time. If the candidate

Creating a central, visual, yearly church calendar

A large block, erasable, two-year calendar hangs on my office wall. The calendar remains as a crucial part of this model. All events, programs, and ministry functions of the church and school are placed there with planning written on the calendar 12–18 months in advance. At the beginning of the year, all ministry directors add their functions to the calendar and make sure that no other ministry has signed up for that date. Ministry dates are claimed on a first-come, first-served basis, and one ministry may not conflict, timewise, with another. Once completed, the calendar is typed and bound, with a

IN DEVELOPING A PASTORAL STAFF ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM, THE KEY WORD IS TEAM. REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE AND MISSION OF THE CONGREGATION, NO PASTOR CAN EFFECTIVELY ORGANIZE AND ADMINISTER A CHURCH ALONE. JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE, APPOINTED 12 DISCIPLES TO SHARE THE BURDEN OF HIS MINISTRY.

feels the Holy Spirit’s call, their name is then submitted for final action.

In this model, the pastor must not override the elders. If a difference of opinion exists, then the pastor and elders, during their bimonthly meetings, should pray and discuss the situation until they reach an agreement. I use this consensus-agreement method because I have learned that each elder usually represents a percentage of the church membership. With a problem solved by consensus, the elder with the previous concern then explains the decision to the church members closest to him, and many problems and conflicts are avoided. Also, when the elders are unanimous and enthusiastic about a program, the rest of the church will most likely support it.

copy distributed to each church board member and ministry leader. It lists all church and school upcoming events, programs, and meetings as well as Sabbath morning worship service speakers for the year.

When pastoring in a multichurch district, I used one calendar with both church activities and worship service speakers listed. We met together and each church presented their dates. Where a conflict existed, we worked it out before the calendar went to press. This way the leaders of both churches knew the upcoming events in each district as well as the scheduled speakers.

Every ministry director provides the pastoral staff with their ministry plans for the year. These plans, with their accompanying dates, are then

placed on the master calendar. Making the calendar an integral part of pastoral leadership prevents last-minute floundering for special music and speakers as well as provides the basis for the year’s projected advertising of church events to the community. By using a published yearly calendar of events, the members are able to plan for, anticipate, and become excited about programs and “talk them up” in the community.

A visual ministries flow chart outlining the church’s organization


To help members understand the function of different ministries, a *ministries flow chart* depicts how

the church ministries relate to each other as well as who is in charge of, and responsible for, each ministry.

The ministries flow chart has proven invaluable as a quick method for orienting all church members, assimilating new members, and drawing visitors to become members. This chart has become a helpful tool that displays to new members the various ministries in which they might serve. It helps in overseeing—ministry elders and department directors know whom to call when a person shows an interest in a ministry. By this chart being displayed on the church bulletin board and published in the church directory, all may be aware of how the church is organized and operated. Regardless

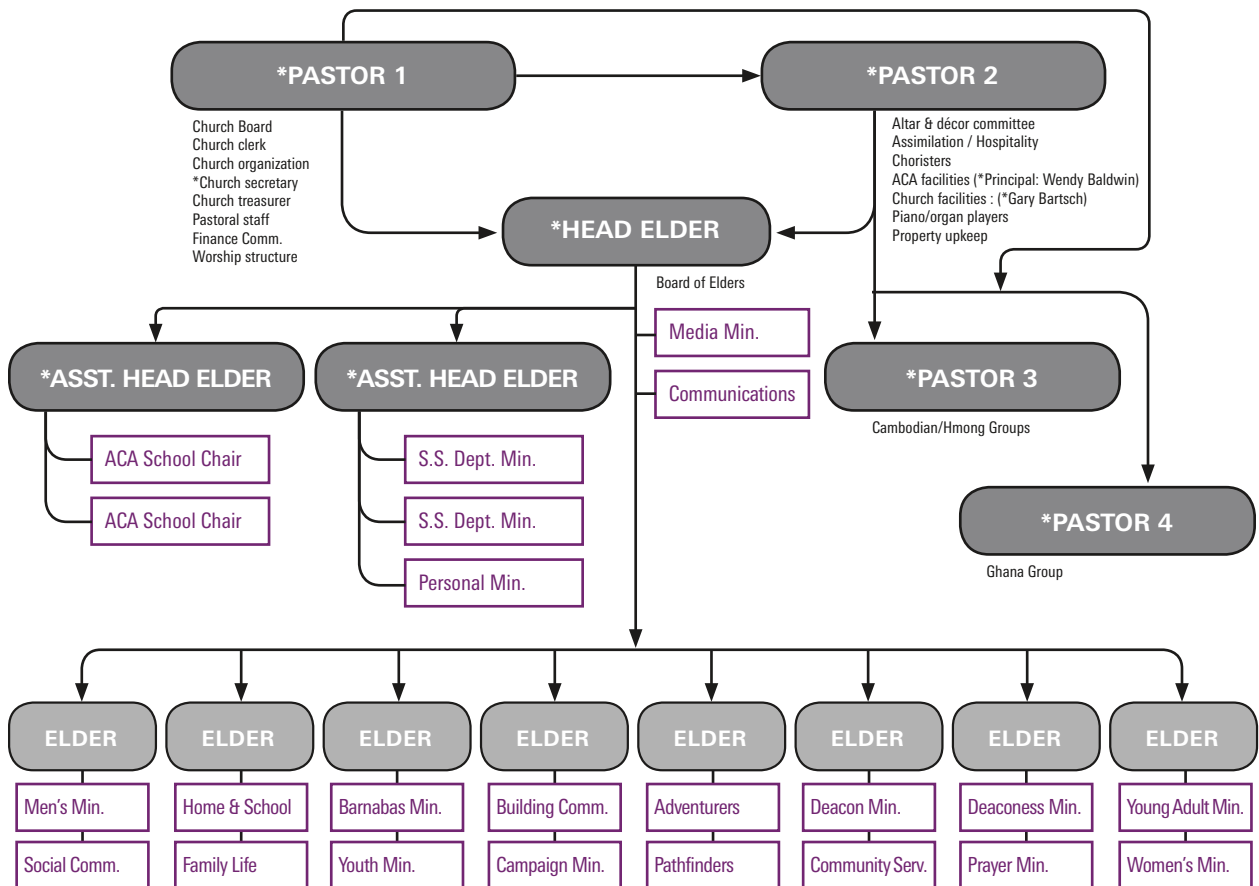
of the size of the congregation, the ministries flow chart becomes a valuable tool. (The figure below shows the ministry flow chart of the Charlotte, Sharon Church.)

Conclusion

This model has worked wonders for my church and ministry. The details will have to be worked out in each setting; the principles, though, behind this method are crucial for helping you run your church as smoothly and effectively as possible. At the same time, this process could spare you from burnout and, who knows, as it helps bring success it might even rekindle some of the fire from those early and idealistic years of your call and ministry. 

Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church Organizational Flow Chart July 2009–2010

*Indicates Pastoral Staff



Above is the Sharon Church administrative team. Each church ministry is highlighted in purple with its director in gray. The ministries are grouped under their overseeing elder. If you’d like to join a ministry, please contact the overseeing elder or the ministry director.



Sacred or profane?

What's in a divine name?

An Orthodox rabbi said to a pastor visiting Israel that God speaks Hebrew.

"Isn't He able to understand any language?" asked the pastor.

"Yes," the rabbi replied, "He can understand any language, but Hebrew is His native tongue. Therefore, the Jew prays only in Hebrew."

I can understand a *religious* Jew making such a comment; recently, however, some Christians have begun to wonder if God could really hear them if they do not address Him in Hebrew. For example, an author¹ claims that a large number of words used today in different English Bible translations have their origin in pagan worship and therefore, must be replaced with Hebrew words. Words such as *Lord*, *atonement*, *Jesus*, and *God*, it is claimed, have to be stricken from the lexicon of English-speaking Christian, because of their "profanity."

Though a number of people hold, to one degree or another, these extremist views, all share one common denominator known as "The Sacred Name," and the gist of the argument is that the name of God is *YAHWEH*. But they take it one big step further—you cannot be saved if you do not use this name. A group called Qodesh la Yahweh, headed by R. Clover, published a four-volume study called *The Sacred Name* in 1989. The major thrust of this publication was to convince Christians that God must be called *YAHWEH*, and nothing else; more so, your own salvation depends on it.

How do we answer such claims?

What is His name?

If you have ever had a discussion with a Jehovah's Witness, the first question you are likely to hear is this: "Do you know that God's name is Jehovah?" The followers of the Sacred Name theory would argue back: "No, His name should be pronounced as *YAHVEH*." They would even go further and assert that the name of "Jesus" is incorrect and should be pronounced as *YAHOSHUA*.²

The answer to all these questions, of course, must come from the Bible. For starters, the issue of God's name occurs for the first time in Exodus 3; the story of Moses' encounter with God, who appeared to him from the burning bush. Both Jehovah's Witnesses and the followers of the Sacred Name theory would refer to Exodus 3:15 as their most important proof text. We need, however, to start two verses earlier, in verse 13, to understand what is going on. Verse 13 states: "Moses said to God, 'When I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?'" God starts answering to Moses in verse 14, not in verse 15. "God said to Moses, 'Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh.'" The Lord continued: "Thus shall you say to the Israelites, 'Ehyeh sent me to you'" (Exod. 3:14, JPS).

This Jewish translation is chosen in order to demonstrate how the traditional English rendering of this phrase "I am that I am" appears transliterated from the original

Hebrew. In verse 14, God first calls Himself *Ehyeh*, not *YAHWEH*. This important point all but destroys the main argument of the Sacred Name, which asserts that God has a proper sacred name, *YAHWEH*.

God first calls Himself *Ehyeh*. What does this mysterious word, *Ehyeh*, mean?

First, *Ehyeh* is not a proper name but an imperfect form of the verb *to be* (Hebrew root *HYH*). A biblical Hebrew verb does not have a tense (at least as tenses are understood in English) but has what are called perfect or imperfect *aspects*. The imperfect aspect denotes an unfinished action. In other words, the Hebrew verb *to be* (*HYH*) in the imperfect would mean a state of being that is not complete; that has no end. Thus, the Hebrew *Ehyeh* has much wider connotations than the English *I AM*. It encompasses the English idea of *was*, *is*, and *will be*—a concept clearly greater than simple "am" of the name "I AM."

This is exactly what John the revelator wrote. " 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8, NRSV). That *was* is how John translated the Hebrew phrase *Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh* into the Greek language, whose verb tenses have similar precise structure as in English.

This is the JPS translation of Exodus 3:15:

And God said further to Moses, "Thus shall you speak to the

Israelites: *The LORD, the God of your fathers*, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: This shall be My name forever, This My appellation for all eternity.

Here the well-known four letters appear: *YHWH 'LWHY 'BWTYKM*, translated, "Yahweh, God of their fathers." *YHWH* appears to be an acronym for the longer name, a *Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh*, used first in verse 14 and whose correct translation we just saw that gave the idea of the One who *was, is, and will be*.

Hebrew grammarians understand that the words *YHWH* and *HYH* (pronounced as *Ehyeh*) have the same root *HYH*, which means "to be." In Hebrew letters, *Yud* and *Waw* in writing look very similar and can be grammatically interchangeable. The prefix (*Alef*, spelled with an "E" in *Ehyeh*) marks the first person; the prefix *Y* (*yud*) marks third person (the *Y* in *YHWH*). The divine name *YHWH* is derived from the Hebrew verb *to be* third person imperfect, which is written as *YHYH*, and this is definitely not the same as the first person imperfect of *to be*, which is *Ehyeh*.

Is it important to pronounce His name?

King David wrote in the psalm that "those who *know your name* will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you" (Ps. 9:10). What does knowing the name imply? Jehovah's Witnesses insist that calling God by His name is essential for salvation.

Abraham and Jesus did not think so. In Genesis 1 the author says that *YHWH* appeared to Abraham. When Abraham saw "three men," he said "Adonai," which in English is translated as "My Lord."³ There is no single text in the Gospel where Jesus pronounced the name *YHWH*. More so, when He taught His disciples to pray, He clearly said "our Father." On the numerous occasions, we see the description of Him praying, and He was always consistent in how He addresses God—and never as *YHWH*.

Jesus' example is very important. In most cultures, when a child calls a parent by their first name, it is considered as a sign of serious disrespect. Of course, we know our Father's name, but would we call him by *this* name? If God is our Father, should we not use the example of His Son for our prayers?

In the Near Eastern culture the wife would never call her husband by his first name. When Abigail came to David to apologize for her husband's conduct, she called him "my master" (1 Sam. 25). Bathsheba addressed her husband, David, in the same manner (1 Kings 1). This type of relations and addressing existed in the ancient Near East because the man was perceived as a woman's guardian and guarantor in the legal and moral aspects of life. The culture of the family relations and legal system differs today, but did the New Testament change our reverent posture with regards to our relations with God?

Ellen White believed that God's name has to be treated with the greatest respect.

To hallow the name of the Lord requires that the words in which we speak of the Supreme Being be uttered with reverence. "Holy and reverend is His name." Psalm 111:9. We are never in any manner to treat lightly the titles or appellations of the Deity. In prayer we enter the audience chamber of the Most High; and we should come before Him with holy awe. The angels veil their faces in His presence. The cherubim and the bright and holy seraphim approach His throne with solemn reverence. How much more should we, finite, sinful beings, come in a reverent manner before the Lord, our Maker!⁴

For any religious Jew who understands and appreciates Hebrew, pronouncing the name *YHWH* signifies grave disrespect to Almighty God. For that reason, the Masoretes, who vocalized consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, intentionally placed under the consonants *YHWH* vowels from the word *Adonai* (my Lord). This was a traditional Jewish reading of the Divine Name based on Genesis 18:2.

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Medieval Christian scholars were not aware of this Jewish way of writing. They read the word *YHWH*, together with its mnemonic vowel points, and pronounced it as *Jehovah*. This pronunciation, though incorrect, has remained traditional for many Christian churches. Nobody knows the exact vocalization of the four consonants, which constitute the name of God. The pronunciation *Yahweh* presents a conventional agreement between modern scholars today.

The tradition of the reading of *Adonai* (my Lord) existed at least since the time of the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The rabbis who wrote this translation used the Greek word *KURIOS* (the Lord) to translate *YHWH* tetragrammaton into Greek. The New Testament writers did the same. They had no problem quoting the Psalms and prophetic texts of the Old Testament from the Greek translation. The word *KURIOS* appears in those quotations numerous times, even though the word *YHWH* never appears in any New Testament book. Therefore, translators of the Bible into the European languages, seeing these examples of early Bible translations, felt comfortable to translate the name of God into the vernacular languages in order that the people would understand it.

If the name of God is so important, then why does it not appear in the New Testament? Proponents of the Sacred Name theory believe that this missing name is part of a conspiracy theory in which the church intentionally hid the true name of God from the people. According to the theory, the New Testament had originally been written in Hebrew language, but the church intentionally hid its original text. That most of New Testament writers were Jewish and their mother tongue was Palestinian Aramaic is true. (Luke, who was the only non-Jewish New Testament writer, authored his Gospel and the book of Acts in Greek.) There is no space in this article for the discussion about the origin and language of the New Testament; however, for the sake of argument, suppose that some of the New Testament books may have been originally written in Aramaic. Both books of Luke were definitely written in Greek. All Old Testament quotations, which in the original Hebrew contained the tetragrammaton *YHWH*, Luke records in the Greek as the word *KURIOS*. Thus, the Lord, who inspired Luke, did not seem to have any problem with having His name translated into Greek, contrary to the claims that use of any name other than *YAHWEH* is profane and leads the user to perdition.

In the same way, there is no problem in translating the name of God

into other languages. Every Hebrew name in the Bible is translatable because it indicated the character of the individual.

Conclusion

The argument insisting that our salvation depends on the Hebrew pronunciation of the name of God is reminiscent of the medieval alchemists who wanted to obtain gold by doing chemical manipulations. In the same way, the alchemists failed because they did not know the fundamental laws of the structure of matter; the Sacred Name theologians have little understanding of Hebrew grammar and biblical textology, which explains why their arguments are full of flaws, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies.

Of course, we must treat the name of our Lord with respect. But salvation is based on our acceptance of Christ's righteousness for us, "the righteousness of God" Himself (Rom. 3:21 NASB), *not* on the name we use to refer to this God. ❏

1 The author of www.israelitenation.org.

2 The Hebrew transliteration of His name is *YESHUA*. It is not a proper name. It is a regular Hebrew noun, which means salvation. Grammatical construction proposed by the followers of the Sacred Name does not exist in Hebrew. Greeks pronounce the name *YESHUA* as *Jesus* (*Yesus*). The reason for this is simple. Greek language does not have the sound *sh*. Therefore any Hebrew word, which contains the letter *shin*, would be recorded in the Greek alphabet using Greek letter sigma. Phonetic problems always occur between the languages. Korean language does not have the sound *r*, while Hawaiian lacks a number of sounds, which are present in the English language. Apostles understood the differences between Hebrew and Greek phonology and had no problem with Luke writing the name *Jesus* in his Gospel and the book of Acts.

3 It is important to notice that the word *Adonai* is used in the plural the same way as the word *Elohim*. This indicates the plurality of God. In spite of the fact that both of these nouns are grammatically plural, they occur together with verbs, which are used only in the singular. For example, in the phrase *God said*, the noun *God* (*Elohim*) is grammatically in the plural, but the verb *said* is singular. This makes the word *Elohim* unique in its sense because in such syntax, it has never referred to any pagan deity. Therefore, the first words of the Bible say, "In the beginning *Elohim* (not *YHWH*) created (in the singular) heaven and earth." If Moses, definitely moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote *Elohim* in the first words of the Bible, it means that he wasn't afraid of the possible confusion. Therefore, Jewish and Christian commentators believe that *Elohim* is another name for God.

4 Ellen White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn, 1896), 106.

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Strong support for EndItNow

Jerusalem, Israel—Five Seventh-day Adventist English-speaking congregations in Israel gathered together on December 26, 2009, to draw strength from each other and, most of all, from God as they heralded the theme “EndItNow.”

The successful gathering, organized by **Nina Usacheva**, Women’s Ministries director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Israel, and **Julio Mendez**, the pastor for the English-speaking Adventist congregations in Israel, had about 180 people in attendance.

There were discussion groups on awareness, prevention, solutions, and inspiration from the Word of God to comfort those who have fallen victim to abuse. The attendees signed a petition signifying their support and commitment to end violence to women and girls.

EndItNow is a worldwide campaign, coordinated by the Women’s Ministries department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Adventist Development and Relief

Agency, to take a firm stand against violence aimed at women and girls. *[Milagros Mendez/TED News Staff/TED News]*

New smoking ban in Finland expected to pass by summer

The Finnish government took further measures for public health by proposing a ban on smoking in private cars with underage occupants and prohibiting stores from displaying tobacco products. While government statistics report that only 20 percent of the Finnish population smokes, the goal is to eliminate smoking entirely, said state Health Ministry secretary **Ilkka Oksala** in an interview with BBC News. Health experts for the Seventh-day Adventist Church supported the move, citing the church’s long-time emphasis on health and wellness.

“Any measure that makes a substance a little more difficult to acquire . . . has been shown to result

in a decreased consumption of the product,” said **Allan Handysides**, director of Health Ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “There’s a linear association between the amount of the product used and the amount of the disease that we see in the whole community.” Handysides added, “What people don’t realize when they start smoking is that giving up the habit is just as difficult as giving up cocaine or heroin.”

Finland’s ruling party in parliament is championing the antismoking legislation and faces little opposition from other parties, the BBC reported. The proposed laws will likely be implemented by summer.

“To make Finland a smoke-free country is probably the boldest goal ever against smoking from the [Finnish] health authorities,” said **Atte Helminen**, president for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Finland. “It is great to see how the health principles [the church] has promoted for so long are now recognized by the government as well.”

The Finnish parliament first outlawed tobacco advertising in 1976. *[ANW News] M*

L E T T E R S

Continued from page 4 ▶



the article left too much unsaid on this chief doctrine of the church.

—*Mark W. Knappe, pastor, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, United States*

Serving God through personal pain

I was moved deeply by Bruce Martin’s article “Pastoring in Pain: Serving God When You Suffer” (January 2010). I have experienced a few seasons of pain that have deeply affected my ministry. But to hear of people telling Bruce that he lacked faith is hard to believe. That must

have been Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” experience.

It actually takes more faith in God to continue to walk, serve, and testify about God with unanswered prayer than with answered prayer. What we fail to see is that God works often better through those of us who are being refined through the fire. I can see Pastor Martin has been a blessing to others because of his thorn in the flesh experience.

—*Eli Rojas, email*

Like the author, Bruce Martin, I have been pastoring in pain for

over ten years now. Sometimes the pain has been so debilitating until I can barely get up and get ready to leave the house. There were many occasions when I emailed my sermon to a person in the church to read on Sunday morning. I am sometimes able to move around and enjoy my freedom—but the pain doesn’t go away. As Dr. Martin said, it does open doors to ministry. It deepens my faith so much.

Thanks for an article that really spoke to me.

—*Marla Abe, co-pastor, Carlisle First Church of the Brethren, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, United States M*

Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision

by N. T. Wright,
Downers Grove, IL:
InterVarsity Press
Academic, 2009.

N. T. Wright's *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision*, cannot be considered an easy walk through pleasant inspirational meadows but is a rigorous climb in theological mountains. Written as a discussion with his critics over his alleged departure from Reformation theology of righteousness by faith and justification, he primarily addresses the work of John Piper in his book *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*. In it, Piper attacks Wright's exegesis of the epistles of Paul. Wright, a leading New Testament scholar, lecturer, and author of some 40 books, currently serves as Bishop of Durham in the Anglican communion.

Divided into two sections, this book first addresses his issues with Piper and others and secondly does careful exegesis of Galatians, Philippians, Corinthians, Ephesians, and Romans. These are followed by a brief conclusion. Wright insists on a covenant view of the redemptive process beginning with the Genesis 3 account of the Fall and breaking of a relationship with the Creator God. Then he proceeds through the Abrahamic covenant, Torah, and coming of the Messiah, all of which adhere to and fulfill the plan of the Creator God to set the sinful world right. He continues by noting that the Abrahamic covenant also ushers in the *eschaton* that arrives in the coming of the Messiah and comes to full fruition in God's final judgment, which ultimately sets right a fallen world.



WRIGHT IS A STICKLER FOR PROPER EXEGESIS, USING HIS VAST SKILLS AS A LINGUIST, HISTORIAN, AND THEOLOGIAN TO SEEK BOTH WHAT THE TEXT SAYS AND WHAT IT MEANS IN ITS ORIGINAL SETTING.

Wright is given to lengthy and complex sentence structure, such as on pages 95 and 96 where one sentence is more than 250 words in length. His sentences are regularly filled with lengthy parenthetical interruptions that require careful attention by the reader to what Wright says. He is not comfortable using words that may be pre-loaded with meaning by the hearer, such as *covenant*, *law*, *righteousness*, *justification*, *judgment*, *grace*, and *faith*, thus rendering them of little value in communicating his intent. To avoid this problem, he frequently uses lengthy, hyphenated phrases such as "God's single-saving-plan-through-Israel-for-the-world-now-fulfilled-in-the-Messiah" as his definition of "covenant."

The perspective of sixteenth and seventeenth century reformation theology and exegesis—as vital, respected, and important as they are to him—are seen by Wright as giving overemphasis to imputed righteousness in an egocentric manner. This misses the point that a "setting right" of accounts does not equate to rendering one morally perfect and sinless. For him, this misdirection leads to antinomianism

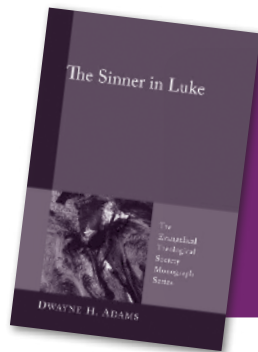
and hostility to the Torah—counter to the intent of Paul.

Further, he strongly resists any dispensationalism that would indicate that God provides a different means of salvation in different eras. For him, the promise to Adam, the covenant with Abraham, and the Torah all point to their consummation in the Messiah, an event that was strongly anticipated in Saul/Paul's day by a calculation of the "Seventy weeks of years" prophecy of Daniel 9 (59)." Wright is a stickler for proper exegesis, using his vast skills as a linguist, historian, and theologian to seek both what the text says and what it means in its original setting. All the while he refuses to allow culture or preconceived notions to dictate the interpretation, as he so clearly indicated in his first paragraph on page 42. His knowledge of the time of Paul, careful and full use of Scripture from Genesis onward, and his amazing, integrating, and prodigious knowledge of the Pauline epistles both astounds and intimidates. This knowledge, that any Bible student would aspire to, will be advanced by reading this book.

—Reviewed by Gary Patterson, retired minister, living in Luray, Virginia, United States.



The Sinner in Luke,
by Dwayne H.
Adams, Evangelical
Theological Society
Monograph
series, Eugene,
OR: Pickwick
Publications, 2008.



TO THESE EARLY WRITERS, A
“SINNER” WAS ONE WHO WAS
NOTORIOUSLY WICKED.

Because the word *sinner* appears 5 times in Matthew and 6 times in Mark but 18 times in Luke, Dwayne H. Adams believes the “sinner” was of special interest to Luke. For centuries Luke’s reference to the “sinner” has fascinated commentators. Adams begins his study of “sinner” in Luke by surveying the work of commentators as early as the church fathers. To these early writers, a “sinner” was one who was notoriously wicked.

As the centuries passed, rabbinic sources were used more frequently in interpreting the synoptics, and the identification of a “sinner” changed. The common people (*am ha-ares*), who failed to keep the ceremonial laws of the rabbis, were commonly understood to be the “sinner” in the Gospels. Israel Abrahams (1917) followed by Joachim Jeremias (1923) rejected the idea that the *am ha-ares* were the sinners in the Gospels; instead, the “sinner” was one who was dishonest, that is, anyone who followed a suspected and degrading occupation. This, they believed, is reflected in the phrase, “tax collector and sinner,” where Sharp’s rule can be seen (two nouns in the same case joined by *kai* with one definite article). “The tax collector and sinner” is then understood to mean “the tax collector,” that is to say, “sinner.”

Adams then surveys the literature that may have influenced Luke’s use of “sinner.” He surveys the Hellenistic background of the word, its use in the Old Testament, intertestamental Jewish material, and rabbinic Judaism. He then examines Jesus’

attitude toward and relationship with sinners by a detailed examination of the passages where the word *sinner* appears in Luke.

Adams concludes that for Luke the term *sinner* is primarily used for a moral category, thus following the Old Testament definition. A “sinner” in Luke is guilty of transgressing the law and stands under the wrath of God, needing the forgiveness that comes through repentance and the acceptance of Jesus as Savior. “Sinner” in Luke is not used for the *am ha-ares*. Nor is it to be understood as merely a sectarian label used by the Pharisees. Nor should Abrahams’s and Jeremias’s list of despised trades be used to identify the “sinner” in Luke.

There is another approach in understanding Luke’s use of the word *sinner* not seen in Adams’s study. Luke may have been very much aware that he was looked upon as a sinner within the Jewish cultural context. First of all, he was a Gentile. Paul reflects the Jewish view of Gentiles in Galatians 2:15 when he wrote, “We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles” (KJV). However, we know that Paul had shed the Jewish/rabbinic point of view by the time he began his mission to win Gentiles to Christ. Peter also showed the Jewish bias toward Gentiles upon entering the home of Cornelius when he said, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation” (Acts 10:28, NKJV). As a Christian, Luke was placed in close association

with Jews and became aware of their cultural biases.

Second, Luke, faced the despised trades bias of the rabbis as well, for he was a physician, and physicians appear in one of Jeremias’s four lists of despised trades. Being a “sinner” by Jewish definition, Luke was deeply interested in Jesus’ attitude toward and relationship with sinners. He probably wanted to convey to Theophilus, who was also a Gentile stand on level ground. Luke’s interest in how Jesus related to the “sinner” is seen in the original material found in his Gospel: (1) Jesus’ genealogy takes all ethnic groups back to Noah where they become one (Matthew’s genealogy stops at Abraham, father of the Jews); (2) the role of the shepherds in the birth narrative (shepherding was a despised occupation); (3) John the Baptist’s quote of Isaiah 40 that ends, “ ‘ ‘And all flesh shall see the salvation of God’ ‘ ” (NKJV), which cannot be found in Matthew and Mark; (4) his interest in the ministry of women to Jesus and the apostles; (5) the parables of the good Samaritan and (6) the prodigal son; (7) the healing of the Samaritan leper; (8) the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector; and (9) the story of Zacchaeus. These nine accounts cannot be found in Matthew and Mark. Without a doubt, Luke, the Gentile “sinner,” shows his interest in how Jesus relates to sinners by the context of his Gospel.

—Reviewed by George E. Rice, retired minister,
Greencastle, Pennsylvania, United States.

Jina Kim, MPH, is wellness program coordinator, Adventist Risk Management, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

Stressed out? Take a deep breath

Juggling priorities with church, work, and family commitments can take a toll on life and may be overwhelming. With the pressures, and demands of our busy lives, taking a break from all stresses becomes a challenge. However, managing stress does not take long. Stress is normal, but when you feel burned out you can follow these suggestions to conquer your stress:

- Understand the cause and root of your stress. Is it your personality? If so, intentionally work on it, so life will not be as stressful. Take this quiz to find out if you have Type A personality: http://stress.about.com/library/Type_A_quiz/bl_Type_A_quiz.htm.
- Slow down, take a deep breath, and relax. Try this series, occasionally, throughout the day:
 1. Lie or sit down.
 2. Inhale through your nose while counting slowly to four. Feel your stomach rise.
 3. Hold your breath for a second.
 4. Slowly count to four while you exhale through your mouth. Your stomach will slowly fall.
- Guided imagery. Use music, visuals, or even your own imagination to provide a sense of peace and relaxation. Some sample images include beaches, sunny skies, landscapes, nature, and others.
 - Use music as a helpful tool to give you an overall good feeling.
 - Select slower and quieter songs such as hymns, some classical music, and sounds of nature.

- Singing along can reduce tension.
- Exercise. This is a highly recommended method to reduce your stress. Take a walk during your lunch break, play a favorite sport, go to the gym with your friends, and—if you are physically fit—let your aggressions out with high-impact exercises such as cardio kickboxing.
- Studies on prayer reveal its benefits and power in reducing stress. Some statistics from these studies include:
 - Hospitalized people who never attend church have an average stay of three times longer than those who attend regularly.
 - Heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not participate in a religion.
 - Elderly people who never, or rarely, attended church had a stroke rate double that of those who attended regularly.

Stress can be defined as a person's response to life's events and other daily activities. Stress comes in various forms. It can be positive, motivating, and bring out the best in us—called *eustress*. Some examples include:

- Getting a promotion
- Getting married or having a baby
- The holidays
- Purchasing a new car
- Running and competing in a marathon or race
- Public speaking

Distress is a commonly known form of stress with negative



implications for both body and mind. Stress, related to both external and internal factors, affects the impact upon your health depending on how well you handle stress and how healthy you are. When stress gets out of control, it can be insidious, threatening, and cause many diseases including heart-related diseases. Other health problems that stress can exacerbate include:

- Pain of any kind
- Digestive problems
- Sleep problems
- Depression
- Obesity
- Autoimmune diseases
- Skin conditions, such as eczema and psoriasis

Ministry is as challenging and stressful as many other vocations. Identify and clearly set boundaries in your work as well as practice good time management (i.e., avoid workaholicism and not completing tasks). Take some time off. Build close connections and support systems. Be sure to eat well, exercise, and get a proper amount of sleep. Have fun and relax.

Finally, remember the message of Psalm 23—the Lord is our Shepherd, and we have no needs that He will not provide, have no need to fear anything, and will dwell with Him forever.

Medical consultants: Allan Handysides and Peter Landless.

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

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